Romantic Bibliomania: Authorship, Identity, and the Book

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Abstract

This thesis explores Romantic authors' representations of books and bookishness. It argues that bibliocentric writing from the early nineteenth century addressed anxieties associated with the profession of authorship in a rapidly changing landscape of publication, print culture, and technology. However, the contested and heterogeneous nature of Romantic cultural production meant that the book was inevitably an unstable object through which to construct authorial identity. Examining the work of Thomas Frognall Dibdin, Leigh Hunt, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Charles Lamb, Thomas De Quincey, Walter Scott and James Hogg, I chart the representation of bibliophilia across a range of genres, literary coteries, and social backgrounds. These writers, though in some respects disparate, can all be termed 'bookish authors': scholarly (or antiquarian), male, and, above all, concerned with the cultural significance of the book-as-object. Their writing is preoccupied with the ways in which books are owned by readers, writers, and publishers, and how their own declarations of textual ownership – signatures, inscriptions, designations, attributions – function both publically and privately. Their work reveals the extent to which books were key determinants in the expression and realisation of the Romantic period self.

Contents

List of Illustrations

Abbreviations

ALH	*The Autobiography of Leigh Hunt: With Reminiscences of Friends and Contemporaries*, 2 vols (London: Constable, 1903)
CWSTC	*The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, gen. ed.* Kathleen Coburn, in 16 parts (London: Routledge, 1969-2002)
CWWH	*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed.. P. P. Howe, 21 vols (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1932)
EEWN	Walter Scott, *The Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels*, gen. ed. David Hewitt, 30 vols (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010)
LL	*The Letters of Charles and Mary Lamb*, ed.. E. V. Lucas, 3 vols (London: J. M. Dent, 1935)
M	*Marginalia*, in *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, part 12
NB	*The Notebooks of S. T. Coleridge*, ed.. Kathleen Coburn, 4 vols (London: Routlege,1973)
SWLH	*The Selected Writings of Leigh Hunt*, gen. ed.. Robert Morrison and Michael Eberle Sinatra, 6 vols (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2003)
WCML	*The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*, ed.. E. V. Lucas, 7 vols (London: Methuen, 1903-05)
WDQ	*The Works of Thomas De Quincey*, gen. ed. Grevel Lindop, 21 vols (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2000-2003)

Introduction

'An intermediate station between authors and readers': Bibliophilia and

Authorship in the Romantic Period

On the 13th of July 1812, luminaries of the bibliophilic world gathered in St James'

Square. The final portion of the 30,000-strong library of John Ker, Third Duke of

Roxburghe, was to be sold. The sale of the Roxburghe library had begun in May of

that year. So extensive was the collection that there had already been forty-two days

of consecutive auctions. Large private libraries had been sold before, but according

to a commentator in *The Gentleman's Magazine* in August 'no sale of Books ever

engrossed a larger share of public attention than the extensive and valuable Library

of the late John Duke of Roxburghe'.[1] In part, this was the result of the record prices

paid for lots. The famed Valdarfer Boccaccio, which went to the Marquis of

Blandford for £2260, was, until 1884, the most expensive single book ever sold. The

bibliomaniac Thomas Frognall Dibdin was also responsible for establishing the

auction's reputation. Dibdin not only commemorated the sale in his *Bibliographical*

Decameron (1817), but was the main force behind the formation of the bibliographic

society which bears its name to this day. The sale was more than a treasure-trove for

the period's wealthiest book collectors or an opportunity to found an exclusive

bibliophilic dining club, however. It entered the public consciousness as a cultural

nexus for book enthusiasts of every stamp. The range of authors that the sale

attracted was impressive. Aside from Dibdin, attendees included Leigh Hunt and

Thomas De Quincey. Busy at Abbotsford at the time, Sir Walter Scott (an

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[1] Anon, 'The Roxburghe Sale', *The Gentleman's Magazine: and Historical Chronicle* (1812), pp. 113-116 (p. 113).

acquaintance of Roxburghe and of Dibdin) asked a friend to 'send him a memorandum respecting any remarkable articles', while William Beckford wrote two satiric poems about the event entitled *Dialogues in the Shade: Rare Doings at Roxburghe Hall* (1819).[2] Within the popular press, mention of the sale or the club became literary shorthand for a particular type of aristocratic, materialistic book appreciation. The Roxburghe sale was not merely the crowning event of the bibliomania boom, therefore, but an exemplar of the mass bibliophilia that captivated Romantic-period Britain.

Bookishness is now considered a fundamental characteristic of Romanticism. Recent decades have seen a marked increase in the number of studies dealing with the period's reading and publishing history. Prominent examples include Ina Ferris and Paul Keen's edited collection *Bookish Histories*, H. J. Jackson's *Romantic Readers*, Andrew Piper's *Dreaming in Books*, and William St. Clair's *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period*.[3] This focus on the book in Romantic studies is a result of the growth of book history as a scholarly discipline, driven by the work of Robert Darnton and Roger Chartier during the 1980s and 1990s. It also reflects a contemporary interest in conceptions of book-as-object, prompted by the changing nature of reading, writing, and publishing in our digital age. Romantic readers and writers were concerned with issues similar to those that occupy us today: evolving technologies of print; mass production; the anonymity of reading audiences; and the

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[2] De Quincey mentions purchasing books from the Roxburghe sale in a manuscript note: '[Ransoming the Books]', in *The Works of Thomas De Quincey*, gen. ed. Grevel Lindop, 21 vols (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2000-2003), X, 377. Hunt is recorded as having attended by William Carew Hazlitt in *The Book Collector* (London: John Grant, 1904), p. 39. Scott's letter to Daniel Terry respecting the sale can be found in John Gibson Lockhart's *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott*, 2nd edn, 7 vols (Edinburgh: Robert Cadell, 1839), IV, 5.

[3] Ina Ferris and Paul Keen (eds), *Bookish Histories: Books, Literature, and Commercial Modernity 1700-1900* (New York: Palgrave, 2009); H. J. Jackson, *Romantic Readers: The Evidence of Marginalia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005); Andrew Piper, *Dreaming in Books: The Making of the Bibliographic Imagination in the Romantic Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); William St Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

worth of certain forms of literary creativity. Without terming these issues equivalent, it is clear that the book-object retains its hold over our collective cultural imagination. Though few outside of book-history circles may have heard of the Roxburghe sale today, it remains culturally relevant. It speaks to our concerns about the way in which we value books and literature and the mechanisms by which we transmit culture. If some recent commentators have begun to characterise the book as an antique object – a relic of our pre-digital past – then it makes sense to reflect back on a period in which the idea of the book-as-antique was engendered.[4] Many buyers attended the Roxburghe sale in search of typographical relics, antiques rather than texts: a fact which provoked the derision of their critics. The conflict between notions of the book as vital (a vessel for the transmission of ideas) and dead (an antique furniture item) galvanised debates on its current and future worth. The book was an object at once characteristic of the Romantic period's modernity and also inextricably bound to its past.

Such contradictions are at the core of this study. My main focus is on the way in which writing about books constituted a means of writing about authorship. This thesis takes a range of representative examples of bibliophilic writing – periodical essays, literary reminiscences, marginalia, novels, and autobiographies – and charts their shared anxieties and concerns. My analysis considers the spaces in which books are kept (Chapter 1); how individual books are exchanged between authors (Chapter 2); and the various ways in which books might be inscribed with the names of their authors, readers, publishers, and editors (Chapters 3 and 4). In each instance, I argue, what was being played out in this upsurge of bibliophilic writing was a debate on the nature of Romantic period authorship. Clifford Siskin implies that readers and

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[4] See Philip Connell, 'Bibliomania: Book Collecting, Cultural Politics, and the Rise of Literary Heritage in Romantic Britain', *Representations*, 71 (2000), 24-47 (p. 25).

writers had become, to use a term that appears repeatedly in the *Work of Writing*, 'comfortable' with their bookishness by the early nineteenth century.[5] I want to nuance this claim. While bookishness, and bookish individuals, had certainly become more familiar by this point in history, the book-object also prompted a wide range of anxieties among writers, if not readers.

Though I refer to the work of book historians, I am no book historian myself. I suspect I am more on the literary side of the 'ongoing breach between book history and literary history' that studies such as Ferris and Keen's *Bookish Histories* attempt to bridge.[6] Primarily, this thesis deals in the history of the symbolic value of the book. The emphasis is on individual authors' responses to this object as representative of their experiences as writers in the early nineteenth century. In line with the recent work of critics such as Ferris, Keen, and Piper, as well as Philip Connell, Jon Klancher, and Deidre Lynch, my analysis takes into account the dual function of books within the period's discourse, emphasising their role in 'personal and cultural identity-formations'.[7] Within this critical field, books are considered in terms of their significance as physical objects, but not in a manner that reduces them to empirical units. This results in a subgenre of bibliographic criticism. Elements of book history – statistical and bibliographic analysis, for instance – are combined with literary criticism in a manner that, in Piper's words, 'draw[s] our attention to the ways that bibliographic details are key determinants, but also key multipliers, of textual meaning'.[8] This mode of criticism shows how central concepts of the book-

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[5] Clifford Siskin, *The Work of Writing* (Baltimore: John Hopkins, 1998), pp. 2, 10.

[6] *Bookish Histories*, p. 2.

[7] Connell, 'Bibliomania'; Ina Ferris, 'Introduction', *Romantic Libraries* (College Park: University of Maryland Press, 2004) <http://www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/libraries/ferris/ferris.html> [accessed 20 October 2010], (para. 3), and 'Book Fancy: Bibliomania and the Literary Word', *The Keats-Shelley Journal*, 58 (2009), 33-52; and Deidre Lynch, '"Wedded to Books": Bibliomania and the Romantic Essayists', <http://www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/libraries/lynch/lynch.html>; Piper, *Dreaming in Books*. See also, the work of these and other critics in *Bookish Histories*.

[8] Piper, p. 9.

as-object are to a literary critical history of the Romantic period and how this scholarship might inflect a number of current debates on canon formation, reception history, and even general constructions of Romanticism: for instance, models of Romantic period creativity that emphasise its communal, as opposed to, individualistic nature.[9]

This thesis brings the discourses of bookish and communal Romanticism together. One of the most important communities to which the authors in this study felt that they belonged was the community of books. It was a community that operated on a material as well as an ideational or textual level. The physical books, as much as the ideas contained within them, were these authors' companions and saturated their writings. In the same way that critics of Romantic sociability have shown the importance of literary, political, and social networks to the production of some of the period's greatest works, this thesis has examined the equally significant paper and leather-bound networks that connected so many of its proponents. I posit the bookish author as an alternative figure of Romantic creativity: one whose prevalent mode of creation is composite, in that it advertises its allusive and intertextual nature. The authors considered in this study are attached to an antiquarian image of authorship; they are connoisseurs, scholars and men of letters. They self-consciously position themselves textually and historically in relation to the books they admire and possess: advertising and building upon the literary influences contained in their favourite works. They desire, ultimately, to one day join this bookish community in book form themselves and, in this way, hope to reconcile some of the inconsistencies, paradoxes, and dissipations of a literary life.

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[9] Jeffrey Cox, 'Communal Romanticism', in *European Romantic Review*, 15 (2004), 329-34; Jon Mee, *Conversable Worlds: Literature, Contention, and Community 1762-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Gillian Russell and Clara Tuite (eds.), *Romantic Sociability: Social Networks and Literary Culture in Britain, 1770-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

Though books, in many ways, anchored writers' sense of their authorial identity, they could also destabilise it. There is a fine line between a derivative and an allusive work and an appreciation of the great works that have preceded your own can bring the latter's shortcomings into a stark focus. This brings me to the second strand of my argument, which considers some of the problems associated with preserving one's bookish links to the past. I consider the Romantic period as a transitional age, in which concepts of the book as antique and the book (or printed word) as an engine of change came into particular conflict. Books typified the conditions of contemporary print culture, while simultaneously remaining a link to the literary and historical past. They were valorised as the unique productions of original genius, but they were also common: there were just too many of them.

In both instances – be it in relation to the antiquarian author or the publishing conditions of the period – there is a tension between old and new: what has come before and what is yet to come. As a result, the figure of the author was characterised as essentially indeterminate and intermediary. Various late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century meditations on the subject of authorship represent the 'Literary Character' as, essentially, contradictory (though this does not prevent them from repeatedly attempting to categorise and define it). Perhaps the best known text of this kind is Isaac D'Israeli's *An Essay on the Manners and Genius of the Literary Character* (1795) in which he tentatively attempts to outline the nature and temperament of 'Men of Genius'.[10] Although he argues that a general literary character exists, he is also aware of its variation. The essay includes descriptions of numerous sub-genres of literary genius or endeavours that resist absolute classification. For instance, in characterising the 'man of letters', D'Israeli admits

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[10] Isaac D'Israeli, *An Essay on the Manners and Genius of the Literary Character* (London: Cadell and Davies, 1795), pp. iii-iv.

that 'the popular notion [of this figure] is as unsettled, as unjust' (*Essay*, p. 11). He occupies, he notes in a later expansion of the essay, 'an intermediate station between authors and readers'.[11] This interstitial existence, I argue, is widely reflected in, and partly the result of, authors' experience of the heterogeneous cultural field of the early nineteenth century. As such, the man of letters' 'intermediate station' lies at the heart of my argument. The indeterminacies that form the basis of D'Israeli's description of the 'literary character' are a feature of authors' social and professional experiences, as well as a reflection of the complex symbolism of the book. Bookishness becomes a response to the anxieties prompted by the machinery of publication and the complex nature of textuality. My chapters tackle the implications for authors of occupying 'an intermediate station between authors and readers' and an 'intermediate station' between material and immaterial states of existence, as embodied by the book-as-object. By engaging with the book as both a physical and an ideational object, the works studied here reveal the ways in which an author's body is manifested in the texts he writes, and the consequences of that manifestation. They are preoccupied by how books are owned by readers, writers, and publishers, and concerned with the function and implications of declarations of textual ownership: signatures, inscriptions, designations, and attributions.

The authors I focus on in this thesis – Thomas Frognall Dibdin, Leigh Hunt, Charles Lamb, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Thomas De Quincey, James Hogg, and Walter Scott – were not only caught between the worlds of the textual and the actual,

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[11] D'Israeli, *The Literary Character, Illustrated by the History of Men of Genius Drawn from their Own Feelings and Confessions*, 3rd edn, 2 vols (London: John Murray, 1822), II, 204. Marianne Egeland writes on the etymology of the term 'man of letters'. In each historical example she describes, 'the terms denote a wide understanding of literature; *second*, literature and learning are intimately connected; and *third*, the learned authors constitute a community': 'The Man of Letters as Hero', *The International Journal of the Book*, 4 (2007), 41-47 (p. 42). See also, John Gross *The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters: Aspects of English Literary Life Since 1800* (London: Wendinfeld and Nicolson, 1969), p. xiii.

but between the roles of collector and creator; professional and amateur; reader and writer. How they dealt with the mixed-mode of early nineteenth-century authorship, and what this can tell us about the nature of Romantic period creativity and identity is the concern of this thesis. Where I differ from other critics in this area is in my particular focus on the relationship between bibliophilic trends and the strained conceptualisation of authorship and identity in the early nineteenth century. I also diverge from previous scholarship in the range of authors and material I have chosen to consider. In examining works beyond the standard bibliophilic essays usually referred to in discussions of bibliomania and bookishness, I show that a bookish aesthetic informs the entirety of many authors' literary output: their autobiographies, their essays, novels, poetry, and letters. With the exception of Lynch and her exploration of the Gothic and Scott, scholars of this topic have tended to focus on the links between bibliomania and popular print culture: the writing of figures such as De Quincey, D'Israeli, Hazlitt, Hunt, and Lamb.[12] Indeed, as I argue in Chapter 1, there are many fruitful comparisons to be made between this group of writers and traditional bibliomaniacs, such as Dibdin. This also means that the 'shabby genteel Romantics' have received their share of critical attention.[13] Partly this is a result of the medium in which they predominantly wrote: the familiar essay. Meditations on books and literature suited periodicals and journals whose primary function was to pass comment on contemporary culture. Equally, the 'familiarity' that characterised this form of writing involved conditionally inviting readers to observe the author in his private or semi-private surroundings. As writers who figured themselves as literary experts, it is unsurprising that their books were repeatedly the focus of their

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[12] Deidre Lynch, 'Gothic Libraries and National Subjects', *Studies in Romanticism*, 40 (Spring 2001), 29-48.

[13] Lynch, 'Wedded to Books', para. 10.

writing. As I hope to show, though, the familiar essay was not the only medium through which authors expressed their bookishness.

Some of my case studies might seem anomalous: James Hogg for instance. Certainly, other authors might have been included. William Beckford and Robert Southey, for instance, were both keen book collectors whose work contributes to our understanding of the Romantic period cult of bibliophilia. According to De Quincey, Southey was so enamoured of his library at Greta Hall that Coleridge used to refer to it as his wife (*WDQ*, XI, 117). But a figure like Hogg offers what Southey, Beckford, and many other traditional bibliomaniacs cannot: a labouring-class perspective on the significance of the book as a cultural symbol. In a related fashion, Walter Scott, as the bestselling novelist of his day, contrasts with a figure like Dibdin, whose audience was small and specialist. Each of my case studies provides unique, but connected examples of how bookishness operated as a cypher for authorship across the period's literary field. As well as mapping early nineteenth-century bookishness across genres, therefore, my thesis charts the way in which a bookish aesthetic operated between distinct literary circles, social classes, and political affiliations. All of the authors considered express a shared concern over the condition of the literary sphere to which they contributed and work through their related authorial anxieties in discussions of the book-as-object. Regardless of their literary and social status, they are drawn into an intricate array of self-justifications and disappearing acts from which emerges a highly self-reflexive and persistently anxious portrait of the Romantic author and, by extension, the Romantic selfhood.

Men of Letters and their Romantic Bibliomania

'The bibliomania has never raged more violently than in the present day', wrote Isaac D'Israeli, in 1791, and, certainly, the late eighteenth century was a developmental period in its history.[14] The rise of popular antiquarianism saw an increased interest in the collecting and studying of a variety of artefacts, and particularly the relics of British culture.[15] Bibliomania was a significant facet of this movement. The basic definition of a bibliomaniac is a person compelled to collect huge numbers of books. In the late eighteenth century, when the term was popularised, its definition was more specific. Primarily, it referred to the aristocratic class of book enthusiasts who were interested in collecting examples of early English printed matter: the mainstays of the Roxburghe sale.[16] It was characterised by an interest in antique tomes and, by the 1790s, early English printing in particular. Dibdin's dissertation on the disease – *Bibliomania: or Book madness, a Bibliographical Romance in Six Parts* (1811) – describes a passion for '*Copies Printed upon Vellum*' or '*Books printed in the Black Letter*' as typical of the true sufferer.[17] If 'the bibliomania' had reached unprecedented heights by the 1790s, its 'violence' was set to increase during the first two decades of the nineteenth century, reaching a peak in the 1810s. The phenomenon only really begins to lose momentum with the faltering of the book trade during the 'great slump' of 1826.[18] Its contextual significance to literary examinations of the early nineteenth century is, therefore, unquestionable. As noted above, the bibliomania seized a wide range of authors: from what Lynch terms the 'shabby-genteel minor Romantic[s]' – for instance, Hunt

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[14] Isaac D'Israeli, 'Bibliomania', in *Curiosities of Literature* (New York: William Pearson and Co., 1835), p. 5.

[15] See Marilyn Butler, 'Antiquarianism (Popular)', in *An Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age: British Culture 1776-1832)*, ed. Iain McCalman et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 328-38; Judith Pascoe, *The Hummingbird Cabinet: A Rare and Curious History of Romantic Collectors* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).

[16] See Connell, pp. 25, 27; Ferris, *Romantic Libraries*, (paras. 1, 2).

[17] T. F. Dibdin, *Bibliomania: or Book-Madness, a Bibliographical Romance in Six Parts* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1811), p. 653.

[18] Antique book collecting continues to be popular, but became less culturally prominent after 1830.

or Lamb – to Walter Scott, who admitted to being 'liable to the disease with *all* its usual symptoms' (Mertoun House, 30 December 1810).[19] In literary circles, its influence was felt by the 'Great' and the obscure alike. For the purposes of this introduction, therefore (and within the thesis as a whole), I have expanded the usage of bibliomaniac, using it to refer to all those who were more generally concerned with the way in which books were possessed, produced, reproduced, and inscribed. Romantic bibliomaniacs were not only book collectors in the sense that they compiled libraries: they also helped to establish a literary canon; produced large numbers of miscellanies and anthologies; and assembled their own literary productions in the form of collected works. Collecting books became a way of collecting together the self or, at least, a textual version of the self. Due to the instability of the cultural sphere in this period and of the book-as-object itself, however, the value and meaning of both the book collection and the selfhoods attached to it came under scrutiny.

What this scrutiny tended to uncover was chaos or a form of madness.[20] Indeed, Siskin argues that 'the newly forming category of Literature' had an intrinsically 'special relationship with madness'.[21] Certainly, writing about books often acknowledged the mania at its heart. Descriptions of 'the bibliomania' share a terminology significant for their tendency to pathologise the act of book collecting. Bibliomania is almost always represented, as in the example from Scott, as a 'disease'. Even its classical nomenclature signals its pseudo-medical affinity. Indeed, the term was popularised in a poem of 1809 by a doctor, Dr. John Ferriar, known for

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[19] Lynch, 'Wedded to Books', para. 10; Walter Scott, 'Three Unpublished Letters of Scott to Dibdin', ed. W. Powell Jones, *Huntingdon Library Quarterly*, 3 (1940), 477-484 (p. 482).
[20] The literal translation of the Greek derived 'bibliomania' is 'book-madness'.
[21] Siskin, p. 37. See also, Bernhard Metz, 'Bibliomania and the Folly of Reading', *Comparative Critical Studies*, 5 (2008), 249-69: 'Book love and book madness belong together, and often it is impossible to distinguish between them' (p. 254).

his work on treatments for fever and insanity (*DNB*). Bibliomaniacs and their detractors alike represent it as a psychological aberration or eccentricity. Dibdin's subtitle to *Bibliomania* is, after all, *Book madness*.

This 'book madness' came in as many forms as the bibliophilic writing in which it was expressed. There are, though, a number of shared anxieties, symptoms perhaps, that permeate Romantic period accounts of the excesses of book love. Thomas De Quincey's 'Letters to a Young Man Whose Education has Been Neglected' (1823) includes a representative example, one which resonates with numerous contemporary portrayals of the disease:

> All this, you will say, was, by my own admission "madness." Madness, I grant; but such a madness! not as lunatics suffer; no hallucination of the brain; but a madness like that of misers,—the usurpation and despotism of one feeling, natural in itself, but travelling into an excess, which at last upset all which should have balanced it. And I must assert that, with allowance for difference of degrees, no madness is more common. Many of those who give themselves up to the study of languages do so under the same disease which I have described; and, if they do not carry it on to the same extremity of wretchedness, it is because they are not so logical, and so consistent in their madness, as I was.
>
> Under our present enormous accumulation of books, I do affirm that a miserable distraction of choice (which is the germ of such a madness) must be very generally incident to the times; that the symptoms of it are, in fact, very prevalent; and that one of the chief symptoms is an enormous "gluttonism" for books.
>
> (*WDQ*, III, 65)

Where a madness such 'as lunatics suffer' might refer to a disordered intellect, this 'logical' madness is 'no hallucination of the brain'. It instead confirms how 'logical' and 'consistent' De Quincey's thought processes are. He may be mad, but his madness attests to his learning and intelligence. There is a perverse 'logic' to the bibliophile's 'disease'. The book-mad often seek the opposite of disorder. What could be more 'logical' or 'natural' than a desire to bring the expansive chaos of printed matter to order? Bibliomania involves a need to organise knowledge, to sort out 'our present enormous accumulation of books' by cataloguing and collecting them. Hence, the bibliographic works of writers such as Dibdin are compendious: condensed versions of the book lover's definitive library. The chapter headings of *Bibliomania*, for instance, recall the spaces in which the bibliomaniac might store his volumes: 'The Cabinet', 'The Library', 'The Drawing Room'. These are books that contain books in an attempt to manage the growth of textual production.

In the above example, books are both the cause and the symptom of De Quincey's madness. It is not merely 'an enormous "gluttonism" for books' that is mad, but their 'enormous accumulation' more generally. The 'miserable distraction of choice' that is 'generally incident to the times' sows the seeds of insanity in an otherwise rational mind. De Quincey is particularly keen to stress the 'general incidence' of his madness: how 'common' or 'prevalent' it is. His time, he argues, is one uniquely oppressed by the 'accumulation of books', a problem that is only liable to get worse. The 'Letters' certainly support Piper's claim that 'Romanticism is what happens when there are suddenly a great deal more books to read, when indeed there are *too many* books to read'.[22] Other critics, however, have complicated the

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[22] Piper, p. 12.

argument that the Romantic period, specifically, saw an unprecedented increase in the production and circulation of printed matter. Unquestionably, the eighteenth century saw more books published than ever before. As James Raven has shown, though, the steep increase in the numbers of separate items being published during the latter part of the century and into the beginning of the next is part of a complex wider narrative of print circulation. Indeed, the mass production of literature is, technologically speaking, really a phenomenon of the Victorian age.[23] The notion of one era, therefore, as unique in being concerned by the influx of printed matter can be overstated.[24] David McKitterick summarises attitudes to printing throughout the centuries as moving from wonder (in the fifteenth and early-sixteenth centuries), to anxiety over the increasing number of publications (mid-sixteenth to seventeenth centuries), to antiquarianism and technological interest (eighteenth century), culminating in the commercialism of the early nineteenth century. Of course, this is a vastly simplified account, as McKitterick readily admits.[25] What it makes clear, however, is that, by the time De Quincey was writing in the 1820s, book gluttonism had a long and substantial history. The book-fool is satirised in Sebastian Brant's *Ship of Fools*, for example, as early as 1494; while in the late sixteenth century, William Webbe complains of the 'innumerable sorts of English Bookes, and infinite fardles of printed pamphlets, wherewith this Country is pestered, all shopps stuffed, and every study furnished'.[26] More recently, from De Quincey's point of view, commentators such as Vicesimus Knox, Samuel Johnson, and William Johnston

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[23] See James Raven, *The Business of Books: Booksellers and the English Book Trade 1450-1850* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 7-10, 320-22.
[24] 'The complaint over too many books and too little time is as old as the history of the written book or even the book-scroll': Metz, p. 249.
[25] David McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order, 1450-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 8-9.
[26] Sebastian Brant, *The Ship of Fools* (New York: Dover Publications, 1962); William Webbe, *A Discourse of English Poetrie* (1586), in *Elizabethan Critical Essays, ed.* G. Gregory Smith, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1904), I, 226.

Temple had noted that 'one of the peculiarities which distinguish the present age, is the multiplication of books'.[27] Knox, in particular, prefigures De Quincey when describing his interest 'in the consequences resulting from the mechanical mode of multiplying the copies of books'. It has resulted, he says, in 'a tincture of letters, which was once rare and formed a shining character, […] pervade[ing] the mass of the people'.[28] Again, bookishness has spread through the population like a disease, transforming what once was 'shining' into something common. Cure and disease are connected, even one and the same. The 'tincture of letters', that might be supposed to do good, when used too frequently, can become distasteful.

The issues raised in the 'Letters', therefore, are not new. De Quincey (to quote Keen) sees his 'determination to subject the rage for books to the disciplinary rigour of a science folded back into the irrationality which it figured itself against'.[29] Keen's subjects may have been writing during the latter part of the eighteenth century, but evidently the 'rage for books' had not exhausted itself by 1823, nor had its attendant madness been cured. According to Dibdin, this did not occur until the 'bibliophobia' hit in the 1830s.[30] Leah Price's *How to do Things with Books in Victorian Britain* (2012) provides another date for consideration. She reads a prevailing 'antibookishness' in literature and criticism approximately dating from the mid nineteenth century. At this point, she argues, the opinion of the book as

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[27] Samuel Johnson, 'No. LXXXV. Saturday, Dec. 1, 1759', in *The Idler*, 2 vols (London: J. Parsons, 1793), II, 93-95 (p. 93); William Johnston Temple, 'Whether the Multiplicity of Books and Increase of Knowledge, be favourable to Piety and Love of Public Good', in *Moral and Historical Memoirs* (London: Edward and Charles Dilly, 1779), pp. 175-192; Vicesimus Knox, 'On the Multiplication of Books', in *Essays Moral and Literary*, 2 Vols (London: Charles Dilly, 1782), I, 226-228.

[28] Vicesimus Knox, 'On the Moral, Political, and Religious Effects of Printing, with Concluding Remarks', in *Essays Moral and Literary*, 2 Vols (London: Charles Dilly, 1782), II, 220-227 (pp. 220-221).

[29] Paul Keen, *Literature, Commerce, and the Spectacle of Modernity, 1750-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 90.

[30] Dibdin, *Bibliophobia: Remarks on the Present Languid and Depressed State of Literature and the Book Trade* (London: Henry Bohn, 1832).

subordinate to the text was fully established.[31] Of course, the notion that the value of

the text should outweigh the value of the book was not new either. Bibliomania's

critics had argued as much since the eighteenth century. Despite these concurrences,

there is yet a '"gluttonism" for books' which is 'very generally incident' to De

Quincey's time. As McKitterick argues, 'time-worn complaints, at an overwhelming

mass of writing, in which choice was difficult, when the poor, the shoddy and the

immoral were granted status equal to the best in writing, content or morals, were

given a new edge in the eighteenth century' and, I would argue, in the early part of

the nineteenth.[32]

At this time, a number of factors combined to produce a particular book

madness within the literary populace distinct from its earlier and later counterparts.[33]

Much of this had to do with the professionalisation of authorship, the resultant

commodification of the book, and the 'cult of "the author" as a knowable and

reverend figure' which, according to Keen, 'only compounded real authors'

problems'.[34] During the second half of the eighteenth and the first half the nineteenth

century a shift took place in perceptions of what it was to be an author. This was

partly the result of changes to copyright law. Most critical accounts of the rise of the

author or the progress of literary culture during the eighteenth century reference the

Donaldson vs. Becket case of 1774, which upheld the invalidation of perpetual

copyright that had been introduced in the Statute of Anne in 1710.[35] The court's

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[31] Price is not suggesting that the materiality of books was no longer a consideration after this date or that anti-bookishness suddenly appeared in the 1850s. Instead she attempts to counteract the myth she sees arising in this period that 'textuality' was the only 'source of interiority, authenticity, and selfhood': *How to Do Things with Books in Victorian Britain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), p. 16.

[32] McKitterick, p. 205.

[33] The spectre of the French Revolution and narratives of print culture's radicalisation in the period following 1789, of course, also loom, but I will not be discussing them here.

[34] Keen, p. 144.

[35] See Ronald Deazley, *On the Origin of the Right to Copy: Charting the Movement of Copyright Law in Eighteenth-Century Britain (1695-1775)* (Portland: Hart Publishing, 2004); Robert J. Griffin,

decision led to a more competitive publishing market and was supposed to have granted authors a greater degree of personal control over their intellectual property. Though this argument has been challenged in recent years, the period nonetheless saw a normalisation of the concept of writing for remunerative gain.[36] Writing became a product and authorship became a job. Of course, this transition was not smooth. Debates over the relative respectability of amateur authorship – namely writing in one's spare time – versus professional authorship – writing for subsistence, or making writing one's sole occupation – continued well into the 1800s. Siskin's research indicates that the number of people in Britain describing themselves as professional authors increased thirty-fold over the course of the nineteenth century, but this increase happens after 1830, broadly speaking during the Victorian era.[37] Even if, as Keen argues, 'the debate about the legitimacy of professional authorship (as opposed to the more genteel model of the amateur man of letters) had largely been won' by the end of the eighteenth century, answers to the question of 'what literary professionalism *meant*: what forms of writing for money were acceptable and even laudable as opposed to the widely reviled' remained uncertain.[38]

This resulted in an increased urgency in the evaluation of literary worth. Within a competitive literary field, authors were being asked to prove their bookish credentials, their creative and imaginative heritage. Were they writing with a respectable and higher purpose in mind, or were they writing merely for money?

'Anonymity and Authorship', *New Literary History*, 30 (1999), 877-895; Mark Rose, *Authors and Owners: The Invention of Copyright* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993); Barton Swaim, *Scottish Men of Letters and the New Public Sphere, 1802-1834* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2009), p. 110.

[36] Raven, pp. 230-238; Siskin, pp. 109-11.

[37] Siskin, p. 108. See also, Richard Salmon, *The Formation of the Victorian Literary Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 6.

[38] Keen, p. 5.

Were their productions to be 'reviled' as populist trash or were they the literary equivalent of the Valdarfer Boccaccio: original, prestigious, and profitable? The Romantic republic of letters was a Bourdieuvian cultural arena: the 'site of struggles in which what is at stake is the power to impose the dominant definition of the writer and therefore to delimit the population of those entitled to take part in the struggle to define the writer'.[39] The authors in this study each put forward their own definitions of authorship, definitions which are in constant competition with one another. Within their works, the book operates as a form of cultural currency, the symbolic value of which is often at odds with its economic value. Considering how books are traded between readers and writers, readers and other readers, writers and other writers reveals the ways in which authors were involved in 'the production of the value of [their own] work' and the valorisation of their personal version of authorship.[40] As in Bourdieu's configuration of the relationship between poets and composers, or painters and the *littérateur*, these writers aim to use books 'without being used, to possess without being possessed'.[41]

Within this competitive and critical atmosphere a type of bookishness prevailed that was particularly masculine and possessive. It was of the kind that Price identifies as being 'associated with men' because it was 'rare and therefore prestigious': concurrent, in Jon Klancher's words, with attempts on the part of 'conservative and radical critics alike' to 'keep the republic of letters masculine'.[42] The rise of the novel and of female authorship during the eighteenth century saw various forms of literary endeavour increasingly, and pejoratively, classified

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[39] Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, ed. Randal Johnson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), p. 42.
[40] Bourdieu, p. 37.
[41] Bourdieu, p. 47.
[42] Price, p. 57; Jon Klancher, 'The Vocation of Criticism and the Crisis of the Republic of Letters', in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, ed. Marshal Brown, 9 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), v, 296-320 (p. 314).

feminine; the authors considered in this study engage with a form of bookishness that distinguishes them as learned, masculine, and autonomous. This is not to characterise their bibliophilia as, in itself, aggressively male, but to suggest that it was particularly characteristic of male authors in the period. This may be due to the fact that – not needing to justify their authorial capacity on the grounds of gender – a greater onus was placed on proving that they were erudite and well-read. Of course, female bibliomaniacs and bibliophiliacs existed. Lynch, for instance, has shown how Gothic novels, often authored by women, were, though 'scarcely canonical themselves, […] among the period's chief exemplars of canon-love'.[43] That is to say, female authors, as much as their male counterparts, co-opted the book-as-object in support of their literary authority. Yet, as Siskin argues of the literary arena in general, the bookishness charted in this thesis was still marked by its exclusion of female readers and writers and by a troubled conception of literary masculinity.[44] According to John Whale, male writers could feel the need to compensate for the 'inherent femininity' of the 'realm of letters'.[45] Stereotypical bibliomaniacal society, too, according to Michael Robinson, can be 'identified with a homosocial subculture organized around a stereotypically non-procreative (and, indeed, uncannily camp) cultural practice'.[46] In the writing considered in this study, masculine overcompensation manifests variously as the implicit threat of sexual violence; a feminisation of the book-object and its modes of reproduction, accompanied by the simultaneous masculinisation of literary endeavour; and writers' concern with establishing a pure, patrilineal bloodline for their authorship.

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[43] Lynch, 'Gothic Libraries and National Subjects', p. 31.

[44] Siskin, p. 2.

[45] John Whale, 'De Quincey and Men (of Letters)', in *Thomas De Quincey: New Theoretical and Critical Directions*, ed. Robert Morrison and Daniel Sanjiv Roberts (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 81-98 (p. 94).

[46] Michael Robinson, 'Ornamental Gentlemen: Thomas F. Dibdin, Romantic Bibliomania, and Romantic Sexualities', *European Romantic Review*, 22 (October 2011), 685-706 (p. 689).

In 'My Books' (1823), for example, Leigh Hunt attempts to counter the view that scholarship 'unfits a man for activity'. While justifying the large amount of time spent immured in his book room, he remarks 'if all this is too luxurious and effeminate, of all luxuries it is the one that leaves you the most strength'.[47] The work of reading and writing is reconfigured as an alternative form of 'strengthening', masculine action. The republic of letters and its constituents were also frequently discussed in martial and combative terms. Dibdin refers to bibliomaniacs as 'book-warriors', 'book-champions', 'book-knights', and 'heroes who fought in the book-fight'.[48] In a related fashion, Hazlitt's 'On the Conversation of Lords' (1826) figures the literary arena as both tilting field – in which aristocratic authors 'arm [...] themselves [...] with the shining panoply of science and letters' – and boxing ring: 'young gentlemen make *very pretty sparrers*, but are not the "ugliest customers" when they take off the gloves'.[49] Various issues are at stake in these examples. Dibdin's 'book-knights' are characteristic of the bibliomaniac's preference for old English romance texts and the contrast between the lists and pugilism in Hazlitt's essay illustrates the differences between patrician and professional authorship, but they all speak to a more general unease over the possible 'effeminacy' of literature. These authors' combative, masculinised discourse is suggestive of their insecurity over their position within the republic of letters.

It is for this reason, too, that the designation 'men of letters' is so appropriate to the authors considered in this study. Not only do they frequently find themselves caught between the 'station' of 'authors and readers' as described by D'Israeli, but

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[47] 'My Books' (1823), in *The Selected Writings of Leigh Hunt*, ed. Robert Morrison and Michael Eberle-Sinatra, 6 vols (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2003), III, 23-37 (p. 25).

[48] T. F. Dibdin, *Bibliomania*, p. 36; *Reminiscences of a Literary Life*, 2 vols (London: John Major, 1836), I, 345, 357, 361.

[49] William Hazlitt, 'On the Conversation of Lords', in *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. P. P. Howe, 21 vols (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1932), XVII, 162-175 (pp. 168, 169).

the degree to which literature was represented as effeminate in the period renders the overt maleness of the designation – *man* of letters – both a foil to and expression of their anxiety over the compatibility of masculinity and authorial endeavour. Though by 1822, D'Israeli argues that the man of letters 'can only be distinguished by this simple circumstance, that [he] is not an author' (p. 203), numerous other writers of the period use both designations interchangeably. 'Men of letters' appear in the titles of numerous journal articles and periodical features, biographies, and histories, and can refer not only to authors, but also scholars, intellectuals, and critics. Indeed, in current criticism, the term is either employed and not interrogated, or used primarily in reference to critics and reviewers associated with the periodical press. As Marianne Egeland notes, it is 'one of those terms we often encounter but rarely question'.[50] John Gross's formative text, *The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters* (1969), is a key proponent of the notion that men of letters and periodical writers are synonymous figures. His study examines writers such as Francis Jeffrey or William Gifford: periodical editors and contributors. More contemporary scholarship, for instance Barton Swaim's *Scottish Men of Letters*, also focuses its attention on critics and reviewers. As much as Romantic men of letters were often involved with periodicals and concerned by similar issues, nineteenth-century discussions do not necessarily connect the two. A man of letters is not exclusively a critic. According to Jon Klancher, by the early nineteenth century he 'had been absorbed into the new category of Romantic authorship'. Connell agrees that his 'authorial persona' was essentially 'ambivalent'. In his formulation, the man of letters:

> represented a leisured, genteel, yet incipiently professionalized set of
>
> scholarly and social values. He thus succinctly embodied the delicately

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[50] Egeland, p. 41.

balanced socioeconomic affiliations of a cultural field which, accessible

to increasing numbers of the middle classes, also relied upon a measured

symbolic identification with aristocratic values and an affected disdain

for the more "vulgar" commercial imperatives of Grub Street.[51]

Like Connell, I consider the man of letters as 'embodying' a number of issues extant in the early nineteenth-century literary sphere. As a sub-category of author, or a role synonymous with authorship, his indeterminate condition is representative. While I would query the extent to which various authors, who can be appropriately termed men of letters, were attached to 'aristocratic values' – for instance, William Hazlitt – I agree that many trod an uneasy path between a related set of symbolic values and their 'middle class' or, alternatively, professional status. Men of letters were involved in the processes of cultural evaluation that could sometimes see their own publications termed 'vulgar'. In contrast to D'Israeli's statement, many who self-identified as men of letters were also authors, but authors who were acutely aware of the issues involved in occupying the 'intermediary station' he describes and, in particular, of existing between 'authors and readers'. The defining characteristic of the man of letters is, in fact, his connection to the book-as-object. Above all else he is a 'busied inhabitant of the library surrounded by the objects of his love! He possesses them—and they possess him!' (*The Literary Character*, p. 205). Like each of the authors considered in this study, his bibliophilia helps to define him. The man of letter's 'intermediate station' mirrors the indeterminacy of the book, its status as a simultaneously material and immaterial object. Being caught between the roles of 'reader and author' he is particularly sensitive to the manner that the book-as-object destabilises authorial status as well as supports it.

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[51] Klancher, p. 315; Connell, pp. 37-38.

Books are certainly fickle friends in William Hazlitt's essay 'On the Literary Character' (1817). The article provides an extended account of the 'character which every man of letters has' and the resultant 'weaknesses and vices that arise from constant intercourse with books'. In his estimation:

> The defects of the literary character proceed, not from frivolity and voluptuous indolence, but from the overstrained exertion of the faculties, from abstraction and refinement […] It is the province of literature to anticipate the dissipation of real objects, and to increase it. It creates a fictitious restlessness and craving after variety, by creating a fictitious world around us, and by hurrying us, not only through all the mimic scene of life, but by plunging us into the endless labyrinths of imagination.
>
> (*CWWH*, XII, 132-33)

Where D'Israeli argues that men of letters 'found in books an occupation congenial to their sentiments; labour without fatigue; repose with activity; an employment, interrupted without inconvenience, and exhaustless without satiety' ('An Essay on the Literary Character', pp. 14-15), Hazlitt sees rather 'dissipation', 'restlessness', and ultimately despair. 'The life of a mere man of letters and sentiment,' he goes on to argue:

> appears to be at best but a living death; a dim twilight of existence: a sort of wandering about in an Elysian fields of our own making; a refined, spiritual, disembodied state, like that of the ghosts of Homer's heroes, who, we are told, would gladly have exchanged situations with the meanest peasant upon the earth.
>
> (*CWWH*, XII, 135)

The 'Literary Character' is undone: 'dissipation' and 'disparity' being among the former passage's key terms. In contrast to his statement in 'On Reading Old Books' (1821), that books 'bind together the different scattered divisions of our personal identity', here they are a 'scattering' force (*CWWH*, XII, 221). The man of letters' mind is 'abstracted' to the point of disintegration. He suffers not only from ennui, resulting from the 'dissipation of real objects' – reality's failure to match up to the majesty of literature – but his own mind is equally 'dissipated'. For Hazlitt, this results in feelings of impotency and powerlessness. His 'Literary Character' is without agency; instead, literature itself is the actor. It 'hurries' and 'plunges' its hapless followers onward into the world of the imagination and, most significantly, it 'creates' where the 'dissipated' writer cannot. The domination of Hazlitt's man of letters by the literature he devotes himself to reflects the manner in which books can 'possess' their readers as much as their readers 'possess' them. He describes a state not unlike that presented in De Quincey's 'Letters to a Young Man'. In each instance the 'glutton of books' traverses the labyrinthine 'province of literature' and gets lost within it. Ultimately, he is forced into a withdrawal from 'the scenes of real life' (*CWWH*, XII, 133). The punishment for feeling too much, for being a man of 'sentiment' as well as of 'letters', is to be 'plunged' into a state in which one can feel nothing but a 'general indifference'. In a typically wounded Hazlittian conceit, books are seen to betray their warmest advocates, to condemn them to 'a living death'.

While D'Israeli considers the 'occupation found in books' beneficial to the man of letters' temperament, for Hazlitt this kind of 'occupation' is clearly destructive. Despite such divergences, both descriptions position their 'literary characters' in the in-betweens of literature and experience. In fact, their disagreement as to the benefits of an authorial or scholarly career could be said to

stem precisely from their mutual recognition of the occupational instability attached to the man of letters. D'Israeli's representation of literary exertion combines a number of oppositional states: 'repose' and 'activity'; 'exhaustlessness' and 'satiety'. The variation in his daily activities is a source of pleasure, keeping him stimulated, but not over-stimulated. Hazlitt deals more cynically with the writer's experience of negotiating these seemingly incompatible states. Rather than finding both 'activity' and 'repose', he finds neither: he is never 'satiated', only 'restless'. Dispossessed, he 'wander[s] about' in an attempt to find a destination or a truth that, Hazlitt suggests, does not exist. He is positioned, not just between the 'situation of authors and readers', but between a mental and a physical reality, possessing a dual vision in which his daily existence is overlaid with an illusory landscape. He is a true 'man of letters': a 'refined' 'abstraction' living between the textual and the actual who, like Homer's ghosts, cannot find 'repose'. In line with such representations, the 'Literary Character' described in this thesis is a character at odds with itself, existing at the borders of literature and, in some cases, society, too.

My chapters consider this concept from a variety of perspectives and across a range of authors and literary genres. Chapter 1 examines the spaces of book collection. Dibdin's and Hunt's discussions of their own and others' libraries reveal the unique pressures of book collecting and what its urges might signify beyond a mere passion for literature. What does it mean to stamp your *ex libris* on a volume? Their collecting habits reflected these writers' uncertainty over their authorial status. Both desperately sought to position themselves within the literary arena by positioning their authorial identities firmly within the library. By comparing their autobiographical works in light of this shared tendency, I expose the ways in which Roxburghe Club bibliomania could mirror the world of the poetic Fancy and, thus,

the pervasiveness and variety of the book madness this thesis describes. In Chapter 2, the book-object's role as a form of cultural currency is perhaps most obvious, as I examine the lending and borrowing practices of Charles Lamb, Thomas De Quincey, and S. T. Coleridge. Here, a consideration of the practicalities of giving or lending books to another writer illuminates issues of influence and audience. When exchanging the symbolic objects of their trade with Coleridge, De Quincey and Lamb find their own literary status destabilised or deformed by the instability of Coleridge's authorial persona as it was publicly fashioned. Lending becomes loss as the author disappears into the 'indeterminate' hinterland of the margins of inscribed books, displaced by the transitional process of book exchange.

Where writing one's name on a lent book is the subject of discussion in Chapter 2, appending one's signature or designation to a published work is the concern of Chapter 3. It moves on from previous chapters in its concern with public forms of book exchange and book ownership: interrogating the processes of publication in more detail. It also differs in its focus on fiction: namely, the novels of James Hogg and Walter Scott. Central to its analysis, is a consideration of the symbolism and connotations of the author's signature as a public signifier of identity. In an age in which authorial celebrity was at its height and (particularly in Scotland) periodical writers reviewed personalities as much as books, both attempted to write novels in which the author's signature led not to an actual personage, but merely another text. The problematics of naming, and being named, resurface in my final chapter, which concentrates on the autobiographical writings of Thomas De Quincey. Along with the subjects of the previous chapter, De Quincey is troubled by the access to the authorial body granted by publication. As such, his autobiographical style is inflected by his desire to direct readers' responses to his work. He constantly

asserts his role as the sole, authoritative interpreter of his texts and of the autobiographical persona they construct. Ultimately, though, his attempts at regulation are abortive. What his works, in fact, reveal is a self prone to multiplication and internal fracture, destabilised by the very texts that appear designed to contain it. For Scott and Hogg, multiplication and fracture are the intended consequences of blurring the subject/object boundary between book and author. For De Quincey, they are the unavoidable consequences of self-reflection.

De Quincey, in his role as bibliomaniac, Roxburghe Sale attendee, book lender, metaphysician, periodical contributor, and pseudonymous author, who often operated at the peripheries of established literary culture, comes to embody, in extreme, this thesis' central themes. My concluding discussion of his works shows how an examination of the bookish author can have implications for wider critical discussions of the Romantic self: its textuality and intertextuality; its multiplicity; its combination of the material and the ideational; in short, its bookishness. This study describes the various ways authors chose to possess and write their names on their books. Whether as a means of protecting the authorial body from the gaze of the public; justifying their literary credentials; or courting immortality by enshrining the self in book form, their bibliophilia expressed their search for their authorial identities. Like the book hunters who flocked to the Roxburghe Sale in 1812, desperate to complete their bibliographical collections, authors writing in the early nineteenth century rummaged the cultural symbolism of the book in an attempt to complete their sense of authorial selfhood. But the book did not only function as a cypher for their authorship, it enabled them to think about the processes of creativity and thought, and the way we, each of us, choose to define our identity.

Chapter 1

Writing from the Book room: Thomas Frognall Dibdin's Bibliomania and

Leigh Hunt's Book Fancy

The representation of bibliomania as a form of madness has led various critics to

comment on the psychological aspects of what, in other respects, is a cultural and

social phenomenon.[1] Paul Keen, in particular, is sensitive to the contradictory

representation of books as both the cure and cause of madness in the mania-obsessed

climate of the late eighteenth century. The frequency and readiness with which

sufferers from the bibliomaniacal 'disease' self-pathologise their condition is also, I

would argue, significant. It can be related to the relationship between bibliomaniacal

drives and authorial ambition. This chapter builds on work already done in this area,

by further exploring bibliomania's role in, to quote Jon Klancher, general 'attempts

to come to grips with the nature, history, and materiality of the book in the early

nineteenth century': specifically, the bibliophilic author's 'attempt to come to grips'

with the symbolic objects of his trade by connecting up the issue of bibliomaniacal

obsession with the struggle for authorial identity and autonomy in the period.[2]

Dibdin's bibliophilia is as much an expression of his desire to be considered an

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[1] See Ina Ferris, 'Bibliographic Romance: Bibliophilia and the Book-Object', in *Romantic Libraries* (College Park: University of Maryland Press, 2004) <http://www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/libraries/ferris/ferris.html> [accessed 20 October 2010] and 'Book Fancy: Bibliomania and the Literary Word', in *The Keats-Shelley Journal*, 58 (2009), 33-52; Deidre Lynch, '"Wedded to Books": Bibliomania and the Romantic Essayists', in *Romantic Libraries* <http://www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/libraries/lynch/lynch.html>; Josephine McDonagh, 'De Quincey and the Secret Life of Books', in *Thomas De Quincey: New Theoretical and Critical Directions*, ed. Robert Morrison and Daniel Sanjiv Roberts (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 123-42; Andrew Piper, *Dreaming in Books: The Making of the Bibliographic Imagination in the Romantic Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); and Paul Keen, *Literature, Commerce, and the Spectacle of Modernity, 1750-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), Chapter 3.

[2] Jon Klancher, 'Wild Bibliography: The Rise and Fall of Book History in Nineteenth-Century Britain', in *Bookish Histories: Books, Literature, and Commercial Modernity 1700-1900*, ed. Ina Ferris and Paul Keen (New York: Palgrave, 2009), pp. 19-40 (p. 20).

author as it is an expression of his love for books. The complexity of that expression should not be ignored just because it is buried under copious bibliographical footnotes. Equally, the 'cheerful sociality' with which Hunt's work has been commonly associated can belie its difficulty. His cheerful demeanour conceals deep-seated authorial anxieties.[3] Ultimately, I argue, Romantic bibliomania was as much a mania for achieving self-possession as it was for possessing curious books.

The bibliomaniac tends to self-diagnose his complaint with a view to presenting a specific image of himself as scholarly and authoritative. He does not deny the sometimes problematic nature of his disease (usually in relation to its detrimental effect on his financial situation), but clings with pride to this psychological abnormality.[4] Why this might be the case, and how literary identity might be served or undermined by this 'maniacal' connection, are questions this chapter aims to answer. Two contrasting bibliophiles will be examined in turn: Thomas Frognall Dibdin, the epitome of the Romantic bibliomaniac; and Leigh Hunt, a less antiquarian, though not less passionate, bibliophile. Considering their work in tandem reveals parallels in their thought processes that shed light on not only on 'the bibliomania', but a number of Romantic concerns previously unallied with the phenomenon, such as the poetics of the Fancy.[5] The ways in which Dibdin and Hunt define themselves through the lens of bibliophilia shows how the essentially conservative world of a Roxburghe club bibliomaniac and the reformist world of the Hunt-circle could mirror one another. The precarious nature of these writers' declarations of authorial identity is revealed by my alignment of bibliomania

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[3] 'Cheerful sociality' is Jeffrey Cox's term: 'Leigh Hunt's *Foliage*: a Cockney Manifesto', in *Leigh Hunt: Life, Poetics, Politics*, ed. Nicholas Roe (New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 58-77 (p. 67).
[4] Ferris, too, notes the odd performativity of the 'Regency Book Dandy' who 'presents himself as a consciously stylized character': 'Book Fancy: Bibliomania and the Literary Word', p. 39.
[5] Ferris makes the link between the idea of the Fancy and Dibdin's bibliomania in 'Book Fancy'. However, the specific crossover between conceptions of the Fancy in general and the bibliophilic works of both Dibdin and the Hunt-circle can be drawn out even further.

and the Fancy. Both Hunt and Dibdin were anxious to define the status and role of

the man of letters, or bookman, within literary culture. Both were keen to emphasise

the uniqueness, or eccentricity, of their own authorial endeavours. Their construction

of themselves as pathological book lovers allowed them to achieve this. Perhaps

more than any of the other authors to appear in this study, however, the book

collector finds himself problematically caught between the 'station of authors and

readers'.[6] The bookish spaces examined in this chapter are paradigmatic of the

'intermediary' social and cultural position of a minor author in the early nineteenth

century. In his library, book room, or study, the bookman inhabits a liminal space

situated at the border of actuality and illusion. His occupation of this space

highlights the difficulties involved in negotiating the boundaries of writing or

collecting as a fanciful pursuit and as a professional or scholarly labour.

This is not to say that Dibdin's and Hunt's individual brands of bibliophilia

are exactly concurrent. Both authors were present at the Roxburghe sale; however,

their experiences of the auction would have been vastly different. Unlike Dibdin,

Hunt was not associated with figures such as Lord Spencer, the Marquis of

Blandford, or Richard Heber, who dominated the bidding. These were bibliomaniacs

extraordinaire, aristocratic (or at least very wealthy), preoccupied with early printed

books, blackletter type, and unwieldy large paper copies; they were obsessed by

completing (as far as this was ever possible for the book mad) their extensive,

private collections of obscure editions and antique pamphlets. Nor could Hunt have

hoped to purchase many of the rare volumes they fought over. (Neither could

Dibdin, but as a member of their coterie he purchased vicariously through them.)

Rather, William Carew Hazlitt suggests that Hunt went to the sale 'just for the sake

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[6] Isaac D'Israeli, *The Literary Character, Illustrated by the History of Men of Genius Drawn from their Own Feelings and Confessions*, 3rd edn, 2 vols (London: John Murray, 1822), II, 204.

of gaining an idea of what such an event was'.[7] He is a marginal figure: too insignificant to have been included pseudonymously in any of Dibdin's descriptions of it, which only mention the great and the good of literary, bookselling, and collecting circles. W. C. Hazlitt's description suggests that Hunt's relative incognito did not trouble him, though. His position seems to have been one of journalistic curiosity mingled with a faint contempt for the aristocrats that dominated proceedings. 'I have ever been a "glutton of books"', Hunt states in his autobiography, but his method of book buying was very different from that of the noble Roxburghe set.[8] The second-hand book stall was his domain. 'I could live very well, for the rest of my life, in a lodging above one of the bookseller's shops on the Quai de Voltaire' (*ALH*, II, 191), he says, where texts were sold for sixpence or less, rather than thousands of pounds. The large sums paid for copies of works notable for their material quirks (unusual typography and woodcuts, for instance) and not the worth of their intellectual contents sits uncomfortably with Hunt's reformist belief in the democratisation of culture. He would rather see Petrarch as 'the God of Bibliomaniacs, for he was a collector and a man of genius, which is an [*sic*] union that does not often happen'. In his opinion, modern bibliomaniacs lack that 'genius' which distinguishes the true 'lover of books' from the mere book collector.[9]

Perhaps this is why, though an admitted 'book-glutton', Hunt does not characterise himself as a bibliomaniac *per se*. The connotations of the term precluded his identification with it. For one, it was primarily associated with Dibdin and his aristocratic circle. It was also thought to denote an excessive preoccupation with the material, as opposed to the intellectual, qualities of books. The bibliomaniac

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[7] W. C. Hazlitt, *The Book Collector* (London: John Grant, 1904), p. 39.

[8] Leigh Hunt, *The Autobiography of Leigh Hunt: With Reminiscences of Friends and Contemporaries, and with Thornton Hunt's Introduction and Postscript*, 2 vols (London: Constable, 1903), I, 155.

[9] 'My Books' (1823), in *The Selected Writings of Leigh Hunt*, ed. Robert Morrison and Michael Eberle-Sinatra, 6 vols (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2003), III, 23-37 (p. 32).

was repeatedly characterised as a 'Book-Fool', who 'of splendid books [owns] no

end,' yet 'few that [he] can comprehend'.[10] Bibliomaniacs of Dibdin's stamp were

aware of these criticisms and often joined in with them: a wood cut of the 'Book-

Fool' from Brant's *Ship of Fools* provides the frontispiece to the original

Bibliomania of 1809. What allowed them to do so was an abiding conviction in the

scholarly import of bibliography, the intellectual brother of bibliomania. I would

query Bernhard Metz's suggestion that 'the bibliomaniac is the counterpart of the

scholar; […] the oppressed and excluded other of scholarship', at least as far as

Romantic bibliomaniacs, such as Dibdin, viewed their own endeavours.[11] Their

willingness to be identified as 'bibliomaniacs' may have something to do with the

Greek, and hence scholarly, etymology of the term. These were not merely book-

mad fools, but classically educated antiquarians and, thus, more likely to come from

an elevated social sphere. If their collective title was coined in jest they could

embrace it precisely because they were educated enough to get the joke. Yes, their

fervour and dogged pursuit of obscure individual volumes was eccentric, perhaps

'maniacal', but their private libraries provided important resources for the nation's

bibliographers and other respectable, educated gentlemen.[12]

Dibdin spent years of his life cataloguing the Spencer collections at Althorp

and in London and was often praised for his endeavours; even in the twentieth

century his contribution to bibliography has been acknowledged.[13] These projects

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[10] Sebastian Brant, *The Ship of Fools* (New York: Dover Publications, 1962), p. 62.

[11] Metz, Bernhard, 'Bibliomania and the Folly of Reading', *Comparative Critical Studies*, 5 (2008), 249-69 (pp. 249-50).

[12] 'The bibliomania symbolized an attempt to promote the participation of distinctly aristocratic cultural practices within a broader emergent idea of the literary past as a collective national heritage': Philip Connell, 'Bibliomania: Book Collecting, Cultural Politics, and the Rise of Literary Heritage in Romantic Britain,' *Representations*, 71 (2000), p. 28.

[13] G. Thomas Tanselle, *Bibliographical Analysis: A Historical Introduction* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009), pp. 9, 11. A reviewer in *The Gentleman's Magazine* calls the *Bibliotheca Spenceriana* a 'splendid performance': 'Bibliotheca Spenceriana', *The Gentleman's Magazine: and Historical Chronicle* (1815), 246-48 (p. 248).

resonated with wider cultural concerns over the organisation, character, and preservation of national heritage and identity.[14] Even critics of 'the bibliomania' were open to the possibility of its scholarly significance. In his essay on 'Bibliomania', D'Israeli describes the condition as that of 'collecting an enormous heap of books without intelligent curiosity'.[15] His terms suggest disorder and waste: a rubbish 'heap' with little intrinsic value, the size of which only serves to compound the foolishness of a collection without limit or discretion. Such 'collections' represent a physical mass of literature, whose compilers seem unconcerned with the intellectual, or 'intelligent', value of the written word. However, this reductive definition ignores the ambivalence of D'Israeli's, and other commentators', engagement with book collecting and bibliography. In many respects bibliomaniacs were also engaged in an on-going discussion over what constituted a collection compiled with 'intelligent curiosity'. Their preoccupation with the material qualities of books and projects of categorisation in fact aligns them with the mid-eighteenth-century fervour for classification, particularly of the natural world, propounded by taxonomists such as Linnaeus and Georges Cuvier. It would be difficult to describe these figures as 'collecting' without 'intelligent curiosity'. Indeed in a letter to Dibdin, D'Israeli remarks that the former's *Library Companion* (a book that was often the butt of bibliomaniacal jibes) 'teem[s] with information, and all curious book-men in the country must surely buy [it]'.[16] Here 'book-men' do seem 'intelligently curious', or are at least being taught how to be. This is a book

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[14] See also, Barbara M. Benedict, 'Reading Collections: The Literary Discourse of Eighteenth-Century Libraries', in *Bookish Histories*, pp. 169-195.

[15] Isaac D'Israeli, 'Bibliomania', in *Curiosities of Literature* (New York: William Pearson and Co., 1835), p. 5.

[16] Thomas De Quincey writes a particularly cutting parody of it for the *London Magazine* entitled 'The Street Companion; or the Young Man's Guide and the Old Man's Comfort, in the Choice of Shoes' (1825); T. F. Dibdin, *Reminiscences of a Literary Life*, 2 vols (London: John Major, 1836), II, 731n.

concerned with order, a taxonomy of the library: outlining the definitive contents of a well-chosen collection, rather than advocating the accumulation of an 'enormous heap of books'.

At the same time that bibliomania's proponents were compiling, cataloguing, and ordering they were also aware of the reductive possibilities, and ultimate impossibility, of generalised structures of classification. Their primary interest was, after all, in the unique material features of individual volumes. While the vogue for taxonomy ushered in by the publication of the tenth edition of Linnaeus' *Systema Naturæ* in the late 1750s was still in effect, a variety of critics have noted an equally prevalent tendency toward more idiosyncratic forms of classification during the Romantic period. Though discussing the classification of the natural world specifically, Onno Oerlemans speaks for the advocates of a number of disciplines in the early nineteenth century when he notes that 'looking for kinds necessarily obscures individual difference. In looking for essential populations we see, dramatically, the many instead of the one, group identity instead of individuality'.[17] This does not mean that Romantic scholars, antiquaries, and collectors were inured to the chaos of unbounded creativity and an ever-expanding sphere of knowledge and publication. With all their cognisance of the complexities of history and science and the significance of individual experience and examples, they still wished to classify kinds. However, they were also concerned with 'individual difference', 'the one' as well as 'the group'. One way of tackling the de-individualising effects of

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[17] Onno Oerlemans, *Romanticism and the Materiality of Nature* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), p. 129; see also Marilyn Butler, 'Antiquarianism (Popular)', in *An Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age: British Culture 1776-1832*), ed. Iain McCalman et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 328-38 (p. 338); and Arnold Hunt, 'Private Libraries in the Age of Bibliomania', in *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland*, ed. Giles Mandelbrote and K. A. Manley, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), II, 438-58. Writing on Scott's bibliomania, Arnold Hunt notes that Dibdin, along with other enthusiasts, was 'cocking a snook at neo-classical taste', and, through the organisation of his books, 'subverting the very idea of the library as an orderly collection governed by a logical system of subject-classification' (p. 447).

large classificatory systems, while preserving the drive to order, is to base the organisation of the collection around the individuality of its collector. It is this appreciation of the individual, the recognition of the book collection as culturally significant in a wider sense, but also as highly personal that links the bibliomaniac with smaller-scale book collectors like Hunt.[18]

An alternative title might be applied to Hunt's bibliophilia: namely, book fancy. His poetry has been central to discussions of the Fancy as an aesthetic and poetic category, but it is not merely his verse that is fanciful.[19] In general, it is reductive to think of the Fancy in poetic terms alone. It is also important to note that Hunt's usage of the term was inconsistent. In *Imagination and Fancy* (1844), a poetic treatise published late in his career, he notes the difficulty of defining the word, especially in relation to the Imagination. The work is uncomfortable with its own terminology. The poetic faculties it describes exist in a complex network of associations that the work ultimately fails to untangle (*SWLH*, IV, 21). For this reason, rather than attempting to differentiate between concepts of Imagination and Fancy in this chapter, I would like to consider Hunt's Fancy in relation to the full range of meanings assigned to the category in the period. Early nineteenth-century definitions variously refer to it as: a reverie; a creative composition; a preference; a delusion; or a group united by a particular preference. Boxing enthusiasts and book collectors, for example, were both collectively known as the Fancy. The *OED* online even uses a quotation from fellow book fancier and Roxburghe sale attendee, Thomas De Quincey, to illustrate this meaning: 'a great book sale had congregated

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[18] Lynch makes a similar point in arguing that 'the bibliomaniac may in fact have supplied his contemporaries with a resource for thinking about how books—or, better still, the canon […] might be *more firmly attached to persons*, might be rendered personal effects': 'Wedded to Books', para. 16.

[19] See Jeffrey Cox, *Poetry and Politics in the Cockney School: Keats, Shelley, Hunt and their Circle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Jeffrey Robinson, *Unfettering Poetry: Fancy in British Romanticism* (New York: Palgrave, 2006); Nicholas Roe, *John Keats and the Culture of Dissent* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

all the *Fancy*.[20] Hunt's reading and book collecting, therefore, can be considered a pursuit of the Fancy. The idea of collecting is embedded in numerous definitions of the term. Julie Ellison argues that concepts of the Fancy included 'the process of intellectual sorting – arrangement, classification, and comparison', and Jeffrey Robinson repeatedly references contemporary accounts referring to the faculty as 'a gatherer of "raw materials"'.[21] It is apt, then, that it was used as a collective noun for book enthusiasts. Both bibliomania and the Fancy shared the common aims of collation and contrast, while to be a member of 'the *Fancy*', or a bibliomaniac, was to belong to a select group of bibliophilic admirers.

The fanciful aspect of the book-as-object is ever apparent in Hunt's writing. Like the Fancy, books blur subject-object distinctions; their status as material objects and the vessels of immaterial ideas mirrors the paradoxical nature of the Fancy which 'tends to define the lyric subject less insistently, encouraging a continuum between subject and object, or a loss of distinction between them'.[22] Robinson's point that within 'fanciphobic thinking', '"reality" does not belong to the world of the Fancy, even though the Fancy is seen as dwelling in the world of objects', is a paradox equally applicable to the world of books.[23] When discussing reading, Hunt tends to blur the boundary between actual and textual experience. In 'The World of Books', Book-England and Book-Scotland appear as real as their geographical counterparts; in 'Fiction and Matter of Fact' the 'man of fancy' may feel that 'the

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[20] Thomas De Quincey, 'Life of Richard Bentley, D. D. by J. H. Monk', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 28 (1830), 1-27 (p. 10n). See also, Michael Robinson, 'Ornamental Gentlemen: Thomas F. Dibdin, Romantic Bibliomania, and Romantic Sexualities', *European Romantic Review*, 22 (October 2011), 685-706 (p. 689).

[21] Julie Ellison, 'The Politics of Fancy in the Age of Sensibility', in *Re-visioning Romanticism: British Women Writers, 1776-1837*, ed. Carol Shiner Wilson and Joel Haefner (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1994), pp. 228-255 (p. 228); Robison, *Unfettering Poetry*, p. 25.

[22] Jeffrey Robinson, 'Leigh Hunt and the Poetics and Politics of the Fancy', in *Leigh Hunt: Life, Poetics, Politics*, ed. Nicholas Roe (London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 156-179 (p. 175).

[23] Robinson, *Unfettering Poetry*, p. 28.

chair in which he sits has no truer existence in its way than the story that moves

him'; and in his *Autobiography* he:

> know[s] not in which I took more delight – the actual fields and woods
>
> of my native country, the talk of such things in books, or the belief which
>
> I entertained that I should one day be joined in remembrance with those
>
> who had talked it.

<div align="right">

(*ALH*, II, 197)[24]

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Just as the Fancy is 'associated with escape and unreality', so, too, are books.[25]

Hunt's passion stems from their ability to elevate his consciousness. As a book

fancier, he is able to amass a store of imaginative material which feeds into his

practical life. He is engaged in a cyclical relationship with his books. They 'move

him' because he is a 'man of fancy' and as they 'move him' they teach him to be

fanciful. Books are Hunt's fancy and his personal conception of the Fancy is

bookish.

This has, for the most part, been neglected in studies of his verse despite the

fact that the poems in which he is concerned with the theme of imaginative

transcendence and identified as poetry of the Fancy often invoke the book-as-object.

The central event of *The Story of Rimini*, for instance, is an act of reading that turns

into adultery – 'That day they read no more' (III, l. 608) – while Paulo and

Francesca's love is fostered by their mutual love of books. Equally, 'Fancy's Party.

A Fragment' from *Foliage* (1818), begins with an image, ostensibly, of Hunt's book

room:

> In this poetic corner

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[24] 'The World of Books', in *Essays and Sketches by Leigh Hunt*, ed. R. Brimley Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1906), pp. 96-104; 'Fiction and Matter of Fact', in *Men, Women, and Books* (London: John Murray, 1909), pp. 1-7 (p. 4).
[25] Robinson, *Unfettering Poetry*, p. 25.

> With books about and o'er us,
>
> With busts and flowers,
>
> And pictured bowers,
>
> And the sight of fields before us;
>
> Why think of these fatalities,
>
> And all their dull realities?

(*SWLH*, v, 225-26: ll. 1-7)

The book room cultivates the Fancy. It is the 'books about and o'er' the speaker that 'wrinkl[e]' (l. 30) to become the skin of the hot air balloon which carries him away from his 'dull realities'. In many ways, flights of fancy and reading are one and the same. Both are predicated on imagined experience. The sources of this experience can be described as essentially artificial, in that they transcend materiality and eschew 'actual' experience. In the case of Hunt and the Cockney School, the connection between books, the Fancy, and artificiality is compounded by their detractors' criticism of the sources of their creativity. Their poetry was considered woefully artificial. It related second-hand experience: their classics were read in translation; their nature found in suburbia; their flowers in window boxes; their bowers only ever 'pictured'.

Though he might distinguish himself from the bibliomaniacs, the reception of Hunt's poetics and lifestyle by the periodical press problematises this distinction. The Fancy as bibliomania and the Fancy as poetic mode shared characteristics that left them open to criticism. Dibdin's bibliographical writing was condemned by sections of the periodical press for the same charges of artificiality and impracticality levelled at the Cockney-school. What Robinson calls 'the cultural police' and Ferris terms 'literary culture' are sceptical and disparaging of both the poetry of the Fancy

and bibliomaniacal writing.[26] Criticisms of the Hunt-circle's work in the Tory press are well documented. Many contemporary commentators questioned: the validity of poetry not written by gentlemen; the perceived moral depravity of Hunt's poetry, in particular; and the stylistic vulgarity of the poetry itself.[27] The Cockney-School, it was argued, wrote in an insubstantial, untutored, and needlessly risqué style. Equally, descriptions of the Fancy – the mental faculty with which these authors were often associated – characterise it as light and airy, subordinate to the gravitas of the imagination.[28] What links criticisms of the Fancy and its Cockney-School proponents to the critique of bibliomaniacal works is the perception that these writers rendered their subjects in a superficial and tasteless manner. They dealt in conceit instead of reality; bindings instead of text; they listed images rather than created poetry; they compiled catalogues rather than produced literature.

Much was written (for political reasons, more so in the case of Hunt and his circle than of Dibdin) with the aim of proving that Cockneys and bibliomaniacs were not men of genius. For instance, a reviewer in the September 1816 edition of the *Critical Review* argues that he is:

> not among those, however, who are accustomed to look upon Mr. Dibdin
> as a man of pre-eminent talents—certainly not a man of an original
> mind; and after often hearing him from the pulpit, and reading him from
> the press, we have come to the opinion, (in which we are aware that
> some will differ from us,) that, though learned, his learning is of a very
> in-applicable, and comparatively useless kind; and that taste has been

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[26] Robinson, *Unfettering Poetry*, p. 11; Ina Ferris, 'Book Fancy: Bibliomania and the Literary Word', p. 34.

[27] See Cox, Chapter 2; and Kim Wheatley, 'The Blackwood's Attacks on Leigh Hunt', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 47 (1992), 1-31.

[28] The most famous example being Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*: *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, gen. ed. Kathleen Coburn, in 16 parts (London: Routledge, 1969-2002), I, part 7, p. 223.

depraved from a natural love of the beautiful to an artificial admiration of the curious.[29]

Here, Dibdin is little more than a collector in textual form and 'certainly not a man of an original mind'. His 'learning' leads him to 'gather raw materials', in much the same way as the Fancy is supposed to do, but it is insufficient to make anything useful out of them. The charge of possessing unnatural tastes is even levelled at him. Though far from the moral depravity and 'exquisitely bad taste' that *Blackwood's Magazine* saw in Hunt's work, Dibdin's taste is yet 'depraved'.[30] Compare the above review to one of Z's 'On the Cockney School of Poetry' articles, in which Z (John Gibson Lockhart) calls the Hunt-circle:

> fanciful dreaming tea-drinkers, who, without logic enough to analyse a
>
> single idea, or imagination enough to form one original image, or
>
> learning enough to distinguish between the written language of
>
> Englishmen and the spoken jargon of Cockneys, presume to talk with
>
> contempt of some of the most exquisite spirits the world ever produced.[31]

The vitriol is stronger here than in the *Critical Review*, but both reviewers share the opinion of their subjects as unoriginal. Where Dibdin fails to appreciate natural beauty, the Cockney School fails to appreciate 'some of the most exquisite spirits the world ever produced' and both, with a presumption overreaching their talents, nonetheless intrude their works on the public. Z continues his argument by deriding the Cockneys' 'laborious affected descriptions of flowers seen in window-pots'.[32] In

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[29] Anon, 'Typographical Antiquities; or the History of Printing in England, Scotland, and Ireland; containing Memoirs of our Ancient Printers, and a Register of the Books printed by them', *The Critical Review, or, Annals of literature*, 4.3 (1816), 245-55 (p. 245).

[30] John Gibson Lockhart, 'On the Cockney School of Poetry I', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 2 (1817) 38-41, (p. 38).

[31] John Gibson Lockhart, 'On the Cockney School of Poetry IV', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 3 (1818), 519-24, (p. 521).

[32] Ibid.

the same way that the 'artificial' and the 'curious' have overpowered Dibdin's intellectual faculties, the Hunt-circle can only describe an artificial, suburban nature rendering their 'admiration' similarly ridiculous and misguided.

The deviation from an appreciation of the substantial (beauty and nature) to the 'curious' and 'artificial' is to some degree intentional on the part of both Dibdin and Hunt. 'Curious' features of individual texts fascinate the true bibliomaniac. Dibdin uses the term repeatedly in *Bibliomania* to refer to valuable or important volumes (see for instance, pp. 311, 518) and providing notices of 'truly valuable, and oftentimes curious and rare, books' is cited as a central motivation behind the work's composition (p. vi). Hunt, too, in the above passage from his *Autobiography*, is happy to admit his possible preference for the 'artificial'. Descriptions in books, like flowers in window-pots, can serve just as well as the real scene, or wild flower, to excite the imagination. That said, neither author views their preoccupation with the 'artificial' and the 'curious' as entirely unproblematic. Dibdin does, after all, 'urge every sober and cautious collector not to be fascinated by the terms "*Curious and Rare*"' in the 'Cures' section of *Bibliomania* (p. 687). Hunt can also appear sceptical of his book fancy. When writing of his lack of money sense he admits to a wish 'that the strangest accidents of education, and the most inconsiderate habit of taking books for the only ends of life, had not conspired to make me so ridiculous' (*ALH*, II, 49). By the time of *Imagination and Fancy*, he seems almost to have acquiesced to his critics' point of view: arguing that poetry of the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth century 'has since been called Artificial Poetry […] in contradistinction to Natural; or Poetry seen chiefly through art and books, and not in its first sources' (*SWLH*, IV, 28). While he does not criticise it with the same vehemence as 'Z'

criticises him, the implication is that this is poetry of the second order, despite the fact that Hunt's own creative perspective was dominated by 'art and books'.

Though the self-pathologising bibliomaniac, or book fancier, may revel in their eccentric predilection, they are also palpably concerned by it. It would be wrong to assume that Dibdin was serious in the 1809 advertisement to *Bibliomania*, when he characterised his pamphlet as a medical treatise: a 'superficial account of a disease, which, till it arrested the attention of Dr Ferriar, had entirely escaped the sagacity of all ancient and modern Physicians'; or that he truly viewed bibliomania as 'so destructive a malady' (p. iii). As previously noted, the educated bibliomaniac participates knowingly in a joke at his own expense. By reclaiming bibliomania in the name of its sufferers, he neutralises its most worrying psychological aspect: delusion. You cannot be a maniac if you know you are one. In continuing the jest, Dibdin is able to justify the usefulness of his bibliomaniacal drives. He argues, against his detractor from the *Critical Review*, that 'softened, or rendered mild, by directing our studies to *useful* and *profitable* works' the 'learning' possessed by a sufferer of this 'disease', and perhaps as a direct result of it, can be both 'applicable' and 'useful' (*Bibliomania*, p. 735, my emphasis). Yet, as this chapter will go on to discuss, there are numerous instances – in his *Reminiscences of a Literary Life* (1836), in particular – which suggest a persistent, underlying unease with the psychology of the book collector, and his assumption of the bibliomaniacal-selfhood. Usually, Dibdin's concern is directed towards other collectors, Richard Heber for example, but the autobiographical nature of the text means that these concerns are repeatedly reflected back on his own psyche.

Hunt is more liable to represent himself as actually 'diseased'. His autobiography contains a whole chapter dedicated to 'Suffering and Reflection'

which details 'a nervous condition, amounting to hypochondria' (*ALH*, I, 181). This follows on from an earlier admission that he 'inherit[ed] from [his] mother a tendency to jaundice' (*ALH*, I, 34). While he does not overtly connect his self-proclaimed 'hypochondria' to his love of books, these two definitive aspects of his personality frequently intersect. In writing to Byron, not long after his release from prison, he complains of a nondescript, 'morbid' complaint which has impeded his ability to return the poet's visits.[33] 'That vile morbid habit of dreading an absence from home, which I told you had been brought on me by imprisonment' (p. 243) is echoed in 'My Books' by his dislike of being separated from his tomes – 'I like to be able to lean my head against them' (*SWLH*, III, 25) – and his representation of the book room as an isolated hermitage. 'For the study itself,' he states, 'give me a small snug place almost entirely walled with books. There should only be one window in it, looking upon trees' (*SWLH*, III, 25). Books, and his love for them, are associated with a desire to absent himself from the practicalities of everyday existence in a possibly 'morbid' fashion.

The Fancy, too, can be diseased. In the sixteenth century the word often referred to a 'delusion'. Certainly, the extensive notes accompanying *The Feast of the Poets* more than once refer to a problematic 'overgrowth of fancy at certain periods of its flourishing' (*SWLH*, V, 54). In Hunt's appraisal of 'Mr Cumberland' and 'Mr Montgomery', for instance, he acknowledges an 'ideal sickliness' about the former, associated with his 'inaptitude [...] to fall in with the real forms and spirits of life', and citing the 'most visible defect' of the latter as 'a sickliness of fancy' (*SWLH*, V, 50). Although bibliophilia may not be troubling in itself, in Hunt's work

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[33] For instance: '(if you will put up once more with the reminiscence of myself & my morbid vagaries)' (Friday, 28 July 1815); 'Excuse all this morbidity, & chattering' (Thursday, 28 September 1815): Timothy Webb, 'After Horsemonger Lane: Leigh Hunt's Letters to Byron (1815-1816)', *Romanticism*, 16 (2010), 233-266 (pp. 242, 244).

it is symptomatic of numerous, less benign, predilections. An indulgence in the Fancy or too great a preoccupation with the world of books frequently results in 'sickness'. Despite being a gentlemanly madness – 'ridiculous' as opposed to 'morbid' – it remains a madness nonetheless. Marginalised by reviewers and cultural commentators, bibliomaniacs and proponents of the Fancy (both poetic and bibliographical) are forced to confront and sometimes accept the validity of representations which figure their collective identity as low-brow, idle, and even delusional.[34]

One way of examining the self-reflexive and anxious pathology of the bibliophile is to consider how he inhabits the spatial environments of his passion: the book room; the study; and the library. Hunt's and Dibdin's bibliophilic writings anxiously attempt to untangle the paradoxes, dualities, and contradictions of these bibliographic spaces. In them, they exist within a world of authors, regardless of their own literary credentials. Collections come to life in a way that allows the bibliophile to engage directly with the objects of his fascination and aspiration. However, Dibdin and Hunt are also aware of the fictive and insecure nature of their self-created bibliographical assemblies. Libraries provided a gateway into literary and socially elevated communities: the Roxburghe Club, the Cockney Circle, and even the literary canon. To truly exist within the space of the library, however, these authors felt the need to publish themselves. Throughout Dibdin and Hunt's writing on the book and the library, there remains a deep-seated anxiety over whether or not their peers and readers are apt to buy into the idea of the bookman as an author, or the idea of either as able to order, control, or fully possess their books. The author in

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[34] Cox argues that 'for Hunt and his group, this apparent marginalization was a guarantee of their resistance to established power' (p. 12). Robinson, too, notes that the Hunt circle 'exploit[ed]' the marginal status of the Fancy, 'which appears as the flaunting of a particular slang of the Fancy coterie, a "flash" language and a flaunting of a negative – or weightless – or non-identity' (p. 199).

his library-come-study is literally, and problematically, situated between the 'station

of authors and readers'.

Thomas Frognall Dibdin and the Bookman's Library

In his *Reminiscences of a Literary Life*, Dibdin argues that:

> The principal, and indeed besetting, difficulty against which I have had
>
> to struggle, has been the constant introduction, if not obtrusion, of *Self*. I
>
> have been inevitably compelled to put that "Self" in the foreground, as it
>
> were, of every picture delineated; but not, I trust, at the expense of
>
> injuring the effect of the middle or background of the composition.
>
> (p. xiv)

This seems a paradoxical 'difficulty', considering that the *Reminiscences* are

autobiographical. Surely the 'Self' is supposed to 'obtrude'? Dibdin's discomfort is

likely related to the relative newness and instability of autobiography as a genre in

the 1830s. As Eugene Stelzig points out, it only managed to transcend its association

with the 'vulgar' and 'sub-literary' by the mid-century.[35] As a bibliographer,

engaged in works of a scholarly nature, Dibdin might have preferred to think of the

Reminiscences as an instructive, rather than self-indulgent text. Like his *Library*

Companion, it should be of use to the 'curious bookman'. Unfortunately for Dibdin,

his works were often considered self-indulgent, pedantic, and egotistical. A critic in

the *Monthly Review* argues that 'the egotisms of the allusions to his own work, in

which the author has here indulged, would discredit any bibliomaniac; and we hope

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[35] Eugene Stelzig, 'Introduction: Romantic Autobiography In England: Exploring Its Range and Variety', in *Romantic Autobiography in England*, ed. Eugene Stelzig (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 1-14 (p. 4).

that it will be one of his *first omissions* from any future edition of the volume'.[36] Similarly, a reviewer from the *Literary Gazette* finds 'with all our willingness to be entertained by Mr. Dibdin,' that 'his laborious trifling is, upon the whole, wondrously tiresome' and 'that his egotism is not merely weak, but sometimes unjust'.[37] Although Dibdin's are, ostensibly, books about books in the most literal sense, his critics could not help but mark the degree to which his self did 'obtrude' in them.

Dibdin was not unique in adopting a personalised, or what Connell describes as an 'annecdotal', style in his works.[38] He was invested in the project of humanising and popularising bibliography by making it relatable to a more general audience. Hence, *Bibliomania* is 'a *Personal History of Literature*, in the characters of *Collectors of Books* […] desideratum even with classical students' (p. vi). The 'personal' nature of the history fosters the reader's greater identification with its subject matter; any but a confirmed bibliomaniac might struggle to engage with the contents of a standard book catalogue otherwise. *Bibliomania* is also a 'personal history' because it documents Dibdin's 'personal' relationship with other bibliomaniacs and with books, satirising and charting the course of his literary disease. Asides usually refer to personal encounters with notables of the day so that, as much as any anecdotal interjection may be intended to throw light on a public figure or rare work, they most often merely reveal Dibdin's role as the touchstone for various flattering literary connections. The characters in *Bibliomania*, for instance, are lightly veiled representations of his acquaintances. He was either a close friend of or in correspondence with Richard Heber (Atticus), Francis Douce the antiquarian

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[36] Hod, 'ART. VI. Bibliomania; or Book Madness; A Bibliographical Romance, in Six Parts', *Monthly Review*, 66 (1811), 270-83 (p. 276).

[37] Anon, 'Review of a Bibliographical, and Picturesque Tour in France and Germany, *Literary Gazette*, 277 (1821), pp. 321-33 (p. 321).

[38] Connell, p. 42.

(Prospero), and Walter Scott (Sir Tristrem). As much, therefore, as he wished to 'delineate' a more general 'picture' of his literary world, so interconnected is Dibdin's passion with his modes of self-formation that his discussion of books leads, inevitably, to a discussion of himself.

One of the most significant underlying causes of Dibdin's unease over the 'constant introduction, if not obtrusion of *Self*' in the *Reminiscences* relates to the space in which that self is imagined. He is preoccupied, in the above quotation, with the visual and spatial. His self is less described than painted: intruding into the 'foreground' and obscuring the 'middle' and 'background' of the 'picture'. Dibdin would rather 'foreground' books. The problem is that books are already foregrounded in his imagination. Even when they make up the 'middle or background' of a scene they can seem to overpower its principal subject. The library becomes a sublime prospect, an environment characterised, in Burkean terms, by infinitude, vastness, and obscurity: one that can overwhelm even the most 'obtrusive' of selves. Dibdin's egotism is exacerbated by the library's sublimity.

Contemporary images support sublime readings of the library. An 1829 engraving from the *Modern Athens* of the Signet (formerly the Advocates') Library in Edinburgh depicts a vast, pillared gallery receding into the distance with a number of small figures crowded in the bottom-centre of the frame. The visual effect of the room's large dimensions is heightened by the inclusion of people in the scene.[39] Significantly, the image does not depict the library's books. A couple of texts are littered on a table in the centre of the room, but the shelves are hidden behind columns. Pillars were a fairly common feature of the institutional library in the

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[39] M. H. Port records the size of the Signet Library as 136 by 39 feet: 'Library Architecture and Interiors', in *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland*, ed. Giles Mandelbrote and K. A. Manley, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), II, pp. 459-78 (p. 464).

period, most being constructed on a neo-classical plan.[40] Indeed, as an institutional

library we might expect representations of the Signet to reflect its public status; this

was an emblem of civilized, Enlightenment Scotland and necessarily grand as a

result. What we might not expect is the extent to which many private libraries

emulated such grandiosity.

Libraries and studies began to be factored into the arrangement of larger,

private homes during the late-seventeenth century and, by the mid-eighteenth, were,

according to James Raven, 'the social heart of the house'. As much as they were

used for the purposes of study, they were also intended 'to impress' visitors.[41] Doric

columns may have been beyond any but the wealthiest library owners, but middle-

class families also incorporated features of the grand public library into their homes:

busts, prints, portraits, and elaborate library furniture were all common additions.

'Aspirant local gentry could now outdistance established neighbours in buying yards

of literature to decorate their homes. Lengthening shelves extended social prestige'.[42]

In this period, wealthy bibliomaniacs often had libraries to rival public collections.

Their homes could mirror the sublimity of their grand, institutional brothers. In

volume two of the *Reminiscences*, Dibdin reproduces engravings of the library and

the drawing-room at Eshton Hall (see figures 1 and 2): the residence of Frances

Mary Richardson Currer (that rare breed, the female bibliomaniac). Currer's library

and drawing-room combined measured seventy-six by twenty-four feet in width,

with sixteen foot high ceilings. These are not modest rooms, as the engravings show.

Their composition mirrors that of the *Modern Athens* engraving of the Signet

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[40] Ibid.

[41] See Raymond Irwin, *The Heritage of the English Library* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1964); and James Raven, *The Business of Books: Booksellers and the English Book Trade 1450-1850* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 196.

[42] Raven, p. 196.
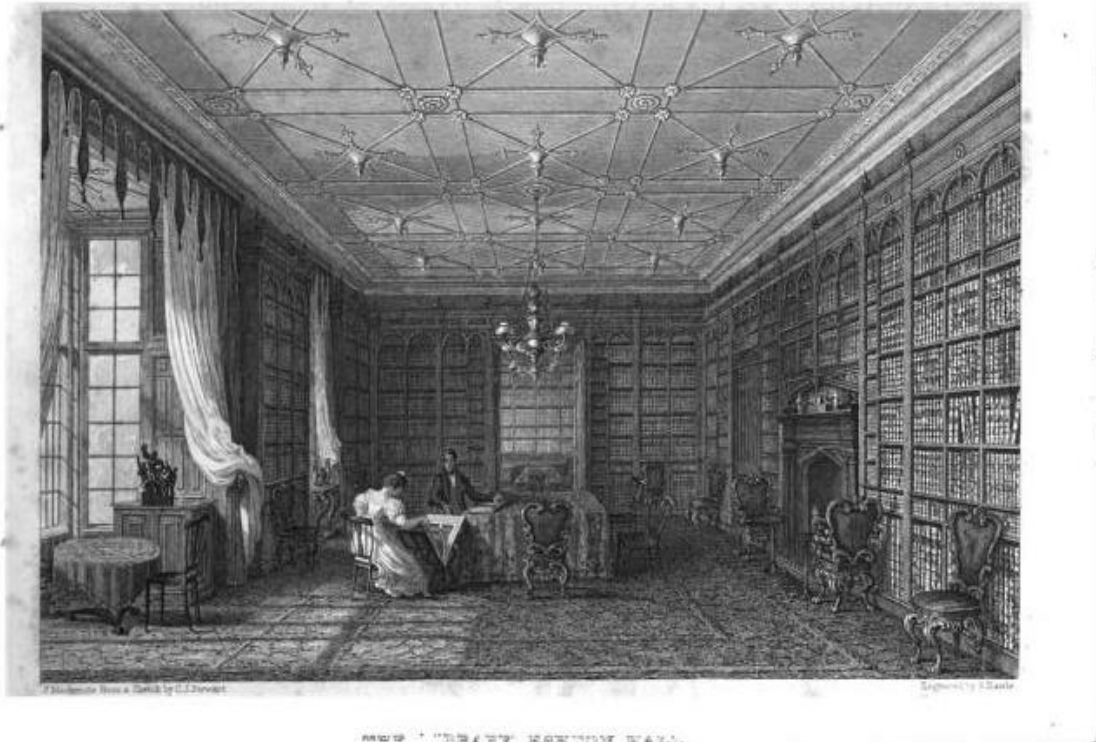
Figure 1: 'The Library, Eshton Hall'. Reproduced in T. F. Dibdin's
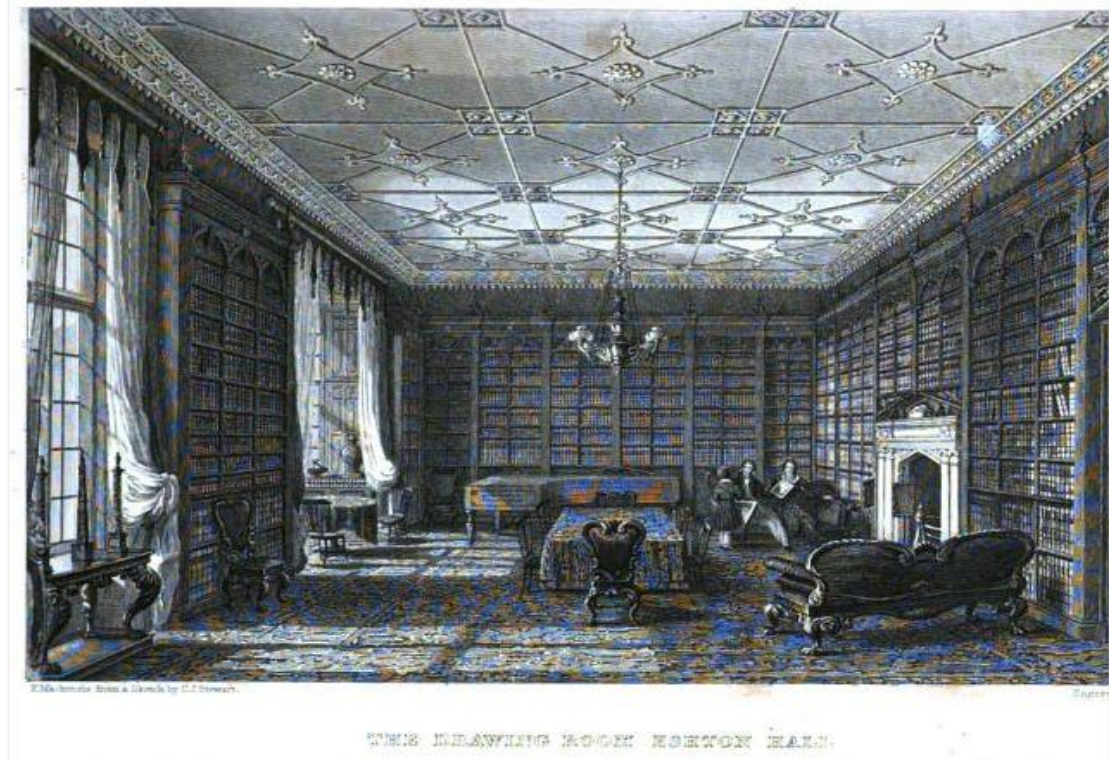*Reminiscences of a Literary Life* **(1836).**

Figure 2: 'The Drawing Room, Eshton Hall'. Reproduced in T. F. Dibdin's
Reminiscences of a Literary Life **(1836).**

Library. Symmetrical walls and ceilings recede into the distance, while the figures inhabiting the scene are dwarfed by their surroundings. In Eshton's case, however, we are able to observe the most important feature of the library: its books. If the dimensions of these rooms are large, then the repeating shelves and their contents might stretch on to infinity. In the first plate especially, where we can see a doorway leading into the drawing-room, the rows of books seem to go on forever. It is difficult to discern where the library's bookcases end and the drawing room's begin. That the two apartments are almost identical does not help to lessen this effect. At a first glance, the viewer might question whether the engravings are in fact of the same space. Based on these images, the visitor to Eshton Hall would step from one book-lined room to another with very few visual cues to enable them to distinguish the two. When each chamber is a repetition of the last, the viewer loses his ability to conceive of their end. The final apartment may, in fact, be the first and *vice versa*. Indeed, the doorway of the library blurs into the back wall of the drawing room so that it rather resembles another bookcase than a portal. Beneath this highly ordered neo-classical space lurks the chaos of infinitude.

Dibdin describes Eshton as a 'BOOK-PARADISE, in which the impassioned Collector might love to rove, and peradventure to fix a temporary abode' (p. 953). Rather than a daunting prospect, it is an Edenic space that welcomes the explorations of the ardent book pilgrim. His positive reaction to the space does not preclude the notion of it as sublime, though. His terms are expressive of the expanse of the collection: any landscape in which it is possible to 'rove', or that might justify a temporary stay, must be of a substantial size. More importantly, it is capable of producing strong emotions. Though the library can be thought of as a temple devoted to order and reason, Dibdin's visitor is, rather, 'impassioned'; the feelings prompted

by the symmetrical and controlled book rooms of Eshton are powerful enough to contrast with the rationality of the neo-classical space that inspires them. He does not engage with the space in an ordered fashion. Free to 'rove', he is liberated from the constraints of systematisation that govern its shelves and their contents. His interaction with the books is based on individual preference and happy accident. Wandering 'peradventure' into any part of the room, he may choose to linger or move on as he pleases. The juxtaposition between the regularity of the engravings and Dibdin's description of the visitor's idiosyncratic and imaginative perusal of Eshton mirrors the issues involved in reconciling general classificatory systems with the vagaries of individual human experience. Order and happenstance collide in the bibliomaniac's 'paradise'.

Perhaps due to the inherently contradictory nature of the Romantic library space, a number of texts that describe library visits in the period note just how overwhelming the experience can be. Even Dibdin recognises libraries' propensity to expand beyond the control of their librarians. Occasionally the 'impassioned Collector' finds that there is too much for him to 'love', and no way of abating his passion or controlling his mania. As the smallness of the figures contained within the Eshton engravings suggests, the collector's freedom to ignore the organisational principles of the library can also veil an anxiety over his inability to fully comprehend them. The figures are diminutive, and possibly insignificant, in relation to the vastness of the knowledge contained within the space they inhabit. If Dibdin was worried that his *Reminiscences* might 'foreground' the self in an excessive manner, then the images he chooses to adorn his bookish chronicle most certainly do not. What his critics term his 'egotism' might therefore be a reaction to the imposition of his favourite subject on his subject position. The only way in which to

end the collection is to impose the subjectivity of the collector on it. The mass of literature must be contained within his frame of reference, so that he can see the entirety of the library at once (as in the engravings). In the position of external viewer he is absent from the scene, but also defines it. He puts himself in the extreme 'foreground' (outside of the frame) to avoid being overwhelmed by the objects of his fascination. Without the organising vision of the collector, however eccentric and individual, the library is made up only of large numbers of books, which have a propensity to become unruly.

While the diminutive readers and the perspective of the Eshton Hall engravings emphasise the extent of Currer's library space, its uniform bookcases can also feel claustrophobic. In contravention of its ostensible purpose, the orderliness of the space – its neat shelves on which every book has a place – can breed confusion. The repeating bookcases and uniform bindings of the texts make distinguishing one work from another near impossible. Just as the drawing-room repeats the library, each shelf repeats the last. The window grids, too, mirror the grid structure of the bookshelves: the light of the one counteracting the dullness of the other. Overall, the library and drawing-room appear relatively dark. Indeed, the incorporation of adequate light-sources was a significant problem for eighteenth- and nineteenth-century library architects. Windows reduced the wall space available for shelving and the presence of large numbers of books meant that candles were a significant fire risk. Eshton's designers may have included substantial bay windows in an attempt to solve this problem, but, in combination with their uniformity, the partial shade in which the bookcases stand, again, make it difficult to distinguish one book from another. In comprehending the whole, the viewer is unable to comprehend the substance of the one: the individual book is lost within the book species. The task of

distinguishing between these individuals (alternate editions of the same work, for instance) is the desideratum of the bibliomaniac, but this would be a difficult or protracted task in the sublime landscape of Eshton Hall. In the contemplation of any substantial library space, the bibliomaniac's psychological drives are shown to be in conflict: on the one hand the wish to amass great numbers of books, on the other, to catalogue their variances. When confronted by the totality of a collection, reconciling these two desires can seem impossible.

In such instances, 'the bibliomania' seems less a comical and non-threatening eccentricity than a troubling monomania, characterised by uncontrollable and repetitive behaviour patterns. Though it is rare for Dibdin to speak ill of any library – grand collections almost always meet with his approbation and delight – he can yet be disturbed by the extremes of the 'disease'. A number of telling passages in the *Reminiscences* reveal the extent to which even the bookman's bookman doubted the stability of the book collection as a mode of self-representation and preservation. Occasionally, the collection seems to express his insignificance and mortality, rather than his intelligence, discernment, and respectability. Nowhere is this more obvious than in Dibdin's description of the library of Richard Heber, one of the period's most prolific collectors. Following Heber's death, Dibdin visits his Pimlico residence and meets with this disarming scene:

> I looked around me with amazement. I had never seen rooms, cupboards, passages, and corridors, so choked, so suffocated with books. Treble rows were here, double rows were there. Hundreds of slim quartos – several upon each other – were longitudinally placed over thin and stunted duodecimos, reaching from one extremity of a shelf to another. Up to the very ceiling the piles of *volumes* extended; while the floor was strewed with them, in loose

and numerous heaps. When I looked on all *this*, and thought what might be at

Hodnet, and upon the *Continent*, it were difficult to describe my emotions.

(*Reminiscences*, pp. 435-36)

There is no space to 'rove' here. His italicisation of the word '*volumes*' draws

attention to both the great number and the great 'volume' of space taken up by

books. They 'choke' and 'suffocate' the observer. Even his sentences are 'choked'

with repetitions and expanding clauses. Within the 'rooms, cupboards, passages, and

corridors' there are not only 'treble' and 'double rows' of texts, but 'hundreds', with

stacks extending in all three dimensions and covering every available surface. This

chaotic scene is in direct contravention of the ideals of classification and order

associated with the library space. Unlike the neo-classical Eshton Hall, Pimlico's

sublimity is a result of its lack of symmetry and order. No receding, book-vistas

dwarf the reader here; rather the books overwhelm the viewer by closing him in and

obscuring the architectural features of the room. Their mass defies the supposed

raison d'être of the bibliographical collection, the library, and the book itself: to

organise knowledge.

Dibdin recognises that even the private library should be accessible to

visitors: a communal and communicative space. Heber's collection is individualised

to the point that it denies the outsider a full appreciation of its merits. It fails to

communicate anything but 'amazement' to Dibdin, who then loses his own powers

of expression, finding it 'difficult to describe [his] emotions'. The volume of words

the room contains is so great, that words are no longer sufficient to describe it, or his

reaction. The only person able to decipher its meaning, its creator, is gone. Without

Heber's living presence, Pimlico has become amorphous and confusing: the key to

its interpretation lost. Dibdin remarks that, 'although the master-spirit had fled, it

seemed yet to *speak* in the LIBRARY left behind—immense, widely scattered, unparalleled in variety and extent!' (p. 440). While Heber is still imagined as being present in the library, his voice is indistinct. His speech is not described. Rather, the library's organisation, or lack thereof, gives the viewer an impression of Heber's personality, which is obscure, even for one who knew him well. Dibdin is only able to sum up the man in terms opposed to this summary aim. Heber's spirit and library are 'immense' and 'widely scattered, unparalleled in variety and extent'. Spatially and semantically, they are limitless. Despite the claustrophobic atmosphere of the 'Pimlico Hermitage' (p. 443), its unsettling nature is, like Eshton Hall, predicated on its suggestion of infinitude and incomprehension.

The lack of physical space is countered by Dibdin's cognisance of the much greater mental and physical landscape the collection implies. Heber's library is beyond his comprehension: not only because it seems impossible to summarise, but because it is impossible to view all at once. It cannot be contained within the British Isles, let alone a single dwelling. If he is awed by the volumes in London, then the unseen contents of Heber's other libraries at '*Hodnet*, and upon the *Continent*' present an even more daunting prospect. Though smaller than many institutional collections, Pimlico seems more expansive, perhaps because it has been amassed by one man. Public collections are the work of many years and many hands; they are designed to cater to the individual needs of scholars without the scholar needing to comprehend the whole. They represent a nation or a society, the many as opposed to the one. That the collection of a single man could fail to be contained in one locality makes the library visitor doubly aware of the expansive nature of the library: its intellectual and referential scope, its spatial magnitude, and its geographical disparity. In terms of representing its 'master-spirit', a 'scattered' collection fails to

maintain the illusion of the self as unified. If the contents of a library may be said to represent the mind of their collector in a tangible fashion, then the library building can be thought of in terms of the body: the physical location of the mind. When the library is situated in numerous locations this metaphor breaks down. Heber may 'speak' at Pimlico, but what would be the voice that spoke at Hodnet or on the Continent? These are hidden to the observer of the single library, unseen spaces disconnected from their experience of the collector. There may always be secondary and tertiary collections, unknowable and impossibly distant, which speak of a different self from the one they knew.

In an attempt to re-establish a sense of order and to restore the reputation of his friend as an able bibliographer and scholar, the initial description of Heber's library is accompanied by a footnoted article on its general contents. In contrast to the chaos of the original scene, Dibdin's *Bibliotheca Heberiana* stresses the intelligence with which the library was compiled and attempts to soften exaggerated contemporary estimates of its size. 'Judgement and prudence' were apparently 'eminently exercised' (pp. 440-41n) in its assemblage, while 'vacant heads and flippant tongues,' only, 'think and talk of the number and value of books, as if there were no end to the first, and no limit to the second' (p. 440n). Dibdin contradicts himself, however, both in his description from the *Reminiscences* and in *Bibliotheca Heberiana*, where he describes the sum spent on the library as 'IMMENSE' (p. 443n, Dibdin's capitals). Even accounting for the context of each description – one relating his immediate response following his friend's death, the other after a bibliographical consideration of the rooms – Dibdin is clearly anxious over the fate of the library and his companion.

There is a sense that the 'master-spirit' has been absorbed or superseded by the library. Though Heber haunts the space, he may soon be dispossessed: practically, due to the sale of his books, and figuratively as his 'spirit' departs the library along with its contents. The collection built according to Heber's inclination and expressive of Heber's personality will be re-appropriated and reorganised by other collectors and for other purposes. Dibdin is essentially supportive of this process. He believes in the public benefit of the re-distribution of knowledge and literature. Thus he urges other collectors to step forward and purchase from Heber's hoard: 'let the timid take courage, and the experienced direct their energies to one laudable object—that of completing the several departments in which their libraries exhibit melancholy proofs of *hiatuses*' (p. 443n). That the constituents of the fragmented library may go towards the completion of another library may be consolatory. In this way, the library is re-established as a place of communication and interaction. Nonetheless, Dibdin's contemplation of the dispersal of Heber's library is tinged with regret. When the collection is broken up its association with the collector is dissolved. He is no longer the unifying, 'master-spirit' of his books; they revert back to their original, individuated status and become someone else's possessions. Considered thus, the ownership of books is an ephemeral pastime; it does not provide a lasting legacy. The library is transformed into an impersonal assortment of texts.

This is perhaps especially the case when the destination of the bibliomaniac's private collection is a national institution. Dibdin is invested in the idea of a community of scholars, and advocates the sharing of scholarly resources for general advantage. Despite the fact that institutions, like the British Museum, fostered

Dibdin's collegial aims, his response to the idea of the national library as inheritor of the private collection is ambivalent:

> The transportation of the library of George III. to the British Museum, by the eldest son of the father who had made the collection struck the public with a mixed sensation of regret and admiration: regret, that a library so extensive and so precious—the result of the unwearied application of half a century in its formation—should leave its old and natural quarters, and become merged in a collection already filled to the brim; and admiration, that a gift of such stupendous magnitude should be made from a sovereign to his people! […] was that space wanted for a *different* object? "*That*" seems to me to be "the question." But, under no aspect, no view or consideration of the matter, should a volume of the PATERNAL LIBRARY have been *moved*. Had I been King of England, half of my EMPIRE should have been wrested from me ere I had parted with a BOOK of my sire.
>
> (*Reminiscences*, p. 346n)

In this instance, the collector's library does not complete, but is merely 'merged' with another. Its individual grandeur is lessened by its association with a greater whole. The monument to George's 'unwearied application' has been exiled from its 'natural quarters'. Geographically it has travelled a relatively short distance, but Dibdin's use of the term 'transportation' suggests a rather greater dislocation. If it has not been 'transported' abroad, like a criminal, it has been relocated to a similarly anonymous land. No longer strictly George III's library, possession has passed to the British Museum; its amalgamation with a national collection reduces its individual significance and its particularity. How can it remain 'extensive' and 'precious' in the

presence of a collection so much more 'extensive' and 'precious'? No longer an impressive prospect, it appears to have become a waste of 'space' as an addition to 'a collection already filled to the brim'. Dibdin's interpretation of the relocation as prompted by a need for 'space' suggests that George III's library was no longer seen as a collection of knowledge (by the Prince Regent at least) and was, instead, viewed as a mere collection of matter: objects taking up too much room. This library of 'stupendous magnitude' no longer means anything. It inhabits a new 'space', but it does not define it.

Dibdin's critique of the library's removal is also coloured by personal considerations: implying that the library was donated for selfish rather than magnanimous reasons. The Prince Regent is censured for his lack of paternal respect. The library is supplanted to create more room in Buckingham palace for a mysterious, '*different* object'. George IV disassociates himself from his personal inheritance. Its historical placement is denied, its 'old and natural quarters' within the royal home have been vacated. Instead, it is problematically given to the 'public', ceasing to be a private possession and losing its meaning as a metonym for a single self or family. The bibliographical bloodline has been tainted. Again, the individual is swamped by the many. George III appears, like Heber, to have lost control of his collection, or his 'EMPIRE' (a loaded reference considering his loss of the North American colonies in the 1780s). 'Half of [his] EMPIRE' was 'wrested from [George]' during his reign and, after his death, his bookish empire was 'wrested from [him]' too. He is a dispossessed king in more ways than one. As with the book collection, the larger the Empire the more difficult it is to control. Unruly subjects and unruly books are of a kind.

At least George III's library retains his name and is maintained as a discrete collection. Both his and Heber's collections, however, are removed from their 'natural quarters' and redistributed within the populace. For Dibdin, one assumes, a book's 'natural quarters' are the library of a true bibliophile. In Heber's case, he hopes that the contents of the collection will be bought by other collectors who will treasure them as unique, individual items. If the collection cannot preserve the memory of the collector after his death, at least the concept of the book as a self-reflexive, individually significant object is maintained. When the collection is given to the public, though, it represents a much greater unit: the people. This is not necessarily unwelcome; in fact, many interpretations of bibliomania stress its influence on the establishment of a national literary heritage.[43] It is important to remember, however, that the popular notion of bibliomania was as characteristically acquisitive and self-involved. As much as the benefit of the nation was appropriated as a justification for the excesses of certain aristocratic bibliophiles, the 'disease' was an expression of its sufferers' personal desires. In the end, Dibdin privileges the 'sire' over the 'EMPIRE', the personal over the national. In the private collection, books remain unique and rare; in the national collection they become generic objects. In the latter instance, they are classified within a grand scheme rather than appreciated for their individual merits and united under the organising vision of one collector. Perhaps this is why Dibdin is so reluctant to part with even one 'BOOK of [his] sire'. The constituents of the library speak of and for his person. 'BOOK[s]' establish his literary pedigree, proving that he was nobly 'sired'.

Ultimately, Dibdin's conflicted musings on the proper use, situation, and organisation of the library suggest his anxiety over the efficacy of the book

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[43] See Connell.

collection as metonym for the self. Is the self in danger of being overwhelmed by the collection? Can a bookman be represented by the books he owns alone, or is the only way to truly inhabit the role of bookman to become a book oneself? Does his identity need to be textual, his name to appear on a title page, for him to exist securely within the space of the library? In Dibdin's case the answer to these questions is yes. When his '*Self*' 'obtrudes' in the *Reminiscences*, it is not as a collector; he never had the means to amass the kind of library he so greatly admired. Instead he 'obtrudes' as an author. At the close of Chapter IV, 'Publications', he makes a statement that characterises the ensuing narrative. 'I determined,' he says, 'upon commencing AUTHOR in right earnest' (p. 166). From this point on the *Reminiscences* is essentially a history of the sources, creation, and reception of his various bibliographical publications. Whole chapters are devoted to his authorial role: Chapter V, 'Authorship', or Chapter X, 'Publications Continued', for instance. He takes great pains to convince his readers of the esteem in which he was held, reproducing countless letters from acquaintances, literary celebrities, and friends thanking him for the receipt of his publications and for their enjoyment of them. He numbers these 'testimonies' among the utmost 'treasures' of his reading-room, above his busts, engravings, portraits, and even his books (p. 300)! He also makes reference to numerous positive reviews in the press. This over-determined offering up of the proofs of his literariness implies that he was much less confident in the role of author than of bibliomaniac.

Even so, he persists in thinking of himself as an author. This is despite the fact that his works were monuments to the art of printing, as much as literature: they contained numerous specially commissioned woodcuts and engravings; were

beautifully bound; and Dibdin was highly sensitive to the intricacies of typography.[44]

He is particularly amused at 'being designated as the "Beau Brummel" of living

authors, in regard to the glossy splendour of my publications' (p. 688n). His

attention to detail in the physical production of his books may not only bespeak his

fascination with and admiration for the printing process, however. Note that Dibdin

refers to himself as the '"Beau Brummel" of *living authors*', while a *Literary Gazette*

review, in fact calls him the 'Beau Brummel of *book-makers*'.[45] Where he wishes to

be perceived as a creator of texts, the public persists in their conception of him as an

artisan: a maker of things. Skilled though he may be in this office, the association

with Beau Brummel shows that his works were thought to privilege style over

substance. To an extent, Dibdin uses this public perception of the material quality of

his works to his advantage. He creates rare books that a bibliomaniac would want to

collect and is thus assured of an, albeit small, market for his productions.

This project is evident in Dibdin's description of the party he threw to

celebrate the publication of the *Bibliographical Decameron*. Having given a number

of the original woodblocks to his guests, he then encourages them to throw the rest

of the printing materials on the fire, revelling in the fact that 'a thrill of horror

seemed to pervade every bosom'. He terms it an act 'which in apparent barbarity of

principle, and of its kind, seemed to have equalled the firing of the Alexandrine

Library' (pp. 628, 629). Dibdin reasons that 'the property of THE WORK was in a

measure *secured* by' this convivial conflagration (p. 629). 'Who NOW,' he

emphatically states, 'could doubt about the value of the *Impressions* in my work

from these identical woodcuts' (p. 630). Though he preserves the artistic productions

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[44] Ferris calls him 'as much a book-designer as a book-author [who] understood authorship as a function not just of the writing of texts but of the production of books': 'Book Fancy', p. 44.

[45] Anon, 'Review of a Bibliographical, Antiquarian, and Picturesque Tour in France and Germany', *Literary Gazette*, 227 (1821), 321-33 (p. 321).

of others – he did not create the images himself – they are integral to the value of '[*his*] work'. Whether his book is the 'property' of another or not, he retains creative 'property of THE WORK'; he has overseen every aspect of its creation and production and no one else, not even a printer, can again exactly reproduce it.[46] It is an act that emphasises the book's significance as a complete, individual object. The particular form of this edition of the *Decameron*, cannot be recreated. Reprints may be issued, but they will necessarily be different. Thus, a bibliomaniac desirous of including a copy within his library would particularly value each different edition of the work. It is exclusive, available only to the discerning book hunter and, initially it seems, only to Dibdin's specially elected cabal.

The burning might be seen to confirm representations of Dibdin as wholly materialist in his attitude to books. It links the publication of the *Decameron* to the Roxburghe Club re-prints, which were produced in limited numbers and only given to members of the society. His act makes the book a relic. The woodcuts it contains can only exist in proximity to Dibdin's prose. It is not his own work he destroys, but that of others: the text itself is available for reprint. His intention, perhaps, is to increase its value by association: alleviating his anxiety over the non-rarity of his prose by emphasising the rarity of his books. Fame-by-association, however, might not be enough for one 'determined upon commencing AUTHOR in right earnest'. Dibdin is anxious to establish his place in the library, and not just as an ephemeral collector, vulnerable to the dispersive powers of time.

Following his description of Heber's library, he relates his discovery of the latter's will (which had eluded the heirs for some weeks). 'I FOUND THE WILL!' he exclaims:

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[46] Unfortunately Dibdin had not foreseen the invention of the scanner which has allowed for the print reproduction of his incinerated woodcuts.

And to reward me, as it were, for my perseverance—as well as yet to
connect me with my departed friend—I found it lying behind some
books within a few inches of my *Decameron* and *Tour*. On the 8th of
January, in the year of our Lord, 1834, I FOUND THE WILL'

(pp. 444-45)

Dibdin positively asserts his authority. It is not merely Heber's will that he finds in his friend's library, but himself. Is it mere coincidence that he discovers it so close to his own works, or was he particularly interested in this corner of the library anyway? Either way, in contrast to Heber's displaced, or misplaced, position in the scattered collection, Dibdin is categorically present: he is on the literary map. His identity is attested to by the name on the spines of his publications. Incorporated into the library prospect, he does not just organise the collection from an external position, he is a part of its organisation. As a bibliographer he defines it from without, but he is also classified by it from within. He takes his proper place, 'as AUTHOR', on the shelf and becomes one of the books his works seek to describe: positioned, not only in the 'foreground' of his picture, but also its 'middle and background'. Even so, the over-determined and, at times, ecstatic manner in which he asserts his authorial identity implies an awareness or, perhaps, a fear that his self (in its authorial guise particularly) is still 'obtrusive' and fails to merit its 'foregrounded' position.

Leigh Hunt's 'World of Books'

With these fair dames and heroes round,

I call my garret classic ground.

For, though confined, 'twill well contain

The ideal flights of Madam Brain.

No dungeon's walls, no cell confined

Can cramp the energies of mind![47]

While Dibdin is drawn to the grand, private library, Leigh Hunt values a space 'confined'. Henry Kirke White's poem 'My Study' could well describe his perfect book room. Cluttered with the shabby ephemera of the scholar, it is a place of Arcadian pretensions, the fanciful 'flights of Madam Brain', and genial interactions. White enjoys a 'luxurious' glass or two of wine (ll. 28-30), an indulgence that Hunt was partial to himself; and, 'though confined', the garret is a social space. Like the heart of the poet, which is equally 'small', it can figuratively 'contain' all of the writer's friends in the form of his community of books (ll. 85-86). Also significant is the way that White presents the cramped garret and the 'dungeon' as analogous 'confined' spaces. The garret, like Dibdin's grand library or bibliomaniacal collection, is both a pleasure ground and a landscape troubled by painful associations and authorial anxieties.

For Hunt, the garret and dungeon are equivalent spaces. Critics have variously noted the literary significance of Hunt's cell in the infirmary of Horsemonger Lane gaol.[48] However, this 'fairy tale' room (*ALH*, II, 9) was a dual space: at once a vibrant literary salon and the site of intense suffering. Hunt's book room, too, is double. His writing on his prison experience and his descriptions of studies and book rooms display an intriguing concurrence. In part, this is the result of the transformation of his prison quarters into a wallpapered study complete with bookcases, a terrace garden, and even a piano. In this room, he forged and reinforced his persona as a book-fancying man of letters, existing on the border between Fancy

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[47] Henry Kirke White, 'My Study: A Letter in Hudibrastic Verse' (1803), in *The Poetical Works of Henry Kirke White* (London: Bell and Daldy, 1866), pp 70-73 (ll. 79-84).
[48] Greg Kucich, '"The Wit in the Dungeon": Leigh Hunt and the Insolent Politics of Cockney Coteries', *Romanticism on the Net*, 14 (1999), <http://www.erudit.org/revue/ron/1999/v/n14/005850ar.html> [accessed 20 March 2012] (para. 1).

and reality. The relative comfort of the cell was not, in itself, unusual for the period, nor was its role as a nexus of sociability. Gregory Dart and Iain McCalman both describe Regency prisons as the site of oppositional relations – public and private, actual and fictive – that reflected the external world and stimulated the creativity of their inmates.[49] Dart's account of debtors' prisons in the 1820s is particularly relevant to Hunt's experience. Due to the permeable class boundaries that allowed a wide array of mock social interactions to take place within its walls, his work outlines an inherently paradoxical space. It was at once imaginative and performative, but also 'the ultimate hiding place of the real'.[50] Certainly, Hunt was involved in an intricate negotiation between 'the real' and the fancied in his Horsemonger cell. It was a space of wilful fantasy and, often, ill-hidden realities. His depiction of the infirmary room as a 'bower of roses' (*ALH*, II, 12) is symptomatic of his tendency to privilege the fancied over the actual, still unsure whether he preferred the 'talk of such things in books' to 'actual fields and woods' (*ALH*, II, 197). The infirmary was another manifestation of his ideal study, not the worse for being 'confined' or confusing the boundary between Fancy and actuality.

The correlation between garret and dungeon is, perhaps, less reassuring when the direction of influence is reversed and the book room takes on the characteristics of the prison. Hunt repeatedly, perhaps pathologically, returns to the prison space in his writing. At times, cell and study seem interchangeable. The frequency with which he speaks of being 'surrounded' by books, and the manner in which he does so, is cloying. He is 'walled with books'; 'I therefore walled myself in'; 'I entrench myself in my books, equally against sorrow and the weather'; and, tellingly:

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[49] See Iain McCalman, 'Newgate in Revolution: Radical Enthusiasm and Romantic Counterculture', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 22 (1998), 95-110; and Gregory Dart, 'A World Within Walls: Haydon, *The Mock Election* and 1820s Debtors' Prisons', in *Romanticism and Popular Culture in Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 214-235.
[50] Dart, p. 216.

I turn my back upon the sea: I shut up even one of the side windows

looking upon the mountains; and retain no prospect but that of the trees.

On the right and left of me are bookshelves: a bookcase is affectionately

open in front of me; and thus kindly enclosed with my books and the

green leaves, I write.

(*SWLH*, III, 25)

Hunt pointedly 'turn[s his] back' on the outside world, 'shut[ing]' himself in and it out. He practically builds himself a new prison. Volumes that once covered his cell's walls are now cell walls themselves. Even the fact that he chooses to look out upon trees recalls the view from his window in the infirmary which 'looked upon trees and flowers' (*ALH*, II, 11). Bookshelves may make 'affectionate' and 'kind' walls, but they are walls nonetheless, permeable only through acts of the imagination.

In many ways, confinement fuels or, indeed, necessitates creativity as external sources of inspiration are denied. Indeed, Hunt's imprisonment was a fertile time when he composed substantial sections of *The Story of Rimini* and *The Descent of Liberty* (1815). Yet, even 'entrenched' among his books and eulogising their restorative powers he cannot help 'confessing a great pain in the midst of [them]' (*SWLH*, III, 24). If *The Story of Rimini* represents a flight of poetic Fancy, it is by no means a flight capable of affecting a full-scale escape from reality. Hunt notes that canto II and a portion of canto III were composed in the Surrey Gaol (*SWLH*, V, 182n). The opening to canto III certainly bears out this claim. Similarly to 'Fancy's Party', it begins with a reference to the 'dull', or in this case painful, 'realities' which beset the poet:

Now why must I disturb a dream of bliss,

Or bring cold sorrow 'twixt the wedded kiss?

Sad is the strain, with which I cheer my long

And caged hours, and try my native tongue;

Now too, while rains autumnal, as I sing,

Wash the dull bars, chilling my sicklied wing,

And all the climate presses on my sense;

But thoughts it furnishes of things far hence,

And leafy dreams affords me, and a feeling

Which I should else disdain, tear-dipped and healing.

(III, ll. 1-13)

On one level, the 'dream of bliss' is that of the poem's heroine Francesca. At this point she believes she has been wed to Paulo when, in fact, he is only acting as a proxy for his brother, her true husband. The immediate interjection of Hunt's poetic voice following this preliminary lament, however, suggests that he has also disturbed his own 'dream of bliss'. He has broken the fourth wall and disrupted the fictive narrative of the poem. Having written the previous canto during his incarceration, by the opening of canto III – with its overt reference to his time in jail (the 'dull bars' and 'caged hours') – he appears unable to sustain his fantasy.

Ferris has read Hunt's 'shrinking or narrowing of the space of reading in one dimension' as 'under[writing] its expansion in another': namely his 'campaign to extend the reading public'. She represents his relationship with his books, and with reading and readers, as 'cosy', essentially comforting.[51] While I do not disagree that the book room was a space of refuge for Hunt, nor do I question his belief in literature as an agent of social reform, I also think that his 'narrowing of the space of reading' has a sinister undertone. His 'book-sense', as Ferris terms it, can be

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[51] Ina Ferris, 'Book-Love and the Remaking of Literary Culture in the Romantic Periodical', in *Bookish Histories*, pp. 111-125 (pp. 116, 117).

restrictive as much as emancipatory. The 'caged' space might 'furnish[thoughts] of things far hence', but it also points to their unreality. For, when the fantasy is resumed – the speaker claims he has had 'Enough of this' (III, l. 14) – its action is reminiscent of the reality it is supposed to transcend. Similarly to Hunt, Francesca is incarcerated: transported from her home to a metaphorical prison in her new husband's castle. As a means to alleviate her disappointment, her father furnishes her new room in the style of her paternal home:

> The very books and all transported there,
>
> The leafy tapestry, and the crimson chair,
>
> The lute, the glass that told the shedding hours,
>
> The little urn of silver for the flowers.

<div align="right">(III, ll. 153-57)</div>

Another version of Hunt's book room, the poem describes a space almost identical to that outlined in 'My Books', at the beginning of 'Fancy's Party', and that recreated in Horsemonger gaol. Like the author, *Rimini*'s characters transform cell into study and study into cell. In this way, Hunt's Fancy mirrors his troubled existence. It disguises rather than elides actual events. Fancy does not provide an unbounded escape from reality, but constitutes a complex re-appropriation of it: reality in Fancy dress.

His perpetual return to the prison space, therefore, is a return to a space in which the boundary between the quotidian and the fanciful is fruitfully, if problematically, permeable. The fact that in the prison space the author's isolation is forced supports his perpetual inhabitation of Fancy worlds. Because of the necessity of creation when external sources of inspiration are denied, the actuality of Fancy worlds need not be challenged by practical experience. Configuring his book room

as a prison allowed Hunt to return to a state in which his indulgence in fancies was a necessity rather than a choice, when it was more difficult for his detractors to accuse him of idleness, or being merely a 'fanciful dreaming tea-drinker'. More than, as Jacqueline George terms it, an 'abiding tendency to integrate his imagination with the material world around him' he places a surprising degree of emphasis on the materiality of the Fancy, semi-seriously representing this illusory world as substantial.[52] This strategy seems designed to defend his bibliophilia and the various forms of imaginative escape – reading and literary composition, for instance – in which he was then engaged. The Fancy is reconfigured as a productive faculty, one which engages with the conditions of the 'real' world. George describes Hunt's authorial perspective as tripartite, shifting between 'the actual world, the world described in books, and the world of literary canonicity'.[53] As a physical and an ideational object the book bridges the gap between these worlds, worlds that Hunt's writing desperately attempts to reconcile. This is clearest in his essays 'Fiction and Matter of Fact' (1825) and 'The World of Books' (1833).[54] In both, Hunt presents his readers with a 'parallel worlds' theory. 'The globe we inhabit,' he states, 'is divisible into two worlds […] the common geographical world, and the world of books' ('World', p. 98) or 'the world that we can measure with line and rule, and the world that we feel with our hearts and imaginations' ('Fiction', p. 9). Key to both essays is an idealist Berkleyan argument that 'the only proof of either is in our perception' ('Fiction', p. 11). Hunt contends that 'it would puzzle a wise man to prove to himself that I was not, in some spiritual measure, in any place where I chose

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[52] Jacqueline George, '"All these lovers of books have themselves become books!": Leigh Hunt in his Library', *The Eighteenth Century*, 50 (2009), 245-261 (p. 256).
[53] George, p. 245.
[54] 'Fiction and Matter of Fact', in *Men, Women, and Books*, 2 vols (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1847), I, 7-15; 'The World of Books', in *Essays and Sketches by Leigh Hunt*, ed. R. Brimley Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1906), pp. 96-104.

to pitch my imagination' ('World', p. 96) and that it might also 'puzzle a wise man to prove' that the matter of fact, physical world was any more 'real' than its fictional counterpart. Rather, our perception of the 'visible and immediate' (fact) and 'the possible and the remote' (fiction) are 'as real, the one as the other' ('Fiction', p. 11). No one perceptual faculty taking precedence over another, felt or imagined experience is equivalent to lived.

The artificiality his critics charge him with is thus reconfigured as higher sensitivity to the emotional depth of existence. The ability to see beyond the physical to its 'connection with the great mysteries of nature' ('Fiction', p. 15) is creative: one need not see to imagine or to comprehend. Indeed, comprehension increases beyond the limits of mechanical proof. Those concerned only with fact 'do not see the reality of the [world of fiction],' and, 'keep but a blind and prone beating upon their own surface' ('Fiction', pp. 10-11). In *Imagination and Fancy*, Hunt might have represented this as an exclusive 'privilege of imagination', but in 'Fiction' it is 'the man of fancy' (p. 11) that lives this enriched life, engaged with both realities. He is figured, paradoxically, as more active than the matter-of-fact man who is 'prone', despite his activities requiring no bodily exertion. Hunt makes the argument that a substantial and practically useful knowledge of the real world can be gleaned from reading and supposedly 'artificial' experiences. He not only undercuts his readers' easy acceptance of the existence of material reality by highlighting its basis in perception, but also represents the 'world of books' as an equally material reality. It is, he asserts, 'hardly less tangible' (p. 98) than its physical counterpart. It can be felt in an emotional sense, but also in the sense that it can be touched.

Here and elsewhere, then, Hunt searches for and constructs 'a *real* place of books' (*SWLH*, III, 26, my emphasis). This place can be created in the imagination

with an emphasis on its materiality, or it can be literally constructed as a study. In 'My Books' it is ideally configured as a 'small snug place almost entirely walled with books' where the reader is in close physical proximity to his volumes: 'when I speak of being in contact with my books, I mean it literally. I like to be able to lean my head against them' (*SWLH*, III, 25, 24). Snugness and privacy are central to reinforcing the sense of the study as the realm of the Fancy or, more specifically, a realm where the 'tangible' and the fancied intertwine. There are many benefits to be had from a space small enough for the occupier to dominate it. Accordingly, Hunt deconstructs the grandiose book rooms valorised by Dibdin. 'A grand private library,' he states, 'which the master of the house also makes his study never looks to me like a real place of books, much less of authorship' (*SWLH*, III, 26). And:

> I dislike a grand library to study in. I mean an immense apartment, with books all in Museum order, especially wire-safed. I say nothing against the Museum itself, or public libraries. They are capital places to go to, but not to sit in: and talking of this, I hate to read in a public place and strange company. The jealous silence, — the dissatisfied looks of the messengers, the inability to help yourself [...].
>
> (*SWLH*, III, 25-26)

For similar reasons, Hunt has 'a particular hatred of a round table [...] covered and irradiated with books'. 'Instead of bringing the books around you,' he argues, 'they all seem turning another way, and eluding your hands' (*SWLH*, III, 26). In each of these examples from 'My Books', he regrets the distancing of the book-object from the reader. His reasoning articulates an underlying fear that the volumes contained in these large spaces are out of his control: 'eluding' him. These libraries frustrate the possessive relationship, signalled by the essay's title, that Hunt had with his books.

In the institutional library he must ask permission to gain access to a work, and risk the 'dissatisfied looks of the messengers'. The texts may be public property, but are guarded all the more 'jealously' for it. As a member of the public, the Museum or public library is his to consult. Even so, the individual feels excluded from these civic collections because he has lost the ability 'to help [himself]'. As national property, they are too large to identify with on a personal level.[55] Their size and their proscription depersonalise a space which, for Hunt, should speak to the individual rather than the masses.

He is only able to engage with these environments passively: to 'go to' them, 'but not to sit in' them and certainly not 'to read in' them. The books have become museum pieces, not for touching or reading, but for looking at. As in the worst of the bibliomaniac's 'grand private libraries', 'three parts of the books are generally trash' (*SWLH*, III, 26) because the proprietor has not bothered to read them. It is a complaint that, despite its seeming divergence from Dibdin's love of the 'grand library', echoes the latter's discussion of the 'transportation of the library of George III'. For both authors, the 'public' nature of these spaces problematises the highly personal nature of the relationship between the book lover and his books. Dibdin regrets the royal library's amalgamation with the national one as it erodes the individual significance of the bibliomaniac to his collection. Hunt's difficulty with 'the Museum' (its capitalisation and definite article suggests that he, too, refers to the British Museum) is alternatively nuanced, but is at its core equally concerned with the diminishing importance of individual book fanciers. The books in 'the Museum' belong to everyone and, thus, can never be simply 'My Books'. This may explain why the silence pervading the library should be 'jealous'. Each reader is

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[55] Lynch tackles this idea in 'Wedded to Books'.

uncomfortable with the property of his fellow scholars in the collection's books. Once read, the intellectual content of a work is possessed individually by its reader. The material receptacle of that knowledge, however, must be returned to the shelf for someone else's perusal.

Its place on that shelf is also determined by an overarching and impersonal 'Museum order'. The relationship of the guest with the library's books is mediated by the 'messengers' who hold the key to its organisational principle. As well as being 'wire-safed', the books are shrouded in the mystery of the Museum's system. Not so in the private garret, and indeed in the private collections of the bibliomaniacs lauded by Dibdin. Here, the collector may determine the order of his books on any idiosyncratic basis he desires. It is this free contact, the ability 'to help yourself', and to know how 'to help yourself', that makes the personal book collection so precious. The distancing of the reader's body from the book-object is not conducive to study or enjoyment. The book room itself, and the books it contains must be a physical reality; they must reassure the inhabitant of the materiality of the space and his centrality to it. In the grand library, the 'immensity' of the space and the locking of the books in wire-safes reminds the scholar of his inability to grasp their contents both materially and intellectually. An 'immense apartment' may contain an 'immense' number of works, which it would be impossible to read. The works, as on a round table, 'elude' his mind and his hands. To be 'in contact' with a book, however, is to be assured of your possession, regardless of your understanding of the text. You may grasp it physically, even if not intellectually.

At the same time, Hunt is eager to cultivate the alternative reality of the Fancy layered over the physical space of the book room. A 'real place of books' should, in a sense, cease to be 'real' when the man of letters chooses to indulge his

Fancy. It should be dis-'ordered' and un-'safed' enough to allow for the freedom of the imagination. Again, its relative smallness adds to this effect. The actual world is shut out and all that can be seen is the pathway to the world of the Fancy: books. There are no distractions, 'jealous silences' or 'dissatisfied' messengers, merely the objects of imagination, which are reassuringly to hand. Hunt remarks that he has his books 'in a sort of sidelong mind's eye' when writing. They act on him in this manner 'like a second thought, which is none; like a waterfall, or a whispering wind' (*SWLH*, III, 25). The books on his shelves are transformed from strikingly physical objects, with which he must be 'in contact', to the ephemeral backdrop of his imagination. They are almost nothing: 'a second thought, which is *none'*. Having argued for the absolute necessity of the material presence of his volumes in his study, Hunt then dematerialises them. The elision of his books' physicality, though, allows for the realisation of his imaginative world. When he reads or writes he exchanges one tactile reality for another. The book room becomes a natural landscape, complete with waterfalls and 'whispering wind[s]': the equally 'tangible' 'world of books'. A material Fancy usurps an immaterial reality so that the ideal study is figured as both a place of real books and a real place of books.

The confined nature of the book room, its creative vitality, and liminality, allies it with another space familiar to Romantic period poetry and, particularly, the poetics of the Fancy: the bower.[56] If Hunt's prison cell was a 'bower of roses' then so was his study. In architectural terms the study and the bower are equivalent; both are private apartments within the home. Other definitions also aptly describe Hunt's representation of this room: for instance, 'a shady covert' or 'leafy recess'; and 'an idealized abode, not realized in any actual dwelling' (*OED*). The book room/study is

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[56] See Roe, pp. 116, 123-25; Rachel Crawford, *Poetry, Enclosure, and the Vernacular Landscape, 1700-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

certainly an idealised space, which, through the interplay of reality and the Fancy within, is 'not [straightforwardly] realized in any actual dwelling'. Hunt's book room is also, as we have seen, a 'leafy recess' (*SWLH*, III, 25). The comparison may be carried beyond these direct equivalences, however. Not only is the study, to use Rachel Crawford's definition of the bower, an 'enclosed green space' permeated by 'delicious breezes' (Hunt's 'whispering winds'), it is also a site of troubled pleasure, contested power, and dubious masculinity. 'Whether poets challenge the poetic and sexual implications of the [bower] form,' Crawford argues, 'or accept or redefine its strictures, they express through bower conventions their own problematic status as writing subjects'.[57] Hunt's use of bower conventions in his descriptions of the book room suggests his unease over his authorial status and his maleness. By transforming himself into the questing subject of bower poetry, and his books into his amorous object, he is able both to reassert his masculine potency and proclaim his literary conquest over the canon.

The study might not seem a conventionally erotic space, but in 'My Books' this aspect of Hunt's bibliophily is striking. According to Crawford, the 'passionate lover' and the 'silent, fearful, yet yielding nymph' play out their symbolic 'erotic encounter' within the bower.[58] Hunt frequently adopts the pose of a lover seeking an 'erotic encounter' in the essay. Questioning the desire of the modern bibliomaniac to buy as many books as possible – for 'it is not at all necessary to love many books, in order to love them much' (*SWLH*, III, 31) – he argues that the true book lover is a careful book reader. To love a book, you must know it well and, for their part, to be beloved:

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[57] Rachel Crawford, 'Troping the Subject: Behn, Smith, Hemans and the Poetics of the Bower', *Studies in Romanticism*, 38 (1999), 249-79 (pp. 249, 252); and *Poetry, Enclosure, and the Vernacular Landscape*, p. 231.
[58] Crawford, 'Troping the Subject', p. 255.

> Books must at least exist, and have acquired an eminence, before their
>
> lovers can make themselves known. There must be possession also to
>
> perfect the communion: and the mere contact is much, even when our
>
> mistress speaks an unknown language. Dante puts Homer, the great
>
> ancient, in his Elysium, upon trust; but a few years afterwards, Homer,
>
> the book, made its appearance in Italy; and Petrarch, in a transport put it
>
> upon his bookshelves.
>
> (*SWLH*, III, 31-32)

The conditions stipulated for book love are suggestive of Hunt's need to assert his
authority over the books he owns. The male, questing lover – Dante, Chaucer,
Petrarch – has a female book 'mistress'. This book-mistress is both the legitimate
object of these readers' desires, and a troubling paramour. Much like the romantic
encounters of the bower – usually erotic or adulterous – the amours of the book lover
are represented as oddly risqué (in the case of *The Story of Rimini* the encounter
encompasses all three: eroticism, adultery, and book love). Provided that the book
'exists', it must 'have acquired an eminence, before [its] lovers can make themselves
known'. It is implied that less eminent books may be loved, but to acknowledge that
love would be undesirable. For a critic outspoken in the defence of his fellow
Cockney School poets and apparently against 'the metropolitan literary
establishment,' it might seem out of character to defer to canonical authority in this
instance.[59] Individual preference is not enough to justify all mistresses, but the
opinion of the world is able to justify the reputation of texts that the reader may not
even have read. It allows Dante and Petrarch to take Homer's excellence 'upon trust'
without compromising their credentials as true book lovers. An implicit shame is

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[59] Roe, p. 117.

attached to the notion of loving the wrong book, perhaps because the admission of an imprudent love might tarnish the scholarly authority of the book lover. It is one thing to defy critics in support of one's friends, but to challenge the standard canon is quite another. A man of letters should be able to judge works of genius from works that merely 'exist'. Failure in this respect would be to inhabit the role of the bibliomaniac, seeking out a book because it is curious or rare and ignoring its intellectual worth.

With all his reverence for the intellectual value of a text, though, Hunt's relationship with his books remains emphatically physical: 'there must be possession also to perfect the communion'. Elsewhere in the essay, he talks of 'lov[ing] the very books themselves,' and 'how natural it was in C[harles] L[amb] to give a kiss to an old folio' (*SWLH*, III, 24). Lamb takes the role of passionate lover, bestowing kisses on his book-mistress. It is a materialistic, quasi-sexual, form of book love which realigns the book fancier and the bibliomaniac. Mocked for their preoccupation with the physical qualities of books, Dibdin, too, speaks of them as though they were pampered pets or mistresses.[60] In the typically hyperbolic style of *Bibliomania*, one character remarks that a favourite edition should 'sleep every night upon an eider-down pillow encircled with emeralds!' (p. 254); equally, the narrative of Lisardo's burgeoning book love (or disease) is entwined with that of his, and Lysander's, projected marriages to Lorenzo's sisters (it is a *Bibliographical Romance* after all). On the one hand, the physicality of the relationship described confirms the bibliophile's active engagement with the book-as-object and his recognition of the sensuality of reading, an act which necessarily involves physical 'contact' as well as

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[60] Michael Robinson offers a queer reading of Dibdin's fetishisation of the book-object, arguing that his 'images of book "enthusiasm" express a mode of affection among men that suggestively sexualizes their relations with literature' (p. 695). I have not considered the homosexual resonances of Dibdin's bibliomania here, but Robinson's analysis aligns with mine in considering the gender politics of book appreciation.

an appreciation of aesthetic quality. But the feminisation and objectification of the book in these instances also allows for a more empowering sense of possession on the part of the collector. The books that Hunt would seek 'perfect communion' with are works of genius, next to which, he admits, his own productions can only represent 'the meanest of these [bookish] existences' (*SWLH*, III, 37). When the work of genius is objectified, however – its immaterial significance elided by sensual experience or a love of the 'very book[] itself' – its intellectual brilliance is diminished. Hunt describes his book collection in unashamedly possessive terms: '*my* Spenser, *my* Theocritus, and *my* Arabian Nights […] *my* Italian Poets […] *my* Dryden and Pope, *my* Romances, and *my* Boccaccio,' and finally '*my* Chaucer' (*SWLH*, III, 24, my emphasis). Rather than referring to 'Boccaccio's *Decameron*', for example, book and author are amalgamated and 'Boccaccio' is absorbed by Hunt's possessive pronoun. It is another version of the transformation of 'Homer, the great ancient' into 'Homer, the book'. These books cease to be the intellectual property of their authors and become that of their readers. In loving them, the book collector comes to identify himself as their patron and protector, no longer cowed by a consciousness of the superior creativity of their progenitors.

The genius of the author remains unobtainable and admirable, but in book form it is rendered non-threatening; especially if, as in the case of Petrarch's Homer, 'our mistress speaks an unknown language'. Like the 'silent' nymph of the bower, the untranslated book cannot remonstrate against the collector's questing masculinity. It is a material possession only, on which the individuality of its possessor is imposed. Whether characterising his volumes as 'silent nymphs' or great authors – Boccaccio or 'Homer, the book' – there is a constant slippage between subject and object in Hunt's description of his volumes. People become

books, and books people. According to H. J. Jackson's examination of his marginalia, Hunt was conspicuous for 'establishing and reinforcing a personal bond with his books, as though they had been human companions'. As in the case of the 'mistress' that 'speaks an unknown language', though, the congeniality of this personal bond is coloured by the fact that 'when we identify books with human companions, it is usually a shortcut for saying that they are *ideal* friends: they provide intellectual stimulation and emotional understanding without asking for anything in return'.[61] The book-mistress, regardless of whether she is a Homer or Boccaccio, does not challenge the scholarly authority of the man of letters. Instead, she allows the bibliophile to simultaneously demonstrate his literary and cultural knowledge – through his appreciation of great works and authors – and his command over the books he owns. He claims authority over the formidable intellectual contents of the study he has populated.

The study thus becomes an imagined community presided over by its compiler. Jon Mee identifies the bower as 'a version of the desire for "select" company', and what company could be more select than the array of authors represented on Hunt's shelves.[62] The book bower is a model literary club, consisting of authors who could never in reality have met, but who engage in dialogue within the bibliophile's collection. By virtue of his personal arrangement, the collector himself acts as convenor in this meeting of minds. Charles Lamb's bookcases as described by Hunt typify this ideal:

> Mr. Southey takes his place again with an old radical friend: there Jeremy
>
> Collier is at peace with Dryden: there the lion, Martin Luther, lies down with

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[61] H. J. Jackson, *Romantic Readers: The Evidence of Marginalia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), pp. 135, 122.

[62] Jon Mee, *Conversible Worlds: Literature, Contention, and Community 1762 to 1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 249.

> the Quaker lamb, Sewells: there Guzman d'Alfarache thinks himself fit
>
> company for Sir Charles Grandison, and has his claims admitted.
>
> (*SWLH*, III, 26)

The study owner participates in an idealised exchange with the textual occupants of the room, who are also engaged in fancied communication with one another. Not only is the collector admitted into this '"select" company' and party to their discourse, but he is also in control of it. The authors may be the grammatical subjects of the passage, but it is really Lamb who has orchestrated Collier's 'peace with Dryden' and admits d'Alfarache into the company of Sir Charles Grandison. The geniality of this portrait, however, is inconsistent. If Hunt felt that his position within the book bower was secure, then he would not, perhaps, feel the need to control the space and objectify its contents in quite the fashion that he does.

As already argued of Dibdin, for Hunt, the only way to secure your position in the book room is to become a book. Although his possessiveness is unequivocal in 'My Books' – '*my* Spenser, *my* Theocritus, and *my* Arabian Nights' – what Hunt actually desires is to exist among his volumes, as one of them. He does not intend to act as their custodian forever, but to become their equal, even in the form of 'the meanest of these existences' (*SWLH*, III, 37).[63] The authors transformed into books in the essay may have been objectified, but they are also sanctified. They are worshipped. Unlike their owner, they can exclusively inhabit the 'world of books', 'kindly enclosed' on the book lover's shelves. Thus, it is rather 'pleasant [...] to reflect that all these lovers of books have themselves become books! *What better metamorphosis* could Pythagoras have desired!' (*SWLH*, III, 36, my emphasis). The book lover has become a literal man of letters: a text. This privileged object is, more

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[63] George, p. 245.

than any other, able to inhabit Hunt's ideal study space. It simultaneously exists in the world of the Fancy and the physical world. Beyond this, the absolute ideal is to be considered the object of another bibliophile's passionate love. When this transformation has been effected, Hunt's identity as a book fancier may be superseded by his identity as an author. In the same way that Dibdin attempts to subordinate his bibliomaniacal endeavours to his publishing achievements, Hunt gives primacy to his authorial role. He is an 'author, who is a lover of books' (*SWLH*, III, 37) rather than 'a lover of books, who is an author', and his ideal study reflects this fact. The grand private library not only fails to look 'like a real place of books,' but is 'much less [a place] of authorship'. A true author's study, like Hunt's, will be a 'real place of books' and this 'real place of books' will foster authorship.

Having constructed himself as a man of letters, 'conversant with poetry and romance' ('The World of Books', p. 98), Hunt must maintain a degree of critical objectivity towards the works he reads and appreciates. The scholar or critic is engaged in the processes of canonisation. His role is evaluative: he believes, rightly or wrongly, that only the best works should be revered and collected. The author, on the other hand, wishes that – however 'mean' – his own creations might be collected, too. He doubly identifies with the roles of scholar and author, as defined by Hazlitt in the *Spirit of the Age*:

> A scholar (so to speak) is a more disinterested and abstracted character
> than a mere author. The first looks at the numberless volumes of a
> library, and says, "All these are mine:" the other points to a single

volume (perhaps it may be an immortal one) and says, "My name is written on the back of it".[64]

Sometimes merely saying 'these are mine' is not enough to convince the book collector of his stake the collection; he also needs to be able to say that among 'My Books' there is one with 'My name […] written on the back of it'. To admit to such a desire, though, might be to display an undesirable level of personal vanity, akin to the 'egoism' Dibdin is accused of by his critics. Certainly, in the *Autobiography* and 'My Books' Hunt denies charges of self-promotion. Like Dibdin, and the majority of the period's autobiographers, he begins his life story with an apology. Again, the subject taking centre stage claims that his personal narrative is of secondary interest to the anecdotes and information he can provide about other personalities, events, and objects. In fact, the self would have been left out of the picture altogether if it was not necessary to 'a sense of justice to others' (*ALH*, I, xxv):

> The opportunity, indeed, which it has given me of recalling some precious memories, of correcting some crude judgments, and, in one respect, of discharging a duty that must otherwise have been delayed, make me persuade myself, on the whole, that I *am* glad.
>
> (*ALH*, I, xxvi, Hunt's emphasis)

The difficulty involved in writing the self is exemplified by the passage's, possibly deliberately, clumsy self-reflexivity. Hunt employs the transitive verb 'persuade' in conjunction with the reflexive-pronoun 'myself' and the qualifying clauses 'on the whole', 'indeed', and 'in one respect'. The result might be an inelegant sentence, but it amply demonstrates the level of discomfort associated with the autobiographical form. The autobiographer must be persuaded that he '[*is*] glad' to present himself in

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[64] William Hazlitt, *The Spirit of the Age: Or, Contemporary Portraits*, in *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. P. P. Howe, 21 vols (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1932), XI, 31.

this medium. Reconfiguring the text as a work due to one's 'sense of justice to others' allows Hunt to depersonalise the autobiography. This is a work about my friends, not me. My friends are remarkable and worthy of commemoration; I am not but by virtue of having known them. The difficulty is that this pose sits uncomfortably alongside the author's vision of himself as one whose works are worthy of note in their own right. Hunt is modest in appraisals of his own writing; he does not claim that they will gain an 'eminence'. Like the size of the book room he favours, their influence may be small and yet sufficient. He will happily 'survive [in book form], were it only for the sake of those who love me in private' (*SWLH*, III, 37). Even so, we may detect an element of performance in this self-effacement. An autobiography is never an innocent production, after all. Modesty need not preclude a sense of one's own merits, nor reduce one's need to be recognised as a writer. Such are the anxieties of the 'minor' author.

Hunt's desire for critical recognition is partly manifested in his desire to become, like the authors he loves, a book. Predominantly a periodical writer, the relative endurance and cultural cachet attached to the codex appears to have made an attractive contrast to the ephemerality of his usual mode of publication. Books and periodical writing are not easy bedfellows. 'Though its demands seem otherwise,' the latter he argues, 'is not favourable to reading; it becomes too much a matter of business; and will either be attended to at the expense of the writer's books; or books, the very admonishers of his industry, will make him idle' (*SWLH*, III, 35). Again, Hunt is torn between 'industry' (practical reality) and his books ('idle' fancy and pleasure). His work removes him from the objects of his affection, while his books appear as less a self-justifying symbol of the author's learned profession than a troubling Fancy that lures him from his practical duties. However, when he himself

appears in book form he may hope to transcend the commercial world of periodical publication and join the ranks of true authors: rising in the aristocracy of letters to become 'Hunt, the book'.

Frustratingly, for Hunt, the aristocracy of letters often intersects with and is determined by the aristocracy of men. As much as existing in book form allows the author to fancy himself 'fit company' for a baronet or a lord, in reality he remains entrenched in existing social hierarchies. The literary culture of Hunt's time did not always reflect the congenial society of his ideal book room. Writing to Byron in 1815, Hunt takes pleasure in being able to send him freshly bound copies of a new edition of *The Feast of Poets* and *The Descent of Liberty*. He apologises for the audacity of their binding which is 'more magnificent than [he] intended' and, what is worse, 'purple'. Nonetheless, he wants to appear to Byron in 'sufficient dress'. 'I cannot give books away as you do, what I can give, I am bound to send in sufficient dresses of acknowledgement'.[65] Hunt is not the best-selling author that Byron is; he will not be published in the vast numbers of his friend. That he is not popular, relatively speaking, does not diminish the value of his gift: it may even increase it. Where there is an abundance, when an author can 'give books away as [Byron does]', the book itself loses value and Hunt is nothing if not a valuer of individual books. He wants his production to be as prized as those he covets. Thus, he will not give his book away in boards. Though not meaning to 'run a race with [Byron] on the binding score', giving the text pre-bound means that it comes as a complete work: ready to be positioned on the bookcase. Hunt's concerns indicate his consciousness of the discrepancy between Byron's status as an author and his own. Equally, his anxiety over the excessive 'magnificence' of the binding may suggest

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[65] 'Letter to Byron, Friday 28 July 1815', in Timothy Webb, 'After Horsemonger Lane', pp. 242-266.

self-consciousness over their class difference. To appear too magnificent might be to trespass above his station, not that Hunt had not done so before and in a much more public fashion.

When he published *The Story of Rimini* in 1816, Hunt addressed its dedicatory epistle to 'my dear Byron'. It was a move that caused outrage in the Tory press. In typical vitriolic style, Z terms it an 'insult' to Byron which excited a feeling of 'utter loathing and disgust in the public mind'. He also, however, hits at the heart of the concern:

> We dare say Mr Hunt has some fine dreams about the true nobility being the nobility of talent, and flatters himself, that with those who acknowledge only that sort of rank, he himself passes for being the *peer* of Byron. He is sadly mistaken. He is as completely a Plebeian in his mind as he is in his rank and station in society.[66]

Hunt's dedication, like the gift of his mask and the *Feast*, assumes a literary equality with his friend. But, even in his eyes, it is a fragile equality. He writes to Byron following the initial, unpleasant reaction to his dedication, apologising for any inadvertent offence caused and pleading ignorance of the lack of respect it was thought to show. The letter is fraught and contradictory. It wavers between obeisance to Byron and his rank, and a conviction in the strength of their friendship and the rightness of valuing poetic skill over ancestry. He considers Byron, exactly as Z surmises, to be of 'an intellectual rank, which stept [*sic*] before the other subordinate one'. Yet he also assures his correspondent that 'I really am no enemy to ornaments of rank'. In typical Huntian style, his confusion is attributed to his impracticality. 'I live a good deal out of the world […] & may be allowed a little cordial ignorance of

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[66] John Gibson Lockhart, 'On the Cockney School of Poetry I', in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 2 (1817), 38-41 (p. 41).

it's [*sic*] demands'.[67] The dedication is not as naïve as this comment suggests, though. At the very least, it remains a purposeful advertisement of his alliance to a literary, if not a social, elite. Hunt shows off his connections in the same way that Dibdin includes testimonials in the *Reminiscences* which prove his personal relationship with the aristocracy and authors like Sir Walter Scott. For the former, this advertisement is partly an act of radical defiance. Hunt argues, against the Tory press, that he is well within his rights to address Byron as 'my dear', being that he is a close friend and intellectual equal. But it is also an act of self-promotion. The letter contains the admission: 'I am willing to acknowledge some egotism'.[68] And well it might, as the dedication effectively relocates the author from the margins of literary culture to its centre. It proves that he is not merely, to use Z's term, 'a paltry cockney newspaper scribbler', but a close friend of the most successful author of the day.[69]

The dedication invokes the topsy-turvy society of Hunt's 'dungeon' garret with which this section began. A need to feel central to his social circle partly accounts for Hunt's perpetual return to the prison space in his writing on the book room. During his time in Horsemonger gaol he was a principal figure in political and literary circles. He was a celebrity, visited by the great and the good. Not only this, but (according to Hunt) these visitors behaved toward him in a deferential manner, despite his distressed circumstances. 'I know not which kept his hat off with the greater pertinacity of deference,' he says of Hazlitt, 'I to the diffident cutter-up of Tory dukes and kings, or he to the amazing prisoner and invalid who issued out of a bower of roses' (*ALH*, II, 12). In prison, the class barriers he flouted in his over-intimate dedication were demonstrably broken down. Hunt's relationship with his

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[67] 'Letter to Byron, April 1816', in Timothy Webb, 'After Horsemonger Lane'. p. 252.
[68] Ibid.
[69] John Gibson Lockhart, 'On the Cockney School of Poetry I', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 2 (1817), 38-41 (p. 41).

Horsemonger visitors and his dedicatee, Byron, in some respects mirror those that existed between Dibdin and his aristocratic patron. Shared ideals bond men of all backgrounds. The problem remains, however, that this bond frequently exists solely in the bowered environment of the prison, library, or study. Books are the great leveller, but only up to a certain point. When the library is dispersed or you step outside of the book-walls of the study, the authority of the bibliomaniacal collector and the man of letters is destabilised. In the form of a book, the bibliophile's place in the book collection is more secure, but only if one can 'become the meanest of these existences'. Whether this event will eventually occur, as Hunt muses at the close of 'My Books', these minor authors 'know not' (*SWLH*, III, 37).

Conclusion

'A man of letters,' says Hunt, 'conversant with poetry and romance, might draw out a very curious map, in which this world of books should be delineated and filled up, to the delight of all genuine readers' ('World of Books', p. 98). In many ways Hunt and Dibdin's writing from the book room is an attempt to do just this. Their bibliophilic works draw out the topography of the library and study. Decorated by busts, portraits, and, of course, the books themselves, these are conversational spaces in which history is felt to be present, and figures of the past are imagined as stepping out of their textual sphere and speaking directly to their admirers. More importantly, perhaps, their mapping of the book room is an act of positioning: whether upon the shelf; in bibliographical catalogues; in the canon; or within social and professional circles, these writers seek to locate themselves upon this 'curious map' of 'the world of books' by locating themselves within the library.

Though frequently represented as an Arcadian paradise, the book room just as often resembles a sick-room. 'You will infect us from top to toe with the BOOK-DISEASE', one character in *Bibliomania* exclaims, 'in truth I already begin to feel the consequence of the innumerable miasms of it, which are floating in the atmosphere of this library' (p. 275). Too much time spent in the Fancy-filled study feeds the 'mania' of its inhabitants. It can be an oppressive, as well as a charming space, hence the call to 'adjourn to a purer air' (p. 275). Dibdin may use the scientific jargon of miasma theory in jest, but the image it evokes – that of a library permeated by particles of the decaying matter of old books and old book lovers – is remarkably apt. It expresses a fear of dissolution, such as that observed in the passage from Hazlitt's 'Literary Character' discussed in the introduction. Dibdin and Hunt worry that, like Richard Heber or Homer's ghosts, a deceased book collector can only '*speak* in the LIBRARY' in a voice 'scattered', disembodied, and diseased (*Reminiscences*, p. 440). They explore the difficulties involved in establishing oneself as an author in the overbearing atmosphere of a library populated by the spectre of past genius and the competitive arena of the early nineteenth-century press. They also suggest the possible link between scholarly endeavour and physical and mental decay. Hunt is certainly of the opinion that, while a scholar's hermetic habits 'often double[] the power and the sense of his mental duties', they also 'unfit[] a man for activity — for his bodily part in the world' (*SWLH*, III, 25). Though his mind is powerful, the 'body' of the author is weak. For Hunt, at least, mental energy and the comfort of the book-cell come at the price of physical fitness. Bibliomania is a bodily, as well as a psychological, 'disease': scholarship is transformed into a physical ailment; flights of Fancy are considered in terms of actual experience. Hunt may wish to imbue the Fancy with substance, to make 'the world of books' a real

world rather than merely an imagined one, but, whether or not the 'BOOK-DISEASE' becomes an actual ailment or an exaggerated personality quirk, the library and the study are troubled by the miasmata of numerous authorial anxieties. What these authors' writings show is that, regardless of the specific terminology attached to the book lover, the space of the book collection was a site of contested creativity and implicit unease. It provided the source material for much of these authors' works, but it also reflected back at them their fears of literary inadequacy. While their ironic self-representation as eccentric, book-mad literati satirised the genteel and, seemingly harmless nature of their 'mania', this pose veils a genuine discomfort over the fragility of the book-worlds they had created and the authority of their position within them.

Chapter 2

'The author's and the giver's minds at once': Exchanging Books with Samuel Taylor Coleridge

In the previous chapter, Hunt's anxieties over the nature and level of his participation in the world outside of the library were seen to echo the sentiments of bibliomania's detractors. Among their criticisms of the book mad scholar, the perception that he lived unproductively apart from society fed into an equally prevalent sense that the books he coveted had been wrongly removed from public circulation. According to D'Israeli, the bibliomaniac's collection becomes a '*tomb of books*, when the possessor will not communicate them, and coffins them up in the cases of his library'.[1] In the eyes of bibliomania's defenders, however, the 'tomb of books' is rather a repository of knowledge. Far from 'coffining up' literature, it preserves it for future generations. As Dibdin argues in the 'Cures' section of *Bibliomania*, the 'disease' may in fact do 'a vast deal towards directing the channels of literature to flow in their proper courses' by allowing 'scholars and authors who cannot purchase every book which they find it necessary to consult' access to rare volumes.[2] The desire to 'communicate' knowledge is figured as one of the bibliophile's essential, and laudable, characteristics. We are reminded that the library is not only a place in which to deposit books, but a place from which they may be removed. To collect a book may be acquisitive, but to loan one out is communicative.

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[1] Isaac D'Israeli, 'Bibliomania', in *Curiosities of Literature* (New York: William Pearson and Co., 1835), p. 5.
[2] T. F. Dibdin, *Bibliomania: or Book-Madness, a Bibliographical Romance in Six Parts* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1811), pp. 739, 740, 741.

Hunt and Dibdin signal their cultural capital by advertising their physical proximity to books: positioning their authorial personae in the library space. However, coveting books was not the only means by which to express one's literary authority; giving them away could work just as well. This chapter concentrates on the negotiation of literary status played out in the exchange of books between authors. What does it mean to borrow from, lend, or give a book to a fellow writer? After all, authors have a special investment in the exchange of the symbolic objects of their trade. Though not every book that passes between two writers is significant, it remains the case that authors trading in books were often also trading in influence, precedence, and authority. Lucy Newlyn describes two parallel definitions of authorship existing in tension during the Romantic period. On the one hand, authorship was 'a species of ownership'. On the other, it was democratic as the value of literature was thought to lie in 'its collective uses'. Authors who lent books negotiated these definitions in a very literal sense: asserting their property in a text at the same time that they relinquished it.[3] The interactions of literary communities bolstered by book exchange were inflected by this paradox, as well as the way in which the book-as-object might be used to display cultural capital or assert authorial identity.

The significances of lending or giving books to one author in particular – Samuel Taylor Coleridge – provides my focus. Nineteenth-century and contemporary portraits of Coleridge alike are preoccupied by his connection to the book-object. 'I am, & ever have been,' he writes in a 1796 letter to John Thelwall, 'a great reader—& have read almost every thing—a library cormorant—I am *deep* in

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[3] Lucy Newlyn, *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism: The Anxiety of Reception* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 69.

all out of the way books'.[4] This image of Coleridge – the 'library cormorant', the

man who had 'read almost everything' – has proved influential. At a time when the

terms of authorship as a profession were being contested, he carved out a reputation

as 'a professional reader' in a way that profoundly affected the manner in which his

literary output has subsequently been interpreted.[5] What particularly interests me is

how his contemporaries responded to this aspect of his authorial identity: in

particular, their desire to lend or give him books. To be among those who supplied

'the library cormorant' with his 'out of the way books' could constitute an act of

reputation building as self-conscious as the act of reading those same volumes

oneself. Whether his book providers received the validation they sought in return for

their bibliographical gifts is, however, questionable. Lending books to Coleridge,

perhaps because of its function as a mode of self-expression, was difficult. His

'library cormorant' persona embodied the contradictions inherent in Newlyn's

'writing-reading subject', and his position as 'a reference point by which [other

authors] located their tasks, their values and themselves' meant that these

contradictions could feed into the authorial anxieties of his literary acquaintance.[6] If

he was a 'reference point' for other authors, that 'reference point' was shifting and

ultimately unstable.

  The examination of his bookish relationships in the 1800s and 1810s reveals

a wealth of material worth considering in relation to the rest of the Coleridge canon:

particularly in his marginalia, letters, and contemporary accounts of his authorship.

My reading of this material, in relation to book lending and borrowing practices,

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[4] *The Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Leslie Griggs, 6 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), I, 260.

[5] H. J. Jackson, 'Coleridge as Reader: *Marginalia*', in *The Oxford Handbook of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Frederick Burwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 271-87 (p. 272).

[6] Newlyn, p. 60; Grevel Lindop, 'Lamb, Hazlitt, and De Quincey', in *The Coleridge Connection: Essays for Thomas McFarland*, ed. Richard Gravil and Molly Lefebure (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990), pp. 111-132 (p. 111).

shows that there is an intersection between discussions of authorial and intellectual property rights in the period, and the nature of sympathy and empathy.[7] Empathetic or sympathetic engagement with Coleridge through the medium of the book could involve a troubling relinquishment of self-autonomy that ultimately reveals a persistent hollowness or alienation at the heart of the authorial identity. The act of passing on books illustrates the notion that creativity is a composite faculty, and that the bookish author is an interstitial figure that trades in allusion rather than original thought. The two case studies that form the basis of this chapter expose the struggles involved in articulating the shared property of the lent book and these writers' attempts to express their literary identities through them. For Charles Lamb and Thomas De Quincey, sharing with Coleridge often entailed a form of loss. Exchanging books with their literary companion and sometime idol was a complex process that required, often problematically, negotiating the roles of 'author' and 'giver' at once.[8]

'*Meum* and *Tuum*': The Distinction between Borrowers and Lenders

The growing number of libraries established between 1750 and 1850 catered 'primarily to the demands of a broad [and male] middle class'. It cost money to subscribe to many institutions and membership was limited; women, though able to borrow from circulating libraries, were often barred from subscription and society libraries, and city dwellers were much better served by these new establishments

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[7] See Jonathan Lamb, *The Evolution of Sympathy in the Long Eighteenth Century* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2009).

[8] Leigh Hunt, 'Pocket-Books and Keepsakes', in *The Keepsake*, ed. F. M. Reynolds (London: Hurst, Chance, & Co., 1828), pp. 1-18 (p. 16).

than those living outside of the major urban centres.[9] As such, the majority of the

book lending that took place in the period occurred between private citizens and

within local communities. Book clubs, coffee-house libraries, and small businesses

(such as tobacconists) provided one source of literature; family, friends, and

acquaintances another. Those affluent enough to have a book collection of their own,

however modest, frequently supplied the literary wants of those around them. These

bookish exchanges fostered literary, commercial, and political communities, and

were the site of various and significant social interactions.

The book is a particularly expressive object of exchange. As D'Israeli implies

above, it is essentially 'communicative': its chief purpose being to record and

transmit knowledge. The lent, recommended, or given book, however, communicates

more than just the information contained between its covers. Lenders and givers may

hope to impress the recipients of their bibliographical presents by introducing them

to hitherto unknown volumes or instructing them in good reading practice. In so

doing, they reveal a portion of their selves as embodied by their reading. As Hunt

describes it in the opening essay of the newly established *Keepsake* annual for 1828,

the book donor experiences the pleasure of giving a 'present, as it were,' that

represents 'the author's and the giver's minds at once'.

> And here we have one thing to recommend, which to all those who prize
>
> the spirit of books and or regard it above the letter, can give to a
>
> favourite volume a charm inexpressible. It is this: that where such an
>
> affectionate liberty can be taken either in right of playing the teacher, or
>
> because the giver of the book is sure of a sympathy in point of taste with
>
> the person receiving it, the said giver should mark his or her favourite

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[9] Joanna Innes, 'Libraries in Context: Social, Cultural and Intellectual Background', in *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland*, ed. Giles Mandelbrote and K. A. Manley, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), II, 285-300 (pp. 289-91).

> passages throughout (as delicately as need be), and so present, as it were,
> the author's and the giver's minds at once.

<div align="right">('Pocket-Books', p. 16)</div>

Hunt's suggestion to mark up the gift-book 'as delicately as need be' seems appropriate when we consider the implications of presenting something as intimate as your 'mind' to another person. As he elsewhere remarks in reference to the giving of locks of hair, the most precious gifts are those that have 'been about a friend's person' or are a literal 'part of the individual's self' ('Pocket-Books', p. 15). While the intimate nature of such gifts marks them as precious, it can also make giving them more awkward. Speaking through and for the donor, the book given in the hope of revealing 'a sympathy in point of taste with the person receiving it' constitutes a form of personal communication. How this 'communication' is received can be read as a reflection of the recipient's general feeling towards his or her benefactor. A 'part of the individual [giver's] self' is either being accepted or rejected. Though Hunt does not dwell on the possibility in 'Pocket-Books and Keepsakes', in 'My Books' given volumes are sometimes unsympathetically received. Though he admits to nurturing 'a special grudge' against those who do not engage in friendly book exchange, Hunt also professes himself upset by the fact that Hazlitt once not only lost one of his books, but forgot that he had even borrowed it.[10] Hunt's annoyance in this instance does not consist solely in the loss of his volume; he is also troubled by what Hazlitt's forgetfulness implies. The expressive link between lender, property, and borrower, has been disrupted. In forgetting, Hazlitt is seen to undervalue his friend as well as his friend's gift. In this instance, and indeed more generally, the

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[10] Hunt, 'My Books' (1823), in *The Selected Writings of Leigh Hunt*, ed. Robert Morrison and Michael Eberle-Sinatra, 6 vols (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2003), III, 23-37 (p. 27).

supposedly joyous merging of 'the author's and giver's minds' in the giving of a book can in fact introduce tensions into the exchange process.

The act of giving or recommending is seldom wholly disinterested. The subtle negotiations of social status that take place within the processes of gift-exchange have long been recognised in the work of sociologists and anthropologists: the way in which giving gifts can constitute a 'means of controlling others', or the gift itself functions as a 'symbolic media for managing the emotional aspects of relationships'.[11] In social exchange theory, for example, the 'process of exchange' reveals an individual's rational pursuit of 'their self-interests' and is coloured by 'a male bias toward competitive interaction'.[12] Authors might have consulted their 'self-interests' when trading texts with other writers, as each competed to secure his position and status within the contested sphere of Romantic cultural production. Though still coloured by 'a charm inexpressible' for 'those who prize the spirit of books', when the donor and recipient are also authors questions of 'playing the teacher', 'sympath[etic]' engagement, and making a gift of one's 'mind' take on a new significance. As the lines between 'author and giver' blur, the giver is reminded that his own authorial persona might suffer from the same form of creative assimilation at the hands of his readers. The question of who is speaking, and for whom, is an important one. Does the original author of a given book speak for its giver or does the giver speak for the author, claiming for himself an intellectual stake in the work presented? According to H. J. Jackson, 'annotated copies seem fairly commonly to have circulated under the reader's name [in the period], often as

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[11] M. Mauss, *The Gift* (Glencoe: Free Press, 1954), p. 73; David Cheal, *The Gift Economy* (London: Routlege, 1988), p. 5.
[12] Cheal, pp. 7, 8.

contributions to an ongoing controversy'.[13] This suggests a privileging of the reading subject in a model of reading that figures the activity as a dialogue between a book's author and its subsequent readers. Theoretically, the reader is afforded equal status with the author: his or her name is used to distinguish the work and his or her challenges to it are accepted as changing its meaning. On the level of the individual book, then, an author's intellectual property is not entirely his own. In a general sense, the author's identity is spread across numerous copies of his or her work and continues to preside over the ideational entity termed the text. Each individual book, however, will always belong to a reader, or readers. When those readers are also authors themselves the situation is even more complex. The circulated book might be representative of their own literary output: an intertext as well as a material text. In such instances, the general issues associated with determining intellectual property and the specific issues associated with individual book exchange begin to overlap.

Even the most amicable of lending and giving relationships between authors can be inflected by the desire to influence or by status negotiations. George Whalley notes a 'special quality' in the exchange of books between Coleridge and Lamb, a 'rich and continuing reciprocal process' in which both authors 'shared [their] delight' in the volumes they traded.[14] But, as Felicity James has demonstrated, their interactions could also be 'haunt[ed]' by fears and tensions that occasionally 'threaten[ed] to undermine mutual reading and writing, and to destroy friendly relations'. Nor was their critical relationship one-sided. Lamb was engaged in

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[13] H. J. Jackson, '"Marginal Frivolities": Readers' Notes as Evidence for the History of Reading', in *Owners, Annotators and the Signs of Reading*, ed. Robin Myers, Michael Harris, and Giles Mandelbrote (New Castle, Del. and London: Oak Knoll Press, 2005), pp. 137-51 (p. 139).

[14] George Whalley, 'Editor's Introduction' to *Marginalia*, ed. George Whalley and H. J. Jackson, 6 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980-2001), I, pp. lvii-cxxxii (pp. xci, lxxxviii): in *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, gen. ed. Kathleen Coburn, in 16 parts (London: Routledge, 1969-2002), part 12.

'rewriting' Coleridge's works as much as the latter 'over[wrote]' his.[15] Of course, by the first decades of the 1800s, when their book lending began to flourish, their relationship had progressed beyond its 1790s incarnation; they were older and their friendship had been altered by events such as their falling out over Charles Lloyd. Their 'mutual reading and writing' practices, too, were perhaps less anxious: focused on the discussion of older writers' works, rather than each other's. They had moved onto a discussion of the book as historical object, rather than concentrating on their contribution to its future. Though critics have tended to focus on their friendship in the 1790s, these later interactions not only reflect the general issues involved in lending and recommending for authors, but offer a new insight into the nature and progression of Lamb and Coleridge's relationship and the evolution of their individual conceptions of authorship and reading practice.[16] Lamb in particular, as Christopher Nield has noted, self-consciously scrutinised the implications of using books as the 'instruments of intellectual seduction'.[17] He is aware that 'playing the teacher' could be as much an act of self-effacement as one of self-promotion.

In February 1808, Lamb lent Coleridge his copy of *The Poetical Works of Mr Samuel Daniel*. Both authors marked the volume. Lamb made textual corrections to what was admittedly a poor edition of 1718 and added a biographical note on Daniel to a blank page at the beginning of the book. Though the collected *Marginalia* does not provide a date for these annotations, Lamb was in the process of preparing his *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets* for the press in 1808, making it likely that these marks were related to his research in this area and thus predate those made by

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[15] Felicity James, *Charles Lamb, Coleridge and Wordsworth: Reading Friendship in the 1790s* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008), pp. 134, 74.
[16] For instance, James, but also David Fairer in *Organising Poetry: The Coleridge Circle, 1790-1798* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).
[17] Christopher Nield, *Charles Lamb, Writing, Books and Print Culture* (Leeds: Leeds unpublished PhD, 2004), p. 97.

Coleridge. Despite the fact that Lamb might be considered the expert in this particular branch of literature, his annotations do not represent an instance of 'playing the teacher' in the manner Hunt describes in 'Pocket-Books and Keepsakes'. They are primarily for editorial purposes. The lending of the book to Coleridge seems less an attempt to influence him, than a genuine instance of the 'mutual reading and writing' in which the pair took such pleasure. Daniel's writing was not new to Coleridge at the time he borrowed *The Poetical Works* from Lamb and he shared, he says, the latter's 'hobby-horsical Love of our old Writers' (*M*, II, 4, 121).[18] However, if Lamb did not hope to 'play the teacher' with Coleridge in this instance, Coleridge may yet have wished to 'play the teacher' with Lamb. His very first marginal annotation – which appears in the form of a letter addressed to his friend – revises the latter's reading of the work. 'I think more highly, far more, of the "Civil Wars", than you seemed to do,' Coleridge writes, enjoining his companion to 'read this poem assuming in your heart [Daniel's] Character' as a means to ameliorate its 'teiz[ing]' effects (*M*, II, 1, 118). He then goes on to explain the meaning of certain diacritical markings and reiterates his advice, in a note written '5 hours after the first', that Lamb 'must read over these Civil Wars again' to fully appreciate them (*M*, II, 2 and 3, 118-19). The notes are written in a genial manner and, according to Whalley, Lamb took great 'pleasure' in them, but Coleridge still assumes the role of instructor.[19] His marginalia effects a reversal in the positions of book lender and book borrower. Though the lender might be supposed to have read the work already, it is the borrower who calls for it to be 'read over'.

Coleridge's marginalia does acknowledge the degree to which the interpretation of Daniel was an on-going subject of debate between himself and

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[18] Coleridge may well have read Daniel's poetry when residing near Wordsworth in the Lake District. A two volume edition of his works was, and still is, part of the Rydal Mount collection.
[19] Whalley, p. lxxxviii.

Lamb. He refers to Lamb's opinions from the preceding 'Monday night' adding, that when they are next comfortably situated together, he will 'read [the text over] to you & Mary' (*M*, II, 1 and 3, 118-19). Their critical reading of the text is, therefore, 'mutually' determined. Nonetheless, Coleridge's interpretative voice remains dominant. Any subsequent readings of Daniel are to be mediated through him via both his marginal annotation and his immediate speech. When Coleridge writes 'Do read over' it is in the context of Lamb's reading 'when ~~we are~~ I am quite comfortable, at our fire-side'. It is significant that Coleridge should have cancelled the plural form 'we are' and yet still refer to 'our fire-side'. Making allowances for the spontaneous and unfinished nature of the marginalia, the correction suggests a struggle, on Coleridge's part, to articulate his property in the lent book. It must return to Lamb, to his 'fire-side' and the shared space of reading and debate, but the onus of the interpretation rests on Coleridge's comfort, on his ability to express the truth of Daniel so that Lamb may comprehend it.

Indeed, Lamb seems to fall in with Coleridge's teachings. In a letter of 1809, he professes himself 'thoroughly converted […] to relish Daniel' by the notes. This admission, though, is not a full-scale relinquishment of his property in or authority over the text. As he goes on to say, the notes have not so much 'thoroughly converted [him] to relish Daniel' as they have convinced him 'to say I relish him, for, after all, I believe I did relish him'.[20] Rather than having totally reversed his opinion, Lamb suggests, Coleridge has merely confirmed it. His only failing, in the interpretation of Daniel, was not sufficiently impressing his friend with the depth of his knowledge of, and 'relish' for, the text. Lamb's authorial persona was self-consciously tied up with the appreciation of Daniel at this time. The subtle tempering

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[20] *The Letters of Charles and Mary Lamb*, ed. E. V. Lucas, 3 vols (London: J. M. Dent, 1935), II, 75.

of Coleridge's advice is in part a means of preserving his literary status in relation to the more established author. By 1809, he may have also been less willing or quick to fall in to step with Coleridge's teachings on all matters. Previous experience had sensitised him to his friend's offers of instruction. Though Lamb had in the past turned to him in search of 'some leading-strings to cheer and direct us [himself and Mary, that is]' (*LL*, I, 74), their rupture in 1798 significantly coloured the way in which the elder poet's advice was afterwards received.[21] Lamb saw Coleridge's offences against himself and Lloyd compounded by his friend's patronising tone. In his famous letter of May 1798, also known as the 'Theses Quædam Theologicæ', he pointedly addresses Coleridge as 'Learned Sir': playing the role of 'friend and docile Pupil to instruct' to the point of absurdity (*LL*, I, 124). Even after their reconciliation in 1800, he baulks against Coleridge in 'Learned Sir' mode. He writes to Thomas Manning towards the end of the year, remarking: 'In Coleridge's letters you will find a good deal of amusement, to see genuine talent struggling against a pompous display of it' (*LL*, I, 235).

For all that Coleridge might at times have irritated him, Lamb is sufficiently self-aware to admit that all men styling themselves literary, himself included, can be guilty of 'pompous displays' of their knowledge. His treatise on the practices of lending and borrowing, 'The Two Races of Men' (1822), recognises the fact that, while lending habits may not reflect an entirely cynical pursuit of 'self-interests', there is yet literary prestige to be gained by the recommendation of a book. Referring to the excellence of Thomas Browne's *Urn Burial* (1658), Elia asserts his primacy in this particular act of literary appreciation, noting that even '[Coleridge] will hardly

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[21] As previously mentioned, James has convincingly shown that Lamb corrected and differed from Coleridge on a number of issues before 1798. After their falling-out, Lamb seems better able to distance himself from Coleridge without feeling directly threatened or imposed upon by his instruction, though this tension has not been entirely excised from their relationship.

allege that he knows more about that treatise than I do, who introduced it to him, and was indeed the first (of the moderns) to discover its beauties'.[22] Lamb, albeit in the voice of Elia, draws attention to his expertise as a reader. He is capable of recognising 'beauties' that other 'moderns' have overlooked and of 'introducing' even the 'Learned' Coleridge to a new branch of literature. In this case, he is the one qualified to 'play the teacher'. His literary posturing, however, is undercut by the sentence that immediately follows: 'so have I known a foolish lover to praise his mistress in the presence of a rival more qualified to carry her off than himself' (*WCML*, II, 25). The essay registers the fact that he who recommends is always in danger of losing possession of the very 'beauties' he claims a special power in discerning. Coleridge, along with Comberbatch, appears in 'The Two Races' as a literary gallant, apt to run off with his companion's beloved 'mistresses' and, perhaps, to deserve them better. It is 'more easy', Elia confesses, 'to suffer by than to refute' the claim that '"the title to property in a book (my Bonaventure, for instance) is in exact ratio to the claimant's powers of understanding and appreciating the same"' (*WCML*, II, 25). Lending or recommending a book is figured simultaneously as an assertion of and challenge to the lender's property in a text. Hence, the writer of 'Two Races' is 'fallen into the society of *lenders*, and *little men*' (*WCML*, II, 25): those who relinquish their 'title to property' in the very act of claiming it. 'The Two Races' subjects Elia's antiquarianism, his self-proclaimed singular tastes, to scrutiny. It exposes the irony of bringing an obscure work to the notice of a wider audience, an act which necessarily reduces its obscurity. No longer are its 'beauties' exclusively yours, they are now free to be 'carried off' by a 'rival more qualified' than you to understand and appreciate them. It exemplifies the symbolic difficulties

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[22] Charles Lamb, 'The Two Races of Men', in *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*, ed.. E. V. Lucas, 7 vols (London: Methuen, 1903-05), II, 165-72 (p. 25).

described by Andrew Piper in relation to the gift-book format popular in the early nineteenth century: namely, that 'the more one shared, the less one paradoxically had to give away'. If 'sharing was integral to writing's diffusion in the nineteenth century, making it increasingly available at the same time that writing's availability made sharing that much easier' then it was equally true that 'the more writing was shared and shareable, the more difficult it became to claim something as one's own'.[23] In this paradox consists the 'littleness' of lenders.

Yet, as we might expect from Elia, Lamb's satire in 'The Two Races' has more than one object. Despite claims that '*the men who borrow*' constitute the '*great race*', the supposedly laudable characteristics of the borrower are as highly ironised as the 'littleness' of '*the men who lend*'. Their 'open, trusting, generous manners' are, of course, predicated on the 'open, trusting [and] generous manners' of those who lend to them (*WCML*, II, 23). Equally, the ability of lenders to supply the wants of 'men who borrow' implies their covetousness: one cannot lend without having previously accumulated. What 'Two Races', therefore, argues for is not the 'greatness' of borrowers and the 'littleness' of lenders, but the arbitrariness of such distinctions. A meditation on the nature of property, and literary property in particular, Lamb draws out the contradictions inherent in concepts of ownership. The essay echoes Coleridge's confusion of 'I' and 'our' in his note on Daniel when it praises the borrower's 'liberal confounding of those pedantic distinctions of *meum* and *tuum*' (*WCML*, II, 23). The two races of men are not so much those who borrow and those who lend, but those who see the world in terms of what is mine and what is yours, and those who see the world in terms of what is 'ours'. Those who can take pleasure in lending are able to recognise the allusive and relational nature of our

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[23] Andrew Piper, *Dreaming in Books: The Making of the Bibliographic Imagination in the Romantic Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), p. 125.

shared literary heritage: that a lent book is never the exclusive property of a single owner, but a symbol of the transference of knowledge as embodied in the book-as-object. There will always be a confounding of '*meum* and *tuum*' in writing, particularly when an author self-identifies as a reader. He will be influenced by earlier writers, borrowing their ideas and, in turn, lending out his own for future writers' use.

The 'confounding of those pedantic distinctions of *meum* and *tuum*', then, is at the heart of the issues experienced by the authors treated in this chapter. Is the lent book mine or yours? Is sharing books always a reciprocal process, or is it a form of theft, a 'carrying off' of our most precious treasures? As the archetypal borrower in 'Two Races', Coleridge, in particular, brings into focus the issues involved in lending or recommending a book as an expression of self, and specifically an authorial self, in the period. His 'greatness' as both a borrower and an author consists in this 'liberal confounding' of '*meum* and *tuum*', 'I' and 'ours'. For many commentators, though, this is also his greatest failing.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Lending to the 'library cormorant'

Coleridge's position as a nexus for literary book exchange can be seen in the way that his contemporaries discussed the volumes that passed through his hands. Cultural capital built up around books containing his annotations. H. J. Jackson notes that though his reputation as an annotator is now well established, there is actually little evidence for Coleridge as a regular writer in books 'until he was in his thirties' and then 'the first occasion on which [he] appears systematically to have written notes in a set of books' was on the 'invitation' of Thomas Poole in 1807. The fact that he kept notebooks, she suggests, may have lessened his need to write in the

margins of his own books.[24] Jackson indicates the degree to which Coleridge's role as an annotator was influenced by his position in literary society. His notebooks were a private repository for his musings on the work of other writers; the annotations he appended to his friends' volumes, however, always had an audience and, most often, a willing one. Allowing him 'free run' of his library, Poole was more gratified than 'vexed that [Coleridge] had bescribbled [his] Books' (*M*, II, 61, 243). Henry Crabb Robinson, too, makes more than one reference to transcribing examples of Coleridge's marginalia in the 1830s and 40s, for the benefit of the author's literary executors.[25] This sharing of Coleridge's as yet unpublished writings provided Robinson with an opportunity for modest cultural display. Though humble in the evaluation of his own writing, he also saw that he might 'do some good by keeping a record of my interviews' with 'the most distinguished men of the age'.[26] He was able to cement his place in the literary culture of the early nineteenth century even if he did not see himself as directly contributing to it. His possession of Coleridge's literary fragments, for instance, allowed him to participate in the preservation of his friend's legacy; he actively engaged in the debates surrounding the divergent accounts of Coleridge that were to appear after his death.

The desirability of possessing one of Coleridge's annotated volumes realises the declaration of the final note made by the author in another of Lamb's books: 'I ~~shall~~ will not be long here, Charles!—& gone, you will not mind my having spoiled

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[24] H. J. Jackson, *Romantic Readers: The Evidence of Marginalia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), p. 270.
[25] Henry Crabb Robinson, *On Books and Their Writers*, 3 vols (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1938), II, 469, 496.
[26] Henry Crabb Robinson, *Diary, Reminiscences, and Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson*, ed. Thomas Sadler, 2 vols (Boston: Osgood, 1871), I, p. vi. See also Eugene Stelzig, 'A Cultural Tourist in Romantic Germany: Henry Crabb Robinson as Nineteenth-Century Life Writer', *Biography: An Interdisciplinary Quarterly*, 28 (2005), 515-33.

a book in order to leave a Relic' (*M*, I, 13, 372).[27] Though Coleridge's fears of

impending death were premature (the note was written around 1811), the prediction

that his authorship should come to be embodied in the form of such bibliographical

'Relics' was not wholly inaccurate. When the original volume – a folio of the

collected plays of Beaumont and Fletcher – is viewed, the link between remembering

the author and marking-up books becomes even clearer. The annotation appears to

have been suggested to Coleridge by a particular passage from act III of *The Queen*

of Corinth (also annotated). The tragic heroine Merione prostrates herself before her

intended husband, withdrawing from their engagement on account of having been

sexually assaulted:

> But so *unfit* and *weak* a Cabinet
>
> To keep your love and virtue am I now,
>
> I mean *this body*, so corrupt a Volume
>
> For you to study goodness in and honor
>
> […] when *this grief shall kill me*, as it must do,
>
> Only remember yet ye had such a Mistress;
>
> And if you dare shed a tear, yet honor me.[28]

The similarity between the sentiment of Coleridge's note and the speech is clear. Not

only do both entreat their audience to remember them well, despite their possible

flaws, but both explicitly make the connection between the book, or 'Volume', and

the body. Coleridge and Merione transform their human bodies – 'weak', 'corrupt',

and not, perhaps, 'long here' – into 'Relics'; their identities can be read in and on the

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[27] In the original copy of this annotation, 'will' has also been cancelled: a fact not made clear in the *Collected Works*. This double deletion suggests Coleridge's agitation at the time of writing this particular note.

[28] Francis Beaumont, *Comedies and Tragedies … Never printed before, and now published by the authours original copies* (London: John Martyn, Henry Herringman, Richard Marriot, 1679), part 2, p. 8.

physical form of the 'Volume'. More so, perhaps, than the books he authored, the books that he had read and inscribed became the objects by which Coleridge's legacy was characterised.

The introductory note to one of the earliest published examples of his marginalia expresses just such a sentiment:

> It is well known to those who are in habits of intercourse with Mr Coleridge, that not the smallest, and, in the opinion of many, not the least valuable part of his manuscripts exists in the blank leaves and margins of books; whether his own, or those of his friends, or even in those that have come in his way casually, seems to have been a matter altogether indifferent. The following is transcribed from the blank leaf copy of Sir T. Brown's Works in folio, and is a fair specimen of these *Marginalia*; and much more nearly than any of his printed works, gives the style of Coleridge's conversation.[29]

Coleridge is to be discovered in 'the blank leaves and margins of books': and, in many instances, other people's books. The prefatory note hints at the relational nature of his authorship. It depends on other people (those with whom he converses) and other authors (those on whose books he writes). It is grounded in his physical presence. Coleridge's annotations reflect immediate forms of communication. 'Much more nearly than any of his printed works' his marginal interjections express the 'style of [his] conversation': that is, the 'style' of interacting directly with the man. There is an emphasis on the importance of seeing 'Mr Coleridge' in the flesh to truly appreciate his intellectual excellences. If direct access to his person is impossible, then the books that he 'owned' and inscribed offer another means of material

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[29] James Gillman (S. T. C. Coleridge), 'The Character of Sir Thomas Brown as a Writer', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 32 (1819), pp. 197-98 (p. 197).

contact. His authorship and his personhood are located in his bibliographical 'Relics'.

Equally significant is the role of 'those who are in habits of intercourse with Mr Coleridge'. The average reader of the *Blackwood's* article has access to neither Coleridge's person nor his annotated texts – both of which are presented as having a significant bearing on the proper reading of his work – but they may gain a glimpse of them through the efforts of his acquaintance. 'Those who are in habits of intercourse' with him play a part in the public construction of his authorship: though not, crucially, in the manner of the 'anonymous critics in reviews, magazines, and news-journals of various name and rank' or the 'satirists with or without a name, in verse or prose' that Coleridge bemoans in the *Biographia*. Despite arguing that it is to these figures that he 'owe[s] full two-thirds of whatever reputation and publicity I happen to possess', their anonymity, or their distance from their subject, apparently undermines their critical insights.[30] Coleridge points to the irony of a nameless writer who deals only in 'names': specifically the making of another's when their own identity remains veiled. It is worth remembering that some of these 'anonymous critics' – such as John Wilson, alias Christopher North – were known to Coleridge and did, at one time or another, have access to his manuscripts and his person. The controversy surrounding the authorship of the damning *Edinburgh* review of his 'Christabel' volume proved an instance in which public criticism blurred into personal betrayal. Though the actual identity of its author is still a matter of critical debate, Coleridge suspected that his one-time friend Hazlitt was the culprit.[31] Whether or not Coleridge approved the publication of all the marginalia that made it

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[30] *Biographia Literaria*, in *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, gen. ed. Kathleen Coburn, in 16 parts (London: Routledge, 1969-2002), I, chapter 3, part 7, p. 48.
[31] See Duncan Wu, *William Hazlitt: The First Modern Man* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 190-91.

into print, the figure presenting them to the public yet claimed a material connection with their subject. The writer of the introduction to 'The Character of Sir Thomas Brown' (signed G. J., usually thought to be James Gillman), rather than distancing himself from 'Mr Coleridge', proudly advertises his proximity to him.[32] He may not provide his full name, appending only his initials to the piece, but, equally, he is not anonymous. His personal 'intercourse' with the man supposedly makes him a better judge of the relative value of his works. The book to which they both have access (Sir Thomas Browne's *Works*, in this instance) bonds them. Their claim to intimacy with or an understanding of Coleridge and his works is authenticated by their possession of this artefact or 'Relic'. The 'communicative' nature – be it through 'conversation' or conversational annotation – of their 'intercourse' suggests not a one-sided interpretation of the great author's output and character, but a mutually constructed reading of his identity.

By bringing his exclusive access to Coleridge's person and marginalia to the reader's attention, G. J. is also implicated in the processes of interpretation the article documents. He becomes a mediator of Coleridge's genius in much the same way that Coleridge's annotations mediate between Thomas Browne and his subsequent readers. Indeed, the annotated book becomes the perfect object through which to express a communal model of textual criticism. As an item owned by one person, written by another, and, possibly, annotated by yet another, the property status of the marked-up book is fluid. It belongs to numerous individuals simultaneously. Though this allows its readers to benefit from the interpretative possibilities enabled by shared reading practices, the difficulty of pin-pointing the volume's true owner can also generate a variety of literary anxieties. The circulation of a book under a

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[32] Whalley suggests that the contributor was so close to Coleridge that he may, in fact, have been Coleridge himself. We do know that James Gillman acted as the intermediary between Coleridge and *Blackwood's* during the publication process: Whalley, *M*, I, p. cxv.

reader's name is seen to have ramifications not only for the book's author, but for any other readers who come into contact with it. Owners of Coleridge annotated volumes were placed in the paradoxical position of claiming as their own a book whose value was predicated on someone other than themselves having read it. By locating the object's value in its ability to offer a unique insight into Coleridge's authorship, they also rendered themselves, as the object's owner, subordinate.

The irony of this is that the annotator, too, is essentially a supplemental figure. According to Jerome C. Christensen, while the act of marginal notation 'threatens to reduce the original text to a pretext for commentary' it is also, however authoritative, a secondary form of writing: distinguished by its proximity to an anterior text.[33] Whether a volume physically belongs to or is authored by another, marginal writing brings into relief instabilities in the concept of authorship. The issue rests on whether adding marginalia to a text constitutes an act of reading or of writing. Specifically, how might an annotator who is also an author in his or her own right see their authorial identity destabilised or strengthened by the auxiliary nature of their marginal notations and their proximity to the original printed text?

The issues associated with marginalia are an acute example of broader anxieties observable in the period over the relational nature of writing. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when so many writers were preoccupied by the issue of increased textual production, all forms of writing could seem to partake of marginalia's characteristic secondariness. As Hazlitt notes in *Spirit of the Age*: 'the world is growing old' and almost no '*niche* remains unoccupied' for the prospective author to fill.[34] Hazlitt's authors, for the most part,

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[33] Jerome C. Christensen, 'Coleridge's Marginal Method in the Biographia Literaria', *PMLA*, 92 (1977), 928-40 (p. 933).
[34] William Hazlitt, *The Spirit of the Age: Or, Contemporary Portraits*, in *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. P. P. Howe, 21 vols (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1932), XI, 28-29.

exist as spectators at a battle, guests at a feast, visitors to a monument. They are able

to appreciate what they observe, but relegated to the role of commentator and

evaluator rather than creator. This is not to say that creation is impossible, but that,

struck as the author or artist is by the magnificence of what is past, he is paralysed by

his struggle to 'do better than all those who have gone before' (*CWWH*, XI, 29). The

bookish author, by publicising his connection to previous writers' works, is perhaps

especially prone to this form of creative paralysis. At its most obstructive,

bookishness can have the effect of making every new book feel like a mere

addendum: a very long, and admittedly well bound, marginal note.

Coleridge's work, especially, is characterised as secondary, with even his

'printed works' represented as inherently supplemental. Aptly, the 'world is growing

old' passage in *Spirit of the Age* comes from the section on Coleridge. He plays a

complex role in Hazlitt's account of the trials of modern authorship. Typifying the

magnificence of 'all those who have gone before', he functions as a reminder of the

rarity of true originality: there being 'scarce a thought can pass through the mind of

man, but its sound has at some time or other passed over his head' (*CWWH*, XI, 29).

Despite his capacious intellect, though, he more than any other suffers from the

creative paralysis Hazlitt describes. Coleridge's intellect is too diffuse. Inhabiting the

thoughts of so many writers and theorists at once renders him incapable of focussing

his individual genius: hence, perhaps, the aptness of characterising it in terms of his

marginalia. His thoughts are always positioned beside someone else's. All the

'mighty heap of hope, of thought, of learning, and humanity' in *Spirit of the Age*

ends 'in [his] writing paragraphs in the *Courier*' (*CWWH*, XI, 34).[35] This is a direct

result, Hazlitt implies, of his reading too much and writing too little. What he does

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[35] Hazlitt is also attacking Coleridge's politics in this instance: the *Courier* being a Tory newspaper.

write, and what may make up 'not the least valuable part of his manuscripts' is reliant on the body of other writers' works. His legacy is contained in marginal 'paragraphs', but not necessarily his own 'printed works'.

It is this perceived reliance on previous literature that forms the basis for the long-standing critical debate on Coleridge's plagiarism or, in other words, his role as a borrower. The core of the debate over his authorial identity – historically observed in the divergent readings of his output by John Livingston Lowes and Norman Fruman – rests on whether or not to interpret his literary mode as allusive and wide-ranging or as derivative and chaotic (or both).[36] What is more generally at stake in this discussion of both his acknowledged and unacknowledged borrowings, however, is a concern over the expression of authorial identity. *Spirit of the Age* registers Coleridge's intellectual failures as a disappointment, despite Hazlitt's admission that perhaps secondariness is all that the modern author can hope for and, in 'Why the Arts are Not Progressive' (1814), perhaps all that he should hope for (*CWWH*, IV, 160-61). In the case of Coleridge, though, it would seem that the 'oldness' of the world fails to satisfy as an excuse for what Hazlitt considered his intellectual inadequacies. Indeed, critical responses to Coleridge's authorship and his work continue to turn on the related concepts of secondariness and the slipperiness of intellectual property. What emerges from the various attempts of scholars following Lowes and Fruman to reconcile these conflicting accounts is the image of Coleridge as, predominantly, a reader and a talker: a 'liminal mind' who practiced 'not philosophy but commentary'.[37] The way in which to recuperate Coleridge, it seems,

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[36] John Livingston Lowes, *The Road to Xanadu: A Study in the Ways of the Imagination* (London: Pan Books, 1978); Norman Fruman, *Coleridge, the Damaged Archangel* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1972); see also Andrew Keanie, 'Coleridge and Plagiarism', in *The Oxford Handbook of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Frederick Burwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 435-454.
[37] Jerome C. Christensen, pp. 933, 937; see also Tilar J. Mazzeo, 'Coleridge, Plagiarism, and the Psychology of the Romantic Habit', *European Romantic Review*, 15 (June 2004), 335-341 (p. 339).

is (and has always been) to embrace the disparate nature of his literary achievement, characterising his writing as purposely supplemental, 'chameleon', or, to borrow Hazlitt's term, 'tangential' (*CWWH*, XI, 29).[38]

However, as the word 'tangential' implies, these attempts at recuperation are not always successful or are, at least, less than straightforward. To have a 'chameleon' mind may be to take a broad and flexible approach to knowledge and learning, to have a 'tangential' one is perhaps to be frustratingly digressive or erratic. Hazlitt's term indicates a movement away from a fixed, intellectual centre. Indeed, the quotation from which this description of Coleridge's mind is taken is used by the OED to demonstrate the definition of 'tangential' as that which 'merely touches a subject or matter'.[39] As such, reading Coleridge's work, like the *Blackwood's* contributor, in terms of its 'tangential' nature does not necessarily resolve the authorial anxieties with which it may be associated. Instead, it can serve to intensify them. As David Fairer argues of Coleridge's poetic interactions in the 1790s, his role is at once 'disturbed and disturbing':

> sometimes he is longing to be grounded and collaborative, at others he
> wants to seize and embody the Idea itself. As Seamus Perry has shown,
> he is a writer who raises complex questions about the struggle for
> coherence; and, as we shall see, it is clear that how Coleridge as an
> individual was organised usually had implications well beyond himself.[40]

It is the overtly relational nature of his authorship, I argue, that renders Coleridge's 'struggle for coherence' in the eyes of his commentators so problematic. It is not

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[38] Timothy Corrigan, *Coleridge, Language, and Criticism* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1982), p. 35.
[39] This more figurative definition of the word diverges from the definition of 'tangential' or 'tangent' appearing in Johnson's Dictionary, which only provides a mathematical explanation for the term. Hazlitt's usage may have been a coinage, specifically suggested by Coleridge's divergent methods of study.
[40] Fairer, p. 5.

only that his writing is reliant on other writers' works, but that other writers and their works are also reliant on him. His creative paralysis cannot be fully absolved precisely because it 'usually had implications well beyond himself'. Both Lamb's characterisation of Coleridge as a borrower and related contemporary representations of him as an annotator emphasise his 'connectedness', to use Fairer's term. His image, like the books he inscribes, is passed around his acquaintance and becomes a talismanic symbol of their authorial ambitions as much as his own. Problems begin to arise because Coleridge's 'connectedness' is frequently perceived to work in only one direction or to be 'tangential'. He may 'merely touch' those around him, without fully engaging with them or their ideas. His borrowings, therefore, are not reciprocal. He 'confounds' notions of '*meum* and *tuum*' only in the sense that others' property is persistently absorbed into his imposing conception of '*meum*'. He is, for instance, almost exclusively represented as a borrower. Rarely do we see Coleridge lend a book. What exactly, then, do those who lend or give books to Coleridge get in return? If, as discussed above, book lending or giving functions as an expression of self, and sometimes a highly personalised expression of self, then the exchanged book should retain as much, if not more, of its donor's identity than its recipient's. However – as seen in relation to his borrowing of Lamb's Daniel – Coleridge's interpretative voice is powerful enough to subsume the analytic contributions of other readers, even a book's possessor. Although the works he annotated often made their way back to their original owners it is also the case that, rather than having succeeded in 'playing the teacher' with Coleridge, those exchanging books with him could find that they had sacrificed something of themselves in the process. In the final two sections of this chapter I examine this concept by way of two case studies: the first continuing my discussion of Lamb's bookish relationship with Coleridge;

and the second considering De Quincey's experience of exchanging books with him in the late 1800s and 1810s. By inhabiting the mediatory role of the lender or giver, both Lamb and De Quincey are led to contemplate the significances of mixing and sharing literary influence, physical objects, and even authorial identities. Within the lending process, as elsewhere in this thesis, the author is less a distinct personality, than a troublingly permeable and indeterminate figure.

'To lose a book to C.': Lamb, Coleridge, and Missing Books

In a note of 1834, 'The Death of Coleridge', Charles Lamb remarks: 'I cannot think a thought, I cannot make a criticism on men or books, without an ineffectual turning and reference to him'.[41] He describes his consultation of the author as one might describe consulting a printed work. He 'turns' to and 'references' Coleridge as though he existed bound in Russia on his shelves. Like the author of the introduction to 'The Character of Sir Thomas Brown', Lamb figures his friend in terms of the unique volume. Again, too, the 'tone' of his voice or his conversation is evoked in relation to this bibliographical relic. Certainly, a reference book – as a general store of useful information – would seem an appropriate analogue for Coleridge's capacious intellect and wide-ranging conversational style. Indeed, just such an image is employed by Lamb (though in a much less flattering way) in a letter to Southey at the height of his and Coleridge's falling out. Why should he require Coleridge's personal instruction, Lamb writes, when '[he has] an "Encyclopædia" at hand' (*LL*, I, 126). In the case of 'The Death of Coleridge', however, a 'turning and reference' to Coleridge is 'ineffectual' not because of any slight felt by Lamb, but because, to his regret, Coleridge-the-man is not available and neither does Coleridge-the-book

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[41] Charles Lamb, 'The Death of Coleridge': transcribed by John Forster in 'Charles Lamb', *The New Monthly Magazine*, 43.170 (Feb. 1835), pp 198-99 (p. 199).

straightforwardly exist in his library: an encyclopaedia will no longer suffice. Despite refuting the claim that Coleridge's 'works did not answer to his spoken wisdom', Lamb is forced to admit that there was a 'tone in his oral delivery, which seemed to convey sense to those who were otherwise imperfect recipients' ('Death of Coleridge', p. 199). Though indicating his own ability to comprehend Coleridge's written works, Lamb nonetheless feels the lack of his friend's physical presence: a physical presence characterised by its bookishness, but not supplied by any actual book. Despite the reciprocity in their lending relationship – Lamb, after all, possessed a number of volumes containing the kind of annotations that were apparently so reminiscent of 'the style of Coleridge's conversation' – a sense of loss endures in his writing on their bookish interactions.[42] Coleridge is associated with a persistent lack: a text that cannot be understood because it is absent; a missing as much as a reference book.

Coleridge had a reputation among his acquaintance for misplacing books. According to Crabb Robinson, he thought this a 'great injustice'. Considering that, when he 'related the history' of the 'reports circulated about his losing books', he was in the process of returning one it seems only fair that Robinson decided he 'ought not to join in the reproach' on this occasion. However, only three days previously he had commented in his journal: 'Called … late on Lamb, who has brought me from Mr. Morgan's some German books I had lent to Coleridge, which are thus rescued from certain loss'.[43] Although 'The Two Races of Men' lauds Coleridge's borrowing practices – arguing that he, of all borrowers, 'will return [your books] (generally anticipating the time appointed) with usury; enriched with annotations, tripling their value' (*WCML*, II, 26) – this account is undermined at the

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[42] James Gillman, 'The Character of Sir Thomas Brown as a Writer', p. 197.
[43] Henry Crabb Robinson, *On Books and Their Writers*, I, pp. 185, 184.

same time as it is offered. Elsewhere in the essay, Lamb is only too keen to note the 'foul gap[s]' and 'slight vacuum[s]' left by the depredators of his library, among whom Coleridge is numbered (*WCML*, II, 25). The letter on which 'Two Races' is based expresses a similar anxiety over the 'vacuum' left by S.T.C.'s borrowings. Lamb scolds Coleridge for having absconded with a copy of Luther's *Table Talk* – or 'Luster's Tables' as his maid comically styles it – not belonging to him in the first place. 'You never come,' he cries, 'but you take away some folio that is part of my existence' (*LL*, II, 284). In the letter, as well as the essay, Lamb's indignation is, in part, performed. He is happy, he implies, to lend his books to Coleridge under normal circumstances, but in this instance he had not been 'very sedulous in explaining' the true worth of the book to its original owner, hence his irritation. The exposure of Lamb's lie of omission is not the only difficulty associated with the borrowing of Luther's *Table Talk,* however. The 'folio' removed is not an inert object, but a significant 'part of [Lamb's] existence'. Coleridge's absence and the absences he leaves behind him unsettle Lamb's very self.

Coleridge, like a favourite volume, was necessary to Lamb's conception of his authorial identity. Hence in 'The Death of Coleridge' his 'criticism on men and books' stagnates in his deceased friend's absence. It is not only after Coleridge's death that 'turning and reference' to him can seem 'ineffectual', though. The frustration and sense of loss associated with their book exchanges of the early 1800s are echoes of the damage done to their relationship in the late 1790s. Lamb continues to confront Coleridge's retreat from their intimacy and the aftershock of his previous propensity to, in Fairer's words, 'invest[] too much of [his] personal identity in him': a 'personal identity' that Coleridge, perhaps, did not always respect as he should.[44]

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[44] Fairer, p. 234.

Coleridge's removal of *Table Talk* without consulting Lamb is an example of a 'borrowing' that fails to take into account the proprietorial claims of the lender. It is a prime example of his propensity to 'confound' the distinction between '*meum* and *tuum*' in a potentially disruptive manner. Sometimes, Lamb's letter suggests, distinctions between mine and yours need to be preserved. Coleridge presupposes his superior 'title to property in [the] book' by taking it without permission. He does not consider the possible importance of the volume to Lamb or the significance of its removal. His conception of '*meum*' is too far in ascendance. Of course, Lamb is also aware of the irony that any ill consequences arising from *Table Talk*'s disappearance are as much a result of his coveting of another man's property as they are of Coleridge's actions. Lamb sees his own sins reflected back at him. He admits that his prevarication over revealing its value was calculated 'so that in all probability [the book] would have fallen to [him] as a deodand'. As much as he plays with the notion of his selflessness in looking after other peoples' books, he remains serious in his assessment that, while 'I may lend you my own books, because it is at my own hazard', it is 'not honest to hazard a friend's property'. Though 'no selfish partiality of [his] shall make distinction between' his books and those of his friends, he does 'always make that distinction' (*LL*, II, 284-85, 285). He is sensitive to every reader's prior claim on the books they have read whereas Coleridge, in this instance, is only conscious of his own.

In 'Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading' (1822), the marks left by previous readers, the evidence of shared ownership and interpretation, are part of what makes a volume truly valuable.

> How beautiful to a genuine lover of reading are the sullied leaves and
> worn-out appearance, nay, the very odour, (beyond Russia,) if we would

not forget kind feelings in fastidiousness, of an old "Circulating Library"
Tom Jones, or Vicar of Wakefield! How they speak of the thousand
thumbs that have turned over their pages with delight! of the lone
sempstress, whom they may have cheered (milliner, or harder-working
mantua-maker) after her long day's needle-toil, running far into
midnight, when she has snatched an hour, ill spared from sleep, to steep
her cares, as in some Lethean cup, in spelling out their enchanting
contents! Who would have them a whit less soiled? What better
condition could we desire to see them in?

(*WCML*, II, 173)

In this passage the book is not an object with a sole owner, but one meant for
'circulating'. Nor are books the preserve of the 'Learned Sir' who might best
understand them. Lamb might make a gendered assumption about the kinds of
readers who borrow from circulating libraries, and is elsewhere less than
complimentary about the quality of 'even the better kind of modern novels' which
are apparently 'for the eye to glide over only' (*WCML*, II, 175), but he also venerates
the reading experience of the 'lone sempstress', the 'milliner', and the 'mantua-
maker'. Considering Mary at one time worked as a mantua-maker, the affection he
displays for these female, 'midnight' readers seems sincere. These women, perusing
their volumes in the 'snatched' hours after their working day, share something with
Lamb in their experience of literature. As he notes in 'Oxford in the Vacation'
(1820), work 'sends you home with such increased appetite to your books' (*WCML*,
II, 8).

Lamb's identification with the various types of reader detailed in 'Detached
Thoughts' chimes with his more famous assertion from its opening: 'I love to lose

myself in other men's minds. When I am not walking I am reading; I cannot sit and think. Books think for me' (*WCML*, II, 172). Newlyn and James suggest that this statement expresses a definitive aspect of Lamb's Elian style. He presents an 'ideal of the reader's openness to the author' which involves 'a double movement of self-recognition and self-surrender' and is representative of his 'willingness to take on the characteristics of another writer's style'.[45] Similarly, Simon Hull describes the essay as a whole as presenting a 'democratic' model of reading that allows Elia to engage in 'an essentially pacific form of emancipation, in accordance with Phil-Elia's representation, that of identifying and merging the self with the other'. In each instance Elia is interpreted as a vessel through which Lamb inhabits the experience and 'minds' of other people. Elian discourse, in this statement in particular, is seen to disguise the figure of the author (Lamb via Elia) and replace it with a reader, other writers, or even books. Elia's readers might themselves find it difficult to inhabit his 'mind' in line with the reading practices described in 'Detached Thoughts' as Elia is already 'lost' in books himself, leaving no concrete psyche for them to commune with. Lamb's declaration is, therefore, related to what Hull sees in his metropolitan writing as a form of 'empowering self-depreciation'.[46] All three critics envisage the 'self-depreciating' and 'democratic' model of reading put forward in 'Detached Thoughts' as a form of positive 'empowerment' for Lamb: an acceptance of powerlessness that is in itself powerful as an 'emancipation' from the anxieties of the critical discourse and authorial tensions of his day. It is an interpretation that connects with my discussion of Scott and Hogg in the next chapter, who, too, obscure their authorial identities in a bid to 'emancipate' themselves from the sometimes harsh publishing conditions of the 1810s and 20s. Even so, there remains

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[45] Newlyn, p. 213; James, pp. 207, 194.

[46] Simon Hull, *Charles Lamb, Elia and the London Magazine: Metropolitan Muse* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2010), pp. 43, 77.

something startling and psychologically troubling about Lamb's opening declaration in 'Detached Thoughts'. The abnegation of self entailed by 'los[ing himself] in other men's minds' speaks to Lamb's deep-set ambivalence over his individual value when 'Detached' from 'books' and 'other men's minds': Coleridge's in particular.

Certainly, the Elian style is 'empowering' in that it constitutes a truly 'liberal confounding of those pedantic distinctions of *meum* and *tuum*'. It relies on the acknowledgement of literary sources at the same time as it appropriates them. Lamb is content to 'lose' himself, both as a reader and an author, to let 'other men's minds' usurp his own. However, as Jane Aaron's work on Lamb's Elian persona suggests, there may also be less 'empowering' aspects to this loss of self.

> [He had the] capacity to merge with others to such an extent that to lose an acquaintance entailed the loss of a part of himself. Dead authors as well as contemporaries made up his multiple parts […] Experiencing himself as many, Elia incorporates within himself, under his own signature, a variety of disparate "types" which frequently represent the darker aspects of the human personality. These are not externalized or projected out on to a scapegoated "other" but recognized as the "shadow" parts of a multiple self.[47]

Aaron's emphasis on the feminine and accommodating nature of Lamb's engagement with his readers also takes into account the 'darker' possibilities of this identification and Lamb's propensity to view 'himself as many'. The anxieties associated with imagining multiple identities at the core of one's being is a subject that will be explored at length in the final chapter, and has a significant bearing on the way in which I will read De Quincey's bookish relationship with Coleridge

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[47] Jane Aaron, *A Double Singleness: Gender and the Writings of Charles and Mary Lamb* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 180.

below. For now, though, I want to focus on the idea that Lamb might view himself as a kind of 'shadow': a composite Frankensteinian selfhood made up, disturbingly, of 'dead authors' and 'contemporaries'. There is a restlessness in Lamb's declaration: 'I love to lose myself in other men's minds. When I am not walking I am reading; I cannot sit and think. Books think for me' (*WCML*, II, 172). That he apparently must be always 'walking', that he 'cannot sit', suggests his desire to be in a state of fluidity, not to be bound by one consciousness, but to constantly shift between them. Sitting still would lead to 'thinking' for himself and, perhaps more worryingly for Lamb, of himself. As such, this model of reading entails the reader forgetting at the same time that he learns from the text. The familiar concept of getting lost in a book is transformed into a troubling form of self-effacement. Like 'the milliner, or harder-working mantua-maker' from the later passage, he seeks to drink from 'some Lethean cup' so that his very 'self' may be lost to his own recollection. He then becomes a dark reflex, a 'shadow' of 'other men' that goes 'walking' in their 'minds'.

For De Quincey, as we shall see in Chapter 4, there is scarcely a more disturbing thought than that of the self being contaminated by another man's mind. His authorial address is coloured by his anxiety over the degree of access that the autobiographical text might grant its readers to the extent that his narrative style becomes desperately controlling: seeking to direct readers' interaction with and interpretation of his works. While Lamb's texts, too, are often semi-autobiographical, he appears less worried about the incursion of Elia's readers into Elia's world, perhaps because Elia himself is a figure who has already allowed his mind to be contaminated or who purposely contaminates the minds of others. The mode of contamination advocated by Lamb in 'Detached Thoughts' does not directly

correspond with the type of contamination feared by De Quincey. Rather than 'project[ing] out' his identity onto 'other men's minds' and replacing their minds with his own, it is Lamb who disappears when he enters into another man's way of thinking. He advocates a self-effacing model of empathetic engagement. As noted above, book exchanges can constitute an expression of sympathy between lenders and givers, borrowers and recipients. Implied in the hoped-for sympathy between giver and receiver is also an assumed sympathy between the author and reader of the given book. However, Lamb's engagement with the authors he reads is not so much sympathetic as it is empathetic. It involves an assumption of the characteristics of the subject (or in this case object or book) to be empathised with. The book itself becomes the active participant in the transaction: thinking for Lamb. The OED defines empathy as 'the power of projecting one's personality into (and so fully comprehending) the object of contemplation'. In Lamb's case, his empathetic model of reading does not so much entail 'fully comprehending' as fully becoming. His identity is usurped by 'the object of contemplation' and his ego neutralised, allowing for a full identification with his subject that privileges their experiences and ideas over his own. What this suggests about Lamb's self-worth and his belief in himself as an author becomes clearer when examined in light of his relationship with Coleridge.

His reading practice stands in subtle distinction, I would argue, to Coleridge's or, at least, the way that Coleridge's reading practices are perceived. The Elian tapestry of reference and allusion is not generally confused with plagiarism, perhaps because Elia's voice submits to rather than subsumes his sources. Coleridge, on the other hand, can seem reluctant to 'lose' himself in the manner described by Lamb. As Newlyn also argues, the former's anxieties over the public reception of his

work introduce ambiguities into his representation of reading practices. His 'defence mechanisms […] work strenuously for the writing side of the writing-reading subject' while simultaneously revealing 'an underlying acknowledgment of the reader's creative power'.[48] Coleridge's own 'creative power' as a reader is privileged to the extent that Coleridge-the-reader can become indistinguishable from Coleridge-the-writer.

At times he appears to be in agreement with Lamb concerning the necessary 'openness' of readers. He makes a note on Lamb's copy of Donne's *Poems*, for example, expressing a sentiment which mirrors the latter's description of 'losing' himself in 'Detached Thoughts'. 'As late as 10 years ago,' he writes:

> I used to seek and find out grand lines and fine stanzas; but my delight has been far greater, since it has consisted more in tracing the leading Thought thro'out the whole. The former is too much like coveting your neighbour's Goods: in the latter you merge yourself in the Author—you *become He.*—
>
> (*M*, II, 12, 220)

Coleridge would avoid 'coveting [his] neighbour's Goods'. Like Lamb he would 'merge' himself with other authors rather than claim as his property their 'grand lines and fine stanzas'. The 'becoming' he advocates also echoes Lamb's mode of empathetic engagement with the texts he reads. We might, though, perceive a distinction between Coleridge's concept of 'merging yourself in the Author' and Lamb's of 'losing myself in other men's minds'. 'Merging' is not the same as 'losing'. In the former instance some sense of the reader's identity is retained. Certainly, it can be argued that in 'becoming' the 'Author' Coleridge has allowed his

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[48] Newlyn, p.90.

identity to be 'lost'. However, this 'losing' might also equate to an elevation of the reader to the position of 'Author'. Where Lamb's reading is pointedly passive – he distances himself from the act of 'thinking' – Coleridge's 'tracing the leading Thought thro'out' is an active pursuit resulting in the 'leading Thought' of the work becoming the reader's own as he 'becomes He'.

Considering Lamb's 'willingness' to 'lose [himself] in other men's minds' in relation to Coleridge's more assertive assumption of the authorial idea tells us something about their relationship: in particular the way in which Lamb was apt to invest 'part of [his] existence' in his friend and what he might 'hazard' in doing so (*LL*, II, 285).[49] As we have seen, Lamb was not always content to submit to Coleridge on matters of interpretation and ideology. He was sensitive to being patronised and recognised his friend's propensity to be patronising. Nonetheless, only a couple of months before he sent Coleridge the 'Theses Quædam Theologicæ' he was keen to impress on him the impact he had had on the formation of his self. 'I might', he writes, 'have been a worthless character without you' (*LL*, I, 118). The degree of self-loathing in this statement is marked. Though it is an extreme instance, penned at a difficult time in Lamb's life, abjection remains a significant feature of his writings. His propensity to see himself as 'worthless' offers one explanation for the willingness to 'lose' himself expressed in 'Detached Thoughts' and elsewhere. Lamb alone, he suggests, is a poor thing. His value consists in his relation to others, his ability to metamorphose into something other than himself.

His recognition of how necessary the other, and Coleridge in particular, was to the expression of his identity and how 'little' he might be without their influence

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[49] Fairer, p. 234.

feeds directly into his representation of reading in 'Detached Thoughts'. In a letter to Wordsworth of 1816 he remarks:

> Coleridge is absent but 4 miles, and the neighborhood of such a man is as exciting as the presence of 50 ordinary Persons. 'Tis enough to be within the whiff and wind of his genius, for us not to possess our souls in quiet. If I lived with him or the *author of the Excursion*, I should in a very little time lose my own identity, and be dragged along in the current of other people's thoughts, hampered in a net.
>
> (*LL*, II, 190-91)

The language of the letter directly prefigures that of the 1822 essay. Again, Lamb might 'lose' himself, or his 'own identity', in 'the current of other people's thoughts', or 'other men's minds'. In this instance it is not 'books' that 'think for' him, but the 'other men' themselves. It is worth noting that Lamb is '*dragged* along in the current of other people's thoughts', here, implying a possible reluctance on his part to follow these 'other people's' way of thinking. There is a distinction between being 'dragged along' by Coleridge (the man) and disappearing into the world of books which, while able to think for him, do not patronise or answer him back. Their relationship was far from straightforward and as much as Coleridge was an idol – without whom Lamb 'might have been a worthless character' – he could well be safer to interact with in the form of a book than as a living companion. 'Detached Thoughts' rewrites Coleridge's companionship, therefore, as a form of reading: another version of the 'turning and reference to' seen in 'The Death of Coleridge'. James argues that the Elian conception of literature is 'based on a "familiar" relationship between texts, and between reader and author'. Lamb's literary familiarity, she contends, arose as a result of the 'the literal "old familiar faces"'

having 'vanished', in particular, Coleridge's.[50] In his absence Lamb transforms him into a book. Whether or not that particular book is accessible or sufficient to supply his place, however, is another matter.

Coleridge was a peculiarly elusive man. In 1800 he remarks: 'I am afraid if I did not at intervals call upon you [Coleridge], I should *never see you*'; to Southey he writes 'Of Coleridge I hear nothing [...] I hope to have him like a re-appearing star, standing up before me some time when least expected'; and to Wordsworth, in 1816, 'I have seen Coler^{ge}. but once this 3 or 4 months [...] when he first comes to town he is quite hot upon visiting, and then he turns off and absolutely never comes at all' (*LL*, I, 169; II, 165, 196). Coleridge appears at the peripheries of Lamb's existence, much as his annotations appear in the margins of his books. Even so, Lamb's thoughts continue to gravitate towards his 're-appearing star'. Its attractive force is creatively enlivening. Writing to Manning in 1800, Lamb describes his joy at being in company with Coleridge again. With the return of his idol also comes inspiration: 'He ferrets me day and night to *do something*. He tends me, amidst all his own worrying and heart-oppressing occupations, as a gardener tends his *young tulip*' (*LL*, I, 178). Unfortunately Coleridge's tutelage is only temporary and it is not long before Lamb has again been abandoned: 'Coleridge has left us, to go into the north, on a visit to his god Wordsworth. With him have flown all my splendid prospects of engagement with the "Morning Post," all my visionary guineas, the deceitful wages of unborn scandal' (*LL*, I, 179). Lamb mocks his critical prospects as 'visionary' in this subsequent letter to Manning, disowning the perceptible excitement of his March epistle. The 'wages' he was to receive would have been 'deceitful' as they would have been paid in return for a forgery of Burton and 'a little sport with such

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[50] James, p. 130.

public and fair game as Mr. Pitt, Mr. Wilberforce, Mrs. Fitzherbert, the Devil, &c.'
(*LL*, I, 179). Beneath the sarcasm, though, may lay genuine hurt. In the face of
Coleridge's 'god Wordsworth', Lamb (as a 'worthless character') perhaps feels he
has little to offer either his own 'god' or the proprietors of the *Morning Post*; his
'wages' are 'deceitful' because undeserved. In the end, he did send his pieces on
Burton to Daniel Stuart of the *Morning Post*, but continued to doubt their success. 'I
am afraid they won't do for a paper' (*LL*, I, 180), he writes. In removing his person,
Coleridge has removed something of Lamb's confidence in his capacity to create.

This is also the case when Coleridge removes a book from Lamb's library.
Admittedly, 'to lose a volume to C. carries some sense and meaning in it. You are
sure that he will make one hearty meal on your viands, if he can give no account of
the platter after it' (*WCML*, II, 26). The 'meaning' of this loss, though, is again
contained in Coleridge's person. The borrowed volume will be 'heartily' enjoyed
and understood by an astute reader. That reader will also make returns, one assumes,
in the form of conversation and exposition on the volume when next you are able to
discuss it with him. The volume itself, though – the 'platter' – cannot be 'accounted'
for. The original book is gone; Coleridge has absorbed it into the library of his mind.
He consumes and digests it as 'viands', destroying the possibility of the original
owner's renewed property in it. After all, one never asks for food to be returned once
it has been eaten. Essentially, a point of reference has been removed from Lamb's
store of information, only to be returned as it is mediated through Coleridge's
presence: a presence which, as we have seen, was notably elusive. Hence he will
always be the missing book on Lamb's shelf and his 'turning and reference to him'
somewhat 'ineffectual'. In the end, he never did get Luther's *Table Talk* back.

Lamb perhaps senses that he is admitting the loss of something in himself when he 'lends' his property to his friend. The absent Coleridge, in whom Lamb invested so much of his literary ambition and identity, is a symbol of the 'lost' figure Lamb presents as his own authorial eidolon, Elia. If Coleridge is a missing book, then Lamb is a missing author, holidaying in other writer's minds. In some respects, to 'lose [your] own identity' to Coleridge is a fine thing, as the parallel descriptions of his company in the letter to Wordsworth and of reading in 'Detached Thoughts' imply. Less gratifying, this loss may also require 'fall[ing] into the society of *lenders*, and *little men*'. Lamb positions himself on the reader side of the 'writer-reader' divide and the lender side of the lender-borrower one. Books are his to give away rather than to produce. His own productions, in 'Detached Thoughts', are not to be 'magnificen[tly]' bound: 'I would not dress a set of Magazines in full suit. The dishabille, or half-binding (with Russia backs ever,) is *our* costume' (*WCML*, II, 173). Although the lender is not so 'little' a figure as 'The Two Races' superficially suggests, and the magazine writer deserves a 'half binding' at least, a sense remains that their role is essentially contributory, never reaching the creative heights of the best of life's borrowers. Equally, the prevalent sense of even the ideal of borrowers, Coleridge, is that he fails to achieve his literary potential, and he does not live up to Lamb's youthful expectations of him. As a borrower he leaves gaps on the bookshelf, rather than filling it up. Lamb does not, therefore, necessarily disparage his own literary productions by admitting their supplemental nature, but rather recognises secondariness as an essential characteristic of literature. His relationship with Coleridge brought him to the realisation that, in many respects, authors can only ever aspire to passing other authors' books around.

'That they *might* mix without danger': De Quincey, Coleridge, and Erroneous Inscription

Like Lamb, De Quincey's sense of himself is disturbed by his interactions with Coleridge. Unlike Lamb, De Quincey does not so much lament the absence of Coleridge's authorial presence as regret his idol's failure to recognise his authorial and intellectual worth. Where Lamb wishes to 'lose' himself in Coleridge's identity, De Quincey prefers to re-write their interactions in a 'pompous display' (*LL*, I, 235) of his own intellectual contribution to the relationship. His attempt at self-promotion is frustrated, however, by his perception that, as much as Coleridge might be famed for 'confounding' notions of '*meum* and *tuum*' in other instances, he seems reluctant to blur the boundaries of literary property with him.

De Quincey first encounters Coleridge in Bristol in the summer of 1807. His account of this meeting records his delight at unexpectedly finding himself in close proximity to an intellectual idol whose poetic works had contributed to 'the greatest unfolding of [his] own mind' and whose scholarly interests matched his 'own absorbing pursuit[s]' in the fields of 'metaphysics and psychology'.[51] Here was a figure in whose writings De Quincey saw the mirror of his own self-perceived genius. His appreciation of Coleridge's published works – which in 1807 had not yet received general approbation – marked him out as a sensitive, independent reader. His and Coleridge's shared interests marked them out as intellectually compatible and, perhaps, as intellectual equals. Certainly, the 'little present to Coleridge' (*WDQ*, X, 297) that he carried with him to Bridgewater as an introductory token indicates his desire to be seen as a fellow metaphysician and writer. It was 'a scarce Latin pamphlet, *De Ideis*, written by Hartley, about 1745' (*WDQ*, X, 297). On the one

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[51] Thomas De Quincey, 'Samuel Taylor Coleridge [I]', in *The Works of Thomas De Quincey*, gen. ed. Grevel Lindop, 21 vols (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2000-2003), X, 287-308 (pp. 287, 288).

hand, the pamphlet was a genuinely thoughtful present. According to De Quincey, Coleridge's interest in Hartley was 'known to most literary people' (*WDQ*, x, 297), and therefore this rare example of his work might make a valuable addition to Coleridge's book collection. But *De Ideis* signifies more than its giver's disinterested generosity. As Charles Rzepka has argued, 'books were […] a primary means of De Quincey's making himself "richer" than his neighbours in the emotional currency of gift-indebtedness' and in the Lakes, as a means to 'secure an honoured rather than "humble" place among Wordsworth's idolators'.[52]

As well as thoughtful gift, then, *De Ideis* is a statement of authority. It signals the giver's intellectual sympathy with the receiver, but also his intellectual and economic superiority. The rarity of the pamphlet allows De Quincey to display his ability to access scarce bibliographical material and stands testament to the depth of his reading in this area: reading which may have surpassed even that of Coleridge, Hartley's devotee. Whether or not these motives were consciously acknowledged in the original meeting, the passage – along with others in De Quincey's articles written for *Tait's Magazine* in the 1830s – emphasises the competitive aspect of the exchange. In a subsequent section of the article series, Coleridge's 'means so trifling of buying books for himself' is noted (*WDQ*, x, 322). Certainly, Coleridge's finances were complicated during the period of his and De Quincey's first acquaintance, but this is a calculated representation of his pecuniary difficulty.[53] Bibliographical records and contemporary accounts attest to the fact that Coleridge had means enough to amass a relatively substantial library, the contents of which were not exclusively borrowed or given (*M*, I, cii-cxv). By representing the 'scarce Latin

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[52] Charles Rzepka, *Sacramental Commodities: Gift, Text, and the Sublime in De Quincey* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995), pp. 175, 168.

[53] Soon after their initial meeting De Quincey made a semi-anonymous gift of three hundred pounds to Coleridge. However, by 1821 a letter from Coleridge suggests that he had asked for at least some of it back: *The Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Leslie Griggs, V, 161-64).

pamphlet' as an article which Coleridge would otherwise have had difficulty acquiring, De Quincey figures himself as necessary to his new acquaintance. Along with the article itself, it confirms its provider's centrality to both the narrative of his recollections and the intellectual lives of the figures he recollects.

Perhaps unintentionally, the gift of *De Ideis* also indicates the degree to which De Quincey could be intellectually and sympathetically out of step with his early idol. By the time he and Coleridge had met, the latter was apparently 'profoundly ashamed of the shallow Unitarianism of Hartley, and so disgusted to think that he could at any time have countenanced that creed, that he would scarcely allow to Hartley the reverence which is undoubtedly his due' (*WDQ*, X, 297). De Quincey never directly relates the reception of his 'little present'. Instead, he examines the history of Coleridge's associationism, nuancing his account to give the impression that, prior to their acquaintance (perhaps prior even to Coleridge's own realisation), he had discerned the incongruity in this 'philosopher's' profession of Unitarian principles (*WDQ*, X, 298). It remains unclear, therefore, whether or not De Quincey was aware of Coleridge's rejection of Hartley before he presented him with *De Ideis* or whether he was shocked to discover the latter's 'disgust'. Either way, he writes this initial exchange in a manner that emphasises the two writers' mutual suspicion of Hartleian philosophy with the slight qualification that De Quincey, having never been wholly seduced by it, was able to allow Hartley 'the reverence which is undoubtedly his due' whereas Coleridge was not. Their original roles in the meeting of 1807 are reversed with De Quincey positioned as the 'metaphysical and psychological' instructor and Coleridge cast in the role of philosophical naïf. It is an example of, to use Andrew Keanie's words, De Quincey playing 'the nimble wordsmith' by 'illustrat[ing] the necessity of his tools of analysis in unearthing the

grandeur of Coleridge's conception from the medium of Coleridge's almost primitive clumsiness'.[54]

De Quincey's account of Coleridge's book borrowing habits during their time as neighbours in the Lakes effects a similar role reversal. According to the former:

> Many of my books being German, Coleridge borrowed them in great numbers. Having a general licence from me to use them as he would, he was in the habit of accumulating them so largely at Allan Bank […] that sometimes as many as five hundred were absent at once.
>
> (*WDQ*, X, 321)

Again, he is able to affirm his expert status by representing himself as the 'licensor' of Coleridge's reading. Only through his generosity can Coleridge achieve his intellectual aims, thus becoming De Quincey's dependant. Based on the available evidence, however, George Whalley suspects that this account may exaggerate the extent of these borrowings (*M*, I, xcii). When it is considered that at the time referred to Coleridge had access to both the Wordsworths' collection at Allen Bank and, more importantly, Southey's large library at Greta Hall, his need might not seem so great. However, these alternative sources were not so well stocked in German literature as De Quincey's own library. We know, for instance, that he lent Coleridge copies of Herder's *Vertand und Erfahrung*, and Leibniz's *Theodicee*, and gave him a splendid four volume edition of Jakob Böhme's *Works*, which was annotated profusely. Daniel Sanjiv Roberts has found evidence, too, of a lost volume of Kant's 'Der Streit der Fakultaten' annotated by Coleridge which may well have originally

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[54] Keanie, p. 441.

belonged to the junior writer.[55] In addition to this bibliographical evidence,

references to De Quincey in Coleridge's notebooks and letters are often, if not

exclusively, related to book buying or publishing activities. In a notebook of 1808,

for example, the intention 'to have a long Morning's Ramble with De Quincey,' is

mentioned, 'first to Egerton's, and then to his Book Haunts'.[56] Often commissioning

him to purchase volumes, Coleridge clearly valued the younger author's

bibliographical knowledge. The exchange of texts, those in German in particular,

was an integral and mutually beneficial feature of their relationship.

When examined in closer detail, though, these bookish exchanges also justify

Lindop's representation of Coleridge's and De Quincey's relationship as 'sometimes

competitive' and certainly coloured by 'a touch of wariness'.[57] This 'competitive'

streak, might be one reason for the relative dearth of Coleridge annotated volumes

owned by De Quincey and of marginalia in the volumes of this sort to which we do

have access. Leibniz's *Theodicee*, for instance, contains five annotations; Kant's

Vermischte Schriften two; and Herder's *Verstand und Erfharung* only one. There

may, of course, be other reasons for this, not all of which imply a coolness in the two

authors' relations. Roberts surmises that a portion of the evidence of De Quincey's

friendship with Coleridge may have been destroyed by the latter's literary executors,

including some unpublished marginalia.[58] As both he and Lindop note, Coleridge

certainly respected De Quincey's intellectual powers.[59] In a letter of 1832 to William

Blackwood, he praises the latter's *Klosterheim* for its 'interest' and scholarly style,

while, in the period of their first acquaintance, he expresses his desire to have the

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[55] Daniel Sanjiv Roberts, 'Three Uncollected Coleridgean Marginalia from De Quincey', *Notes and Queries*, 41 (1994), 329-35 (p. 332).
[56] *The Notebooks of S. T. Coleridge*, ed. Kathleen Coburn, 4 vols (London: Routlege, 1973), III, 3276.
[57] Lindop, 'Lamb, Hazlitt, and De Quincey'. p. 125.
[58] Daniel Sanjiv Roberts, *Revisionary Gleam: De Quincey, Coleridge, and the High Romantic Argument* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), p. 271.
[59] Lindop, 'Lamb, Hazlitt, and De Quincey', pp. 128-29; Roberts, *Revisionary Gleam*, p. 15.

young writer's honest critical opinions on 'any thing, I may submit to you' (*Letters*, VI, 911; III, 51). It may simply be that many volumes which Coleridge did annotate and return to De Quincey have been lost. Considering De Quincey's irritation at Wordsworth's 'spoiling' his copy of *Burke's Works* with a butter knife, Coleridge may equally have wished to avoid offending his friend by writing in his books and possibly damaging them (*WDQ*, XI, 117-119). As De Quincey's library contained volumes valuable not only for their intellectual contents, but for their bibliographical curiosity, the addition of marginal notes to 'an old blackletter book, having value from its rarity' would have 'disturbed [him] in an indescribable degree; but simply with reference to the utter impossibility of reproducing that mode of value' (*WDQ*, XI, 118). Many of the German works in his collection would not have been antique but relatively recent volumes: those by contemporaries such as Herder, Schelling, and Schlegel, for instance. But, again, they were not necessarily widely available. This fact may have increased their monetary value, or the number of people to whom they might need to be lent, and acted to suppress Coleridge's annotative urges.

Even taking these arguments into account, the *Tait's* articles and the marginal evidence that we do have still suggest a lack of reciprocity in the way in which books were traded between these authors. De Quincey appears to have felt that a form of intimacy was being denied him. During the passage in which he praises Coleridge's habits of marginal notation – his 'spoiling' of books – he also notes how he has 'envied many a man whose luck has placed him in the way of such injuries' (*WDQ*, XI, 118). Despite his possession of at least three 'injured' volumes, he has cause to 'envy' others this same distinction. His comment suggests that Coleridge's critical insights were being shared with others, through 'luck', but not necessarily frequently enough with De Quincey himself who, it is implied, was more qualified to benefit

from or evaluate them. He would agree with certain of Lamb's borrowers that '"the title to property in a book […] is in exact ratio to the claimant's powers of understanding and appreciating the same"' (*WCML*, II, 25). As Rzepka argues, 'he thought books should be put freely into the hands of those who could best use them, presumably to be passed on to others as relative needs changed'.[60] De Quincey clearly believed in his own powers of 'understanding and appreciating' Coleridge's genius and criticisms. What he is less sure of, perhaps, is Coleridge's ability to understand and appreciate his. The *Tait's* articles call into question Coleridge's powers of interpretation at the same time as they praise them. The haphazard way in which his critical insights are described as being shared suggests that De Quincey saw one of Coleridge's greatest interpretative failings as an inability to properly evaluate the minds of his companions, particularly De Quincey's. As we have seen, he was careful to represent his own powers of comprehension as on a par with if not, at times, exceeding Coleridge's own. A scholar learned in the same branches of literature as his idol, surely he should have been the one with whom Coleridge's marginal observations were shared. He is not content to be the mere 'licensor' of his idol's learning, he must also be his equal in it: his disputant or rival.

The rivalry De Quincey felt towards Coleridge can be seen in the way that his writings register a discomfort not only with the latter's lack of inscription in the books that he borrowed, but also with the erroneous nature of the inscriptions that he did make. Whether stemming from intellectual jealousy, competitiveness, or feelings hurt by the lack of attention paid to a book provided by him, the tone of a note appended to Coleridge's first annotation in Leibniz' *Theodicee* is noticeably brusque. Coleridge writes that after having made a 'careful Perusal of this Work' he has come

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[60] Rzepka, p. 182.

to view Leibniz's theories as inherently flawed (*M*, III, 1, 504). Below it, De Quincey adds the following:

> N. B. The above note from Mr Coleridge, who, out of 908 pp. ~~of~~ which this work contains, could have read only 305—all after that being uncut when he returned it to me.
>
> (*M*, III, 504n)

Coleridge's 'Perusal', he argues, was anything but 'careful'. Instead of being returned 'with usury' over half of the book remains unread and, with only five notes added, it has hardly been, to use Lamb's phrase, 'enriched with annotations'. De Quincey preserves the annotator's guilt. The book itself, with its uncut pages, provides material evidence of the falsehood of the claim. De Quincey does not account for the fact that Coleridge may have read other copies of the *Theodicee*, but instead draws future readers' attention to the fact that this copy, at least, remains un-perused. Note well, he says, Coleridge's intellectual arrogance in passing judgment on the theories of one whom he has not properly read.

But this is not only an instance of intellectual one-upmanship, such as we might find in the allegations of plagiarism for which the *Tait's* articles are so famous. De Quincey also draws attention to an individual act of book exchange and the failure on the part of the borrower to fully appreciate his lender's beneficence. Rather than engaging in a literary conversation with De Quincey between the pages of his book, Coleridge 'returned it to [him]' mostly unread with its primary tenets rejected. His opinions are not shared with his supposed librarian. De Quincey attempts to position himself in relation to Coleridge in the margins of the *Theodicee* by annotating Coleridge's annotations, but his voice must remain a secondary, or even tertiary, addition to the text: an addendum to an addendum. He continues to

come after Coleridge, to base his critical voice on that of another. Various critics

have discussed the degree to which De Quincey saw Coleridge, problematically, as

his doppelgänger.[61] Indeed, I discuss the issue of supplemental or secondary selves

and their relation to the anxieties of authorship in De Quincey's work in Chapter 4.

The break-down in the dialogue between himself and Coleridge in this instance of

book exchange, however, suggests something more general about the processes of

reading and annotation.

As a marginal annotator himself, Coleridge's voice is also secondary in the

Theodicee. He, as much as De Quincey, relies on his forerunner's words. The issue

in the case of this individual volume, though, is that his secondary voice might still

be seen to take precedence over De Quincey's, despite De Quincey being the original

owner of the volume. Coleridge's marginalia will inflect subsequent readings of the

text; Coleridge will speak to its readers along with Leibniz. De Quincey attempts to

reclaim control of his volume by qualifying Coleridge's notes. The problem remains,

however, that the direction of influence for his amendment is linear. De Quincey is

Coleridge's reader, but Coleridge is not his. The former addresses subsequent

readers of the volume among whom, we assume, Coleridge is not now included,

having dismissed Leibniz's works. Coleridge, however, would likely have assumed

that De Quincey would read his assessment of the *Theodicee* when he returned it to

him. Unlike his addresses to Lamb in Daniel's or Donne's works, Coleridge does not

speak to De Quincey directly, but includes him within the book's more general

audience. He simultaneously engages and disengages him in his discussion of the

text. Though they may have discussed the volume in person, the relationship

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[61] See Grevel Lindop, *The Opium Eater: a Life of Thomas De Quincey* (London: Dent, 1981), p. 317; Edmund Baxter, *De Quincey's Art of Autobiography* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), pp. 65-70; and Nigel Leask, *British Romantic Writers and the East: Anxieties of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 170-228.

inscribed on the *Theodicee*'s pages positions Coleridge as the instructor and De Quincey as pupil in a way that the latter would most likely find exasperating. He objects, not only to Coleridge's unsubstantiated judgments on Leibniz, but also to being numbered among the former's audience when he would rather be considered his interlocutor.

> As De Quincey notes of Coleridge's marginal contributions, the author ever: imagined an audience before him; and, however doubtful that consummation might seem, I am satisfied that he never wrote a line for which he did not feel the momentary inspiration of sympathy and applause, under the confidence that, sooner or later, all which he had committed to the chance margins of books would converge and assemble in some common reservoir of reception.
>
> (*WDQ*, XI, 119)

Again, Coleridge's writing is described in terms of oral performance. He seeks the 'applause' and 'sympathy' of his 'audience': another example of the way in which his speech and his written work were intertwined in representations of his authorship. In the same manner, too, that his conversation is often described as a monologue that was difficult to interrupt, Coleridge's marginalia allows scant space for dialogue.[62] De Quincey inserts himself into the discussion on Leibniz, but, while subsequent readers are made aware of his property in the volume and knowledge of its subject matter, the insertion does not straightforwardly engage in a discussion with Coleridge himself. This has implications for readers and writers alike. By questioning Coleridge's reading of Leibniz, De Quincey demonstrates the way in which the author is always open to critique. As discussed at the beginning of this

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[62] Seamus Perry, 'The Talker', in *The Cambridge Companion to Coleridge*, ed. Lucy Newlyn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 103-125 (pp. 108-110).

chapter, one cannot count on 'a sympathy in point of taste' between giver and receiver, nor between an author and his readers, as Coleridge is represented as doing in the above passage.[63] Equally, the reader's criticisms are often spoken into the void, unheeded by the author: a fact that Coleridge himself laments in his notebooks. 'I often when I read a book that delights me on the whole', he writes, 'feel a pang that the author is not present – that I cannot *object* to him this & that – express my sympathy & gratitude for this part, & mention some fact that self-evidently oversets a second. Start a doubt about a third – or confirm & carry a fourth thought' (*NB*, II, 2322). Coleridge himself would see reading as a dialogue, in which the text is fluid and immediately amendable. This is, he suggests, a consequence of his 'nature [being] very social' (*NB*, II, 2322). It would also allow Coleridge – as is the case in his note on reading Donne – to assume a formative role in the text's construction. He may '*object* to', 'start a doubt about', and 'overset' the original author's points, essentially altering the text itself. On the one hand, he advocates a communal model of literary composition. The author is not an isolated creator, but ever in dialogue with his precursors and followers. On the other, both De Quincey and Coleridge indicate that they might prefer it if the 'audience' for their commentary were other writers, rather than mere readers. What they desire is an equal billing with the authors whose precepts they '*object*' to.

The apparent difficulty of the book sharing relationship expressed in the *Tait's* articles comes down again to the problems involved in the 'liberal confounding of those pedantic distinctions of *meum* and *tuum*', of writer and reader, lender and borrower. How does one retain property in an object that one also wishes to share? How does one advertise one's literary credentials without also advertising

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[63] Hunt, 'Pocket-Books and Keepsakes', p. 16.

one's indebtedness? In the case of Coleridge and De Quincey, the latter is caught between his desire to bolster his authorial profile by connecting himself to Coleridge and the wish to avoid being seen as merely one of Coleridge's 'audience' members. He wants to engage with Coleridge without being overshadowed by him. His anxiety over the ambivalence of his position in relation to the other author can be seen in the way he describes the 'mixing' of their books at Allen Bank:

> To prevent my flocks from mixing, and being confounded with the flocks already folded at Allen Bank (his own and Wordsworth's), or rather that they *might* mix without danger, he duly inscribed my name in the blank leaves of every volume; a fact which became rather painfully made known to me; for, as he had chosen to dub me *Esquire*, many years after this, it cost myself and a female friend some weeks of labour to hunt out these multitudinous memorials, and to erase this heraldic addition; which else had the appearance to a stranger of having been conferred by myself.
>
> (*WDQ*, X, 322)

The passage presents a complex image of the possible 'dangers' of 'mixing' of one author's literary 'flocks' with another's. It reveals the contradictions inherent in De Quincey's relationship with Coleridge. His desire to be 'confounded' with him competes with the fear that his identity might be confused with or by him. By 'dub[bing him] *Esquire*', Coleridge provokes some of De Quincey's deepest-seated literary anxieties. Roberts reads the misnomer as an 'encroachment' or 'trespass', on Coleridge's part, against De Quincey's 'right to determine his own' title, but there is more to this slip of the pen than the removal of De Quincey's 'right'.[64] Coleridge has

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[64] Roberts, *Revisionary Gleam*, p. 13.

revealed the ease with which, even an identity as carefully and self-consciously constructed as De Quincey's was, can be misread, the way that textual ambiguity can lead to a collapse, or 'confounding', of the subject.

What De Quincey particularly fears is the 'appearance to a stranger' of the misapplied title. Rather than being interpreted as Coleridge's mistake, it appears as his own. A readership whose responses he cannot control – unnamed 'strangers' of an undefined 'future' period – may have their impression of him forever marred, not as a result of his own writing, but as a result of another's. Roberts' interpretation recognises De Quincey's discomfort at having his ability to name himself compromised: his role as the codifier of his own identity is usurped. Also at issue is the fact that De Quincey himself can be said to have sanctioned the erroneous inscription. As John Barrell's influential reading in *The Infection of Thomas De Quincey* (1991) suggests, the 'infections' or 'diseases' that so troubled the Opium-Eater were 'always an external manifestation of an internal psychic anxiety, something first projected and rejected, then taken back in'.[65] Barrell's model of inoculation for De Quincey's writing about the diseases of the East can be applied (with some provisos) to the mechanics of his book lending practices with Coleridge.[66] A process of 'projection' and 'rejection' is very much an aspect of the two authors' relationship. In lending Coleridge his books, De Quincey 'projects' an aspect of his self on to Coleridge in line with the concept that the lent or recommended book communicates something of its donor. He then 'takes [the lent book] back in' when Coleridge returns it. It is at this point that the issue of

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[65] John Barrell, *The Infection of Thomas De Quincey: A Psychopathology of Imperialism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), p. 17.
[66] 'The process of inoculation involves simultaneously protecting someone against a disease and infecting them with it'; 'the process of inoculation we have been examining in De Quincey's geopolitical schemata is rather less successful [...] at best it enables the patient to shake [Eastern diseases] off for a time, or gives him the illusion of having done so, but always with the fear that they will return in a more virulent form': Barrell, p. 16.

'rejection' comes into play. Not only might Coleridge, as in the case of Leibniz's *Theodicee*, have 'rejected' De Quincey's offering, De Quincey himself can 'reject' Coleridge's readings and, to a degree, Coleridge himself. The rivalry existing between them results in De Quincey attempting to 'reject' the very idol he wished to 'project' on to or impress. Coleridge becomes a 'disease' that 'infects' De Quincey's book at his invitation, having been lent in full knowledge of and respect for Coleridge's annotative habits. This process of bookish inoculation is transformative. It mutates De Quincey's identity from De Quincey to De Quincey Esq. The fact that the latter would view the title – a mere three letter addition to his name – as such an aberration, something to be methodically 'erased' or eradicated, implies that it is not so much Coleridge's misreading or 'disease' that troubles him, but the notion that his identity is unstable enough to be deformed in the first place.

The threat of miscegenation lurks in the passage. De Quincey is unsure as to whether the 'mixing' of his and Coleridge's books will result in an improved breed of creativity or whether his own purebred 'flocks' will end up tainted. Perhaps De Quincey feels he might be bred out of his own library: his identity diluted rather than strengthened by its mixture with the more imposing authority of Coleridge. By mentioning the 'female friend' – most likely his wife Margaret – who aided him in the correction of Coleridge's inscriptions, De Quincey subtly reasserts his ability to reproduce his identity on his own terms and in his own image. Equally, De Quincey's pride is dented by the fact that Coleridge appears to wish to preserve the purity of his own 'flocks'. The very act of inscription creates two distinct lines of literary heritage: that of De Quincey and that of Coleridge and Wordsworth. At the same time that De Quincey fears interbreeding he is troubled by the fact that his seed

– in the form of the books he lends Coleridge – is being rejected or, at least, quarantined.

It is for these reasons that the 'mixing' of his and Coleridge's books is so fraught. The 'mixing' involved is symbolic and psychic, as well as literal. Even though De Quincey wants his and Coleridge's books to be 'confounded', the possible contamination involved is problematic. This could be a particular effect of the physical transfer of objects between persons involved in lending books. The returning book has been touched, and 'infected', by the borrower. As in the case of inoculation, this infection may be desirable. Its implications, though, remain disturbing. Like the dreamer in 'The English Mail Coach' (1849), the owner of a returned and annotated book might find 'housed within [it] — occupying, as it were, some separate chamber in [its] brain — holding, perhaps, from that station a secret and detestable commerce with [its] own heart — some horrid alien nature' and 'What if it were [the lender's] own nature repeated' (*WDQ*, XVI, 423). Leask's and Lindop's reading of Coleridge as De Quincey's doppelgänger allows for the 'alien nature' found lurking in the returned book to be read as both Coleridge and De Quincey. In 'rejecting' Coleridge, and Coleridge's misinterpretation of his identity, De Quincey may also be seen to 'reject' something in himself. Coleridge's misapplied Esq. feeds into De Quincey's anxiety that the self he recognises as his own may not, in fact, be his at all. Perhaps it is 'alien' or other; perhaps it is closer to Coleridge's representation of it, or to Coleridge himself. The fact that Coleridge's annotations precede and possibly supersede De Quincey's only intensifies his anxieties over the former's primacy. What if Coleridge is not De Quincey's double, but De Quincey is his? What if De Quincey himself is the 'repeated' nature, a supplement only to Coleridge's original genius?

Again, exchanging books with Coleridge has the power to distort the lender's sense of self. In Lamb's case, the absences Coleridge left behind him – both on his bookshelves and in his life – were analogous to his own proclivity for self-effacement. Lamb lost Coleridge, but he also lost himself. For De Quincey the case is almost the opposite. Coleridge appears as too large a figure in his conception, occupying the paradoxical position of idol and double both. Even so, De Quincey experiences a similar loss of self to Lamb, though much less willingly. Indeed, Lamb seems quite happy to assume the role of double, shadow, or other. In many ways his desire to 'lose [himself] in other men's minds' enacts just the kind of 'infection' that so disturbs De Quincey. Rather than 'rejecting' 'alien natures', Lamb would transform himself into one; he would lurk in a 'separate chamber in [another's] brain', becoming them, though not necessarily replacing them. De Quincey, on the other hand, fears this transformation. To 'lose' himself is to spiral out of control into the nightmare landscape of his opium dreams. The kind of 'mixing' or 'confounding of those pedantic distinctions of *meum* and *tuum*' that Lamb describes as 'liberal' (*WCML*, II, 23) De Quincey might consider a dangerous blurring of the boundaries between me and you, self and other.

Conclusion: 'Is & was Mr Charles Lamb's Book'

The act of writing a name – be it your own or someone else's – in a book is, perhaps, paradigmatic of the issues discussed thus far. Writing your name in or on something usually constitutes a statement of ownership. However, with the lent or given book the question of possession is less than straightforward, as we have seen. Where and how the various readers of, and writers on, a volume are inscribed on the text that they exchange can reveal tensions inherent in the concepts of shared property,

literary influence, and textual identity in general. A name inscribed between the covers of a book may indicate more than just that book's owner or writer. The signature or dedication exists in a liminal space where the 'distinctions' between *meum* and *tuum*, reader and writer, become unclear: the very self it is supposed to designate is destabilised.

De Quincey's were not the only volumes in which Coleridge wrote the original owner's name; Lamb was frequently addressed by him too. The third marginal note to appear in Lamb's copy of Donne's *Poems* provides a particularly significant instance of this:

> N.B. Tho' I have scribbled in it, this is & was M[r] Charles Lamb's Book, who is likewise the Possessor & (I believe) lawful Proprietor of all the Volumes of the "Old Plays" excepting one.
>
> (*M*, II, 3, 217)

The only comparable example we have for De Quincey is a 1652 edition of George Herbert's *Remains*, which contains Coleridge's autograph and the inscription 'To Thomas De Quincey Esq.' (*M*, II, p. 1032). Its erroneous 'esquire' confirms the *Tait's* account of Coleridge's annotating policy. The distinction between the two inscriptions is subtle, but important. In the latter instance, the inscription is clearly dedicatory, designating a gift: '*To* Thomas De Quincey Esq.'. The impetus behind the note in Lamb's book, however, is Coleridge's act of 'scribbling' in it. He makes the distinction between the author of the marginal notes and the owner of the book clear. In both instances Coleridge acknowledges his lack of property in the book that has been written in. In De Quincey's case, though, the 'Possessor' of the book remains singular: S. T. C. may sign it, but only in the act of signing it away. When Coleridge returns Donne to Lamb, however, the identity of the book's 'Possessor' is

less definite. The marginal commenter – 'I' – continues to identify himself with the work. If he does not materially 'Possess' it, the object itself is 'Possessed', or 'infected', by his textual identity. A 'mixing' takes place within the pages of the book. The identity of the lender, the borrower, and the text's original author interact with one another. Coleridge recognises Lamb's identity, but also invites Lamb and other perusers of the volume to read his commentary and contemplate the way in which both identities mentioned in the note have a property in it.

In De Quincey's description of the texts he lends to Coleridge, the volumes themselves '*might* mix without danger' in a physical sense in the library, but the lender and the borrower are not so closely identified. For all De Quincey's anxieties over 'infection' and alienation, the 'mixing' of his and Coleridge's texts is something he desires as well as fears. Another aspect of his discomfort over the nature of the inscriptions appended by Coleridge to his volumes is that the 'rejection' of self, entailed in Barrell's process of inoculation, might come from Coleridge as much as De Quincey. De Quincey may wish, occasionally, to 'reject' Coleridge as a 'diseased' version of his own self, but he is less comfortable with the idea that Coleridge might in turn reject him. The inscription of his name in the above account allows his texts to 'mix' with Coleridge's and Wordworth's, but the impetus behind the inscription essentially stems from a desire for De Quincey's volumes not to 'mix' or be 'confounded' with the other authors' possessions. They '*might* mix without danger' because, when the time comes to return them, it will always be clear to whom they belong, even if the description of that person is slightly inaccurate. When Coleridge returns the books from Allen Bank, they do not return doubly inscribed (though in some respects De Quincey might interpret them as such); they return as they arrived, belonging to De Quincey and De Quincey alone. De Quincey's

emphasis on the word '*might*' expresses his ambivalence over just this fact. Namely, that the bibliographical relationship between himself and Coleridge was not reciprocal, but merely utilitarian and that he might be the 'diseased' self being 'rejected'. It indicates not only how much he '*might*' have wanted his books to 'mix' with those of his literary idols, but also the conditional nature of that 'mixture'. They '*might*' have mixed, but that does not mean that they did. He is assured of the 'Possession' of his books, but not of the 'Possession' of an example of Coleridge's mind or an equal placing in his estimation.

Had De Quincey's books 'mixed' freely with Coleridge's and Wordsworth's, however, then the 'confounding' of '*meum* and *tuum*' implied in the mixture would have seen the original owner, in addition to risking 'infection', risk relinquishing his property in the borrowed volume or, at least, allowing the borrower a share in the volume's ownership, as in the case of Lamb's copy of Donne's *Poems*. The concept of shared ownership is most succinctly expressed in dual tense phrase 'this is & was Mr Charles Lamb's Book'. The volume 'is' still Lamb's book, however, not in the way that it 'was' before Coleridge inscribed it. By adding his marginal notes, Coleridge situates Lamb's ownership of Donne's *Poems* in the past. There is both the humorous implication that he might not return the book (as in the case of Luther's *Table Talk*) and a nod to the way in which the book might now belong to him and Lamb simultaneously: an ideal representation of the mutual property each reader has in the volume they share. But, though the 'is & was' inscription indicates the volume's dual ownership and the jovial reciprocity of Lamb and Coleridge's lending relationship, like the confusion of 'I' and 'ours' in his copy of Daniel, it is also indicative of the struggles involved articulating this concept. As in Coleridge's correction of 'we are' to 'I am' in Daniel, the addition of 'was' in some degree

diverts possession away from Lamb. It may also be significant that the notes on Donne were written when Coleridge believed he was dying. At the end of the volume, he adds: 'I shall die soon, my dear Charles Lamb! and then you—will not be vexed that I had bescribbled your Books. 2 May, 1811' (*M*, II, 61, 243). Just as he meant to leave 'a Relic' in the form of Lamb's copy of Beaumont and Fletcher, this particular volume of Donne's *Poems* is rewritten as a memorial to their annotator. Lamb may be its custodian, but Coleridge is now its co-author. Its return to Lamb is assured because Coleridge will no longer need it when he is deceased. Indeed, the notion that he might not return it otherwise is indicated by the odd declaration that Lamb is 'likewise the Possessor & (I believe) lawful Proprietor of all the Volumes of the "Old Plays" excepting one'. This is almost certainly a reference to the 'third volume' of Lamb's set of the 'old plays' that had been lent to Coleridge sometime in 1808, but which Lamb had failed to retrieve. He writes to accuse him of misplacing it in 1809. 'Pray, if you can, remember what you did with it, or where you took it out with you a walking perhaps; send me word; for, to use the old plea, it spoils a set' (*LL*, II, 75). Apparently, by 1811, the volume still had not been returned: another of the 'foul gaps' left by Coleridge on Lamb's shelves. At the same time that Coleridge displays his 'very social' nature, he also reminds Lamb, and us, that he is ultimately a borrower, possibly a stealer, and, often, a loser of books.

Lending a book can be an expression of authorial identity – asserting a literary opinion by way of a recommendation – it can also be a form of loss, a relinquishment of authority. It does not so much confirm the lender's authorial status as it confirms his status as a reader. It means admitting that one's property in a text may only ever be notional, even if you are its author. When presenting 'the author's and the giver's minds at once', one also has to take into account the impact of the

reader's or recipient's mind on the transaction. Exchanging books with Coleridge, in particular, brings these various forms of loss into focus. In his bookish interactions with Lamb and De Quincey, the difficulty of making 'distinctions', between '*meum* and *tuum*' (*WCML*, II, 23), reader and writer is revealed. The rivalries of fellow authors can turn creative exchange into a fraught negotiation of status resulting in the problematic 'mixing' of influence with infection. Both Lamb and De Quincey 'lose' something in their bookish dealings with Coleridge: most significantly, their sense of self. For Lamb the 'confounding of those pedantic distinctions' enables a form of cathartic escape from self-consciousness; for De Quincey it only exacerbates it. Both authors' writings on the subject of Coleridge's book borrowing, though, register the ambiguities and possible absences that lie at the heart of the writer-reader dichotomy and the expression of textual identity. Perhaps because Coleridge was represented as an author whom, to understand, one had to personally know – to hear and to see – lending or giving him books led the authors discussed here to question more closely what the objects of their trade might reveal about them: how their intentions might be read or misread; how, if physical interaction is no guarantor of 'a sympathy in point of taste' between giver and receiver, textual interactions between readers and writers might be particularly open to misinterpretation.

Lending books to Coleridge was far from being merely a practical or friendly act, nor even a straightforwardly self-serving one, calculated to ensure one's rise within the literary ranks. It was an anxious form of self-projection: influenced by and reflecting these writers' concerns about literary interaction. All three authors are forced by their book-sharing experiences into a confrontation with the wider issues of creative indebtedness and reader-response. The possible loss of one's identity, along with one's literary property, is the subject of the final two chapters of this

thesis, in which I will explore more public incarnations of the private exchanges discussed here as they emerge from the mechanics of publication. What becomes clear is that these two forms of book exchange are intimately related. The same sets of tensions pervade lending and publishing. Book lenders and authors alike are concerned with how to gain the sympathy of their audience without inviting them too far into their own private world, without the body of the author being tainted like the *Queen of Corinth's* Merione and her 'corrupted' 'Volume'. In this chapter, wider debates about the nature of sympathy and empathy in the long-eighteenth century are reflected in the bookish exchanges of its subjects. The significance of physical interaction – of touch, conversation, proximity, even sexual aggression – to sympathetic engagement and the cult of sensibility is also part of the process of book lending and giving, particularly in the case of Coleridge. The passing of an object that has 'been about a friend's person' can help to establish a special sympathy between giver and receiver, the kind of sympathy also sought by an author from his readers.[67] As with sympathetic or sentimental engagement involving the exchange of intimacies and bodily fluids such as tears, however, these interactions can mutate into a form of contamination.[68] It is partly for this reason, I argue, that the figure of the author is often so elusive in writing of this period. Lamb may be happy to get lost 'in other men's minds', but few authors are so comfortable with the idea of other men getting lost in theirs. Familiarity with the body of an author's works does not necessarily entitle his readers to assume a familiarity with the author himself.

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[67] Hunt, 'Pocket-Books and Keepsakes', p. 15.

[68] See Jonathan Lamb; and G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

Chapter 3

Authorial Possession: Devils, Contracts, and Commodification in the Work of

Walter Scott and James Hogg

'Let fame follow those who have a substantial shape,' says the 'Author of Waverley'

in the 'Prefatory Epistle' to *The Fortunes of Nigel* (1822), 'a shadow – and an

impersonal author is nothing better – can cast no shade'.[1] Despite the substantial

'shade' cast by the 'Author of Waverley' over the literary world of the early

nineteenth century, this statement is not necessarily disingenuous.[2] Scott gestures

towards the popularity of the *Waverley* novels and the celebrity of their apparently

anonymous author, but makes a serious point about the nature of literary personality.

The Romantic period has been identified as the first age of celebrity, in which the

characters of individual authors took on a new public significance.[3] Within the

periodical press in particular, the slippage between an author's textual persona and

his or her private identity was often a cause of concern. Scott questions the validity

of a conception of literary fame based on the authorial body and writers' 'true'

identities: the hunting after signatures rather than texts. 'Fame' may follow 'those

who have a substantial shape', but the 'Author', and the author figures found in the

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[1] Walter Scott, *The Fortunes of Nigel*, in *The Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels*, gen. ed. David Hewitt, 30 vols (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), XIII, p. 8.

[2] When referring to the 'Author of Waverley' in future I will, for variety's sake, use the contraction: 'Author'. This is not to be confused with the noun 'author' which will not be capitalised or appear in inverted commas.

[3] See *Romanticism and Celebrity Culture, 1750-1850*, ed. Tom Mole (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Richard Cronin, *Paper Pellets: British Literary Culture after Waterloo* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); David Higgins, *Romantic Genius and the Literary Magazine: Biography, Celebrity and Politics* (London: Routledge, 2005); and Peter T. Murphy, 'Impersonation and Authorship in Romantic Britain', *English Literary History*, 59 (1992), 625-49. The practice of autograph collection, a pastime that grew up alongside the bibliomania, was also popular at this time: Sarah Lodge, 'By Its Own Hand: Periodicals and the Paradox of Romantic Authenticity', in *Romanticism, Sincerity, and Authenticity*, ed. Tim Milnes and Kerry Sinanan (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 185-200 (p. 185).

works of the other writer considered in this chapter, James Hogg, are noticeably lacking in 'substance'. They exist in a liminal state, caught between life and death, the corporeal and incorporeal, existence and non-existence. Like Lamb, they are often happy for their identities to get 'lost'.[4]

Scott and Hogg consider how the authorial body is mapped onto the book-as-object and what the result of this mapping might be. Their works repeatedly focus on the ways in which the author, or indeed any selfhood, may be manifested within, or imagined through, the texts they write or own. However, these manifestations are only ever partial. Both authors are aware of the difficulty of assigning a singular and finite identity to the 'shadowy' figure of the author. Their works embody and embrace the 'indeterminate' forms of authorship that this thesis charts. In particular, they are concerned with the level of access to the authorial body that the periodical press of the time and the processes of publication might grant their readers.

The perspective of each differs in at least one crucial respect from the other authors I have considered thus far. In Scott's case, his lack of authorial anxiety sets him apart. As the best-selling novelist of the period, his authorial status is secure. He was both critically and popularly acclaimed and did not need to justify his authorship by advertising his bookishness in the manner, say, of Hunt or Dibdin. Nonetheless, his 'bookomania', as he termed it, informed his writing at the deepest level.[5] Conversely, Hogg, of all my case studies, can be least appropriately described as a bibliomaniac, or even a bibliophile. His labouring-class background means that he is distanced from the kinds of youthful literary experiences enjoyed by the other authors I discuss, who proceed from the middle or upper-middle ranks of society. As

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[4] Charles Lamb, 'Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading', in *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*, ed. E. V. Lucas, 7 vols (London: Methuen, 1903-05), II, 172.
[5] Walter Scott, 'Three Unpublished Letters of Scott to Dibdin', ed. W. Powell Jones, *Huntingdon Library Quarterly*, 3 (1940), 477-484 (p. 482).

he reports in his 'Memoirs', 'nor had [he] access to any book save the Bible' in his formative years. This is not to say that Hogg did not love books. Gillian Hughes' research in particular shows that, if he did not have the means to compile a grand library, Hogg was certainly a voracious reader who was greatly attached to his own modest collection of books.[6] He was also eternally grateful to the Laidlaw family, for whom he worked in the late 1780s and early 1790s. In their employ, he was finally granted access to a range of literature that sparked his authorial ambitions.[7] He typifies the plight of numerous authors caught between competing societal and literary worlds. Aspiring to become a fully-fledged member of the literary society of 1820s Edinburgh – with all the lettered gentlemanliness that implied – he was for the most part denied the respect and inclusion he craved from figures like John Gibson Lockhart and John Wilson. This is not to imply that Hogg was simply an unwitting victim. His ability to appropriate jests made at his expense and the high level of self-analysis found in his writing, show that his approach to publication was not as unsophisticated as some of his contemporaries assumed. The treatment he received at the hands of Wilson, Lockhart and William Blackwood, did, though, foster a mistrust of the organs of publication and of the book-as-object itself. In addition, his grounding in oral culture imbued him with a persistent suspicion of the printed word.

He was not alone in his suspicions, though. Scott shared them. The disparity between the literary and financial success, as well as the social position, of Scott and Hogg has resulted in a number of critics placing their work in opposition.[8] While

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[6] Gillian Hughes, *James Hogg: A Life* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), pp. 266-67.
[7] James Hogg, *Memoir of the Author's Life*, in *Altrive Tales: Featuring a Memoir of the Author's Life*, ed. Gillian Hughes (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), pp. 11-52 (p. 17).
[8] Often Hogg is read as reacting against Scott and his fiction. For example, Graham Tulloch argues that Hogg is critical of Scott's brand of chivalry and that 'this criticism applies to the real Sir Walter Scott of Abbortsford as well': 'The Perilous Castle(s) of *The Three Perils of Man*', in *James Hogg and the Literary Marketplace: Scottish Romanticism and the Working-Class Author*, ed. Sharon Alker and Holly Faith Nelson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 157-74 (p. 166). See also Ian Duncan, 'Shadows of the Potentate: Scott in Hogg's Fiction', *Studies in Hogg and his World*, 4 (1993), 12-25;

their approach to publication, authorship, and the way in which they represent the self does differ, their conceptualisation of authorial identity coheres and reflects wider early nineteenth-century treatments of this subject. This chapter investigates the links between Scott's and Hogg's representation of the compulsions and anxieties of authorship: most significantly, their recognition of the problems that arise from associating the author as a historical individual with the author as a textual persona adopted by the writer. Their works examine the paradoxical nature of authorship and forms of publication that see the author identify with his literary productions at the same time that he problematises and complicates that identification.

The inclusion of Scott and Hogg in this study illustrates the pervasiveness of certain bookish tropes in the period's literature. This chapter moves away from my previous focus on non-fictional prose to consider fiction in more detail: emphasising the importance of the book, as a symbolic object, to popular fiction of the early nineteenth century. A discussion of Romantic bookishness need not be limited to the bibliographical works of Dibdin or the bibliophilic essays of Lamb and Hunt. The book was a well-worn signifier of authorial practice and identity across the range of literary genres: as was the bibliomaniac himself. Scott's work, in particular, contains numerous portrayals of the bibliomaniac or bibliophile familiar from other chapters. *The Antiquary* (1816) presents an image of a study that might have come straight from Dibdin's *Reminiscences*:

> It was a lofty room of middling size, but obscurely lighted by high
>
> narrow latticed windows. One end was entirely occupied by book-

and *Scott's Shadow: The Novel in Romantic Edinburgh* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), Chapter 6; Suzanne Gilbert, 'James Hogg and the Authority of Tradition', in *James Hogg and the Literary Marketplace*, pp. 93-110; and Margaret Russet, *Fictions and Fakes: Fording Romantic Authenticity, 1790-1845* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), Chapter 7.

shelves, greatly too limited in space for the number of volumes placed

upon them, which were, therefore, drawn up in ranks of two and three

files deep, while numberless others littered the floor and the tables, amid

a chaos of maps, engravings, scraps of parchment, bundles of papers,

pieces of old armour, sword, dirks, helmets, and Highland targets.

(*EEWN*, III, 21)

The description mirrors that of Richard Heber's study discussed in Chapter 1. Scott

was an acquaintance of Heber – he had a number of antiquarian friends – and may

well have been familiar with the 'chaos' of the Pimlico residence. Just as in Dibdin's

portrait, the Antiquarian's study is littered with books stacked 'in ranks of two or

three files deep' so that the range and contents of the shelves seem unfathomable.

The collector's impulse to organise knowledge is also apparent in this confusion.

The 'chaos of maps' that litter the tables speak to the antiquarian's paradoxical

desire to chart the past and the bibliomaniac's need to categorise books, but also to

their sense of the impossibility of achieving these aims. The collector's map, like his

study, will always be in 'chaos'. The map is equally important as a symbol of the

Antiquarian's more general concern with positioning himself in history. Jonathan

Oldbuck's obsession with local history and his own ancestors indicates, like the

'curious map' of Hunt's 'World of Books', his desire to situate himself within an

encompassing narrative, this time historical rather than literary.

This narrative is also heroic. The concept of antiquarianism and book

collecting as peculiarly masculine pursuits or pursuits that are, at least, represented

as such, is demonstrated by the fact that the antique objects in Oldbuck's collection

are predominantly weapons and armour.[9] Just as Hunt turns his books into

mistresses, Scott's Antiquary is particularly interested in the tools of battle. His

passion is for examining the male sphere of action, though this pursuit is undercut by

the satirical nature of Scott's portrait. The study may be full of weapons, but it is

also 'decorated […] with Dutch cherubs, having their little duck-wings displayed'

(*EEWN*, III, 21). Scott's portrayal of Oldbuck attests, not only to the various

paradoxes and self-mockeries involved in being a bookish author, bibliomaniac, or

antiquarian, but also to these figures' desire to find their place in the 'chaos' of

literature and knowledge that characterised the field of cultural production in the

Romantic period.

'An Impersonal Author'

Fiona Robertson has argued that 'there has always been a close, though under-

examined, relationship between the plurality and flexibility of Scott's work and the

difficulty of fixing upon him a defined authorial identity'.[10] Captain Clutterbuck

describes the 'Author' as an 'Eidolon, or Representation' (*EEWN*, XIII, 4) in the

'Epistle'; in fact, he can barely confirm the gender or physical appearance of his

companion (*EEWN*, XIII, 5), let alone his actual identity. Simultaneously corporeal

and spectral – depending on who is describing him – he is a self-reflexive portrayal

of Scott's authorship. Although the 'Author of *Waverley*' shares a number of Scott's

interests and traits, the former is not realised in the external figure of Walter Scott.

He is manifested only as typography within the physical topography of the book.

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[9] Bookish women certainly existed in the period, and the idea that an interest in popular antiquarianism was limited to the male sex is clearly false. I merely mean to suggest that self-consciousness over the masculinity of antiquarian or bookish pursuits is characteristic of their male practitioners.

[10] Fiona Robertson, *Legitimate Histories: Scott, Gothic, and the Authorities of Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 12.

The identity of Hogg's disinterred author figure, Robert Wringhim of the *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824), is similarly elusive. During the novel's famous exhumation scene, the link between the textual representation of the author and what is assumed to be his body is confused.[11] Wringhim's corpse decays almost as soon as it is exposed to the air, having 'merely the appearance of flesh without the *substance*' which 'could not bear handling'.[12] Hogg's editor is as hard pressed as Captain Clutterbuck to fathom the identity of the author figure he encounters in the flesh. His best guess is that Wringhim was either a 'fool' or a 'religious maniac' (p. 175), though he finds neither interpretation entirely satisfactory. The tantalising preservation of the corpse belies its ultimate 'insubstantiality'. Even when the 'substance' of Robert Wringhim's person is transferred to his tract – which, though mouldering, 'seemed one solid piece' (p. 173) – the identity of the author remains unstable. In Scott's and Hogg's imagined encounters with the authorial body, the author lacks a 'substantial shape'. These literary bodies are drawn into their texts only for them to decay on closer examination, receding from their readers' interrogative gaze.

On the one hand, this characteristic lack of 'substance' is a reaction against the problematic conflation of the textual identity and private person of the author found in the journalism and criticism of the period. Hogg, in particular, was plagued by the misuse of his name and designation within the periodical presses.[13] On the

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[11] The *Private Memoirs* has often been read as autobiographical, compounding the link between Hogg's representation of the sinner and Scott's representation of the 'Author of Waverley'. Both are fictionalised portraits of their originators. See Karen Fang, *Romantic Writing and the Empire of Signs* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010).

[12] James Hogg, *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, ed. P. D. Garside (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002), pp. 172, 173.

[13] Valentina Bold argues that 'the Noctes Shepherd was a credible character and, thereby, did incalculable damage to Hogg's reputation, personal and poetic. Moreover, it did Hogg a financial disservice: being saddled with this ungenteel persona probably cost Hogg the Royal Society of Literature pension he desperately needed': *James Hogg: A Bard of Nature's Making* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007), p. 70.

other, both of my subjects recognise the way in which the author's entanglement in the creative and practical processes of publication involved a degree of personal accountability, even if that accountability was sometimes undesirable. The moment of publication is a moment of acknowledgement, of committing one's name to the printed page, and to public notice. Having your 'name on the back of [a book]' was, for figures like Hunt and Dibdin, something greatly to be desired.[14] However, as seen in the previous chapter, writing your name in or on a volume could be a fraught process. Such inscriptions seem to confirm the link between authorial identity and the external person of the author. Without a substitute – an 'impersonal author' like the 'Author of *Waverley*' – the external self of the writer can end up being consumed and possessed along with his works.

A work's reception was often determined as much by the identity of its author as by its intrinsic merits: as Hunt and other members of the Cockney School found to their cost. In recognition of this fact, acts of acknowledgment in Scott's and Hogg's fictions – particularly the signing of one's name – frequently result in punishment rather than advantage. This is not to suggest that either was without authorial pride. Scott was happy to publish poetic, biographical, and editorial works under his own name, while Hogg acknowledges his 'pride of authorship' (p. 21) in his *Memoir*, describing his annoyance at the fact that his popular song, 'Donald MacDonald', was never accredited to him: no one 'ever knew or inquired who was the author – so thankless is the poet's trade' (p. 20). Rather, both interrogate the validity of constructing too literal an image of an author based solely on the written evidence of his works and textual representations of him. In part, this can be attributed to reception anxiety; it is also (especially for an author such as Scott whose

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[14] William Hazlitt, *The Spirit of the Age: Or, Contemporary Portraits*, in *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. P. P. Howe, 21 vols (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1932), XI, 31.

reception was overwhelmingly positive) a creative choice. Scott relishes his protean identity. As Gerard Genette argues, he 'believ[ed] that a true novelistic vocation [was] inseparable from a certain proclivity for suddenly disappearing, that is, in short, for clandestineness'.[15] In his novels, the figure of the author is as important a character as any contained within the main body of the text. Scott's creative mode, and, one might argue, the creative mode of all historical fiction, originates in the belief that our understanding of actual or historical persons is coloured by individual perspective and an acknowledgment, in Evan Gottlieb's terms, of 'the mediated nature of the "history" [the reader] is reading'.[16] The author's historical person, as much as the history he rewrites, is just another form of fiction. Images such as the buried manuscript and its attendant corpse, or the signature written in blood (a recurrent image in Hogg's tales), may seem to unite book and body, but this unity is deceptive. Scott and Hogg demonstrate that not only should the authorial body be disconnected from the author's body of work, but that this disconnection is a fundamental and enabling feature of authorship.

Allusion and the 'Eidolon, or Representation of the Author of Waverley'

The nature of Scott's identification, or non-identification, with his works has been a popular subject with his critics. Much has been written on the reasoning behind his persistence in anonymity: explanations for which range between the discomforts he felt over the propriety of novelistic composition to his perceived inclination for facetiousness and narrative play. Rather than seeking to explain his anonymity biographically, I want to examine the conceptual framework that lies behind it. A good place to begin doing so is in the paratextual material of his novels. It is in the

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[15] Gerard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 43.

[16] Evan Gottlieb, *Walter Scott and Contemporary Theory* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), p. 46.

various prefaces, introductions, and epigraphs that we are first introduced to the character of the 'Author of *Waverley*' and that Scott explicitly discusses questions of authorship. As an intermediary figure, he is best discussed through an examination of this inherently intermediary form of writing. I am by no means the first person to consider the paratextual material of Scott's novels: Jane Milgate and Fiona Robertson, in particular, have written extended analyses of the *Waverley* prefaces.[17] What I wish to focus on, however, is what the prefaces reveal about Scott's conceptualisation of authorship and his reaction to the literary marketplace of his time.

The *Waverley* prefaces present the reader with an authorial identity which, to use Foucault's formulation in 'What is an Author?', cannot be said to 'pass from the interior of a discourse to the real and exterior individual who produced it', but rather exists at a work's borders, 'marking off the edge of the text'.[18] The scene of the 'Author's' discovery by the Captain in *The Fortunes of Nigel*'s preface typifies this version of authorship. Visiting Ballantyne's publishing house, Clutterbuck decides to explore the 'labyrinth of small dark rooms, or *crypts*' that made up its 'back-settlements':

> I proceeded from one obscure recess to another, filled, some of them
> with old volumes, some with such as, from the equality of their rank on
> the shelves, I suspected to be the less saleable modern books of the
> concern, I could not help feeling a holy horror creep upon me, when I

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[17] For other discussions of Scott's prefaces, see Judith Wilt, *Secret Leaves: The Novels of Sir Walter Scott* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985); Fiona Robertson, *Legitimate Histories*; and Jane Millgate, *Scott's Last Edition: A Study in Publishing History* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1987). Robertson comes closest to my analysis, by considering the effect on readers and critics of Scott's self-conscious representation of his authorship in the prefaces to the *Magnum Opus* edition of his works.

[18] Michel Foucault, 'What Is an Author?', in *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault*, ed. Paul Rabinow (London: Penguin, 1991), p. 107.

thought of the risk of intruding on some ecstatic bard giving vent to his

poetical fury; or, it might be, on the yet more formidable privacy of a

band of critics, in the act of worrying the game which they had just run

down […] the irresistible impulse of an undefined curiosity drove me on

through this succession of darksome chambers, till, like the jeweller of

Delhi in the house of the magician Bennaskar, I at length reached a

vaulted room, dedicated to secrecy and silence, and beheld, seated by a

lamp, and employed in reading a blotted *revise*, the person, or perhaps I

should say the Eidolon, or Representation, of the Author of Waverley.

(*EEWN*, XIII, 4-5)

Clutterbuck is led by an 'irresistible impulse' of 'curiosity': a 'curiosity' similar to

that displayed by Scott's public in their quest to learn his name. Frustratingly for the

Captain, although this 'impulse' leads him to the 'Author', it does not lead him to

Scott. Rather, his encounter leaves him with as many questions as answers, at least

as regards the 'Author's' true identity. *Waverley*'s creator is to be found in the

deepest recess of the shop, in a 'vaulted room, dedicated to secrecy and silence':

'secrecy' preserved, perhaps, by Scott's 'silence' on the subject of his identity. He

brushes off any suggestion that he might not be so 'impersonal', or anonymous, as

he desires (*EEWN*, XIII, 8). Clutterbuck's reference to John Leycester Adolphus'

1821 publication *Letters to the Member for the University of Oxford*, which make the

case for Scott as the creator of the *Waverley* novels, is disregarded by their subject.

Neither confirming nor denying the truth of their argument, the 'Author' sidesteps

this reference to his proper-name, arguing that the question of his identity 'is very

undeserving the rout that has been made about it, and still more unworthy of the

serious employment of such ingenuity' (*EEWN*, 13, p. 9). In his opinion, that

'ingenuity' would have been better employed in other ways. The interchange leaves readers unsure of which version of events to credit – the author's or the critic's – as Clutterbuck's experience in Ballantyne's fails to validate Adolphus' claims. Though the Captain has his suspicions, the 'Author' remains conspicuously 'insubstantial'. He continues 'an Eidolon, or Representation'.

One way of interpreting this 'insubstantiality' is to consider it in terms of intertextuality and the composite, or 'mixed', mode of creativity that characterises the work of bookish authors. As Gottlieb states in relation to *The Antiquary*, Scott's novels continually, and 'explicit[ly]', signal their 'synthetic composition'.[19] They do this in two ways: first, they advertise their reliance on historical narratives and other literary genres (they synthesise separate parts into a greater whole); secondly, they make explicit the material processes that lie behind their production (they are synthetic: artificial or constructed). The 'Author' is representative: he is made up of a combination of literary allusions and images, and his representation is a self-conscious and self-referential meditation on the act of representing.

These features of his work situate Scott on a trajectory of metafictional writing from Cervantes through Sterne and beyond. Cervantes, especially, strongly influenced Scott.[20] He read him in the original Spanish as a youth, owned seven copies of *Don Quixote* and considered translating it, while the series title for the *Tales of My Landlord* is itself a quotation from the novel. Like *Don Quixote*, Scott's texts contain numerous interjections from the authorial voice; often utilise the found-manuscript topos; trouble concepts of authenticity; are populated by doubles and fakes; and represent the boundary between fiction and reality as permeable. The

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[19] Gottlieb, p. 46.
[20] Cervantes' effect on Scott is well noted J. A. G. Ardila sees 'the lasting love for Cervantes' in the Romantic period as 'perhaps most noticeable in Walter Scott': 'The Influence and Reception of Cervantes in Britain', in *The Cervantean Heritage: Reception and Influence of Cervantes in Britain*, ed. J. A. G. Ardila (London: Maney Publishing, 2009), pp. 2-32 (p. 19).

meeting of Clutterbuck and the 'Author of Waverley' contains numerous

metafictional elements: the fact that the latter is engaged in revising copy (possibly

of the very novel that we are about to read); that the scene takes place in a publishing

house; and that the failed efforts of other authors – 'the less saleable modern books

of the concern' – are piled up alongside Scott's 'Representation'. While critics of

Scott and Cervantes have noted the influence of the Spanish author on the former's

work, few go far beyond making the connection between *Don Quixote* and *Waverley*.

To use J. A. G. Ardilla's definitions of the various types of Cervantean influence,

Waverley can be read as a 'quixotic fiction' because Edward Waverley is 'an

individual who, through excessive reading of a certain literary genre' develops a

skewed perception of the real world.[21] Beyond this, though, Scott's fiction can be

described as Cervantean. It does not merely contain Quixotes, but is deeply

influenced by that novel's form.

Key aspects of Scott's 'synthetic' or metafictional mode of composition can

be usefully illustrated by way of another author: the Reverend James Ridley.

Clutterbuck's reference to 'the jeweller of Delhi in the house of the magician

Bennaskar' points Scott's readers to an important intertext for the epistle: 'The

History of Mahoud', from Ridley's *Tales of the Genii* (1764). Though little known

now and largely ignored by critics, it was popular in the second half of the eighteenth

century and through to the nineteenth. *Tales* was referenced in numerous works, and

was a formative text for, among others, Charles Dickens.[22] Its effect on Scott is

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[21] Ardilla, p. 11.

[22] For more on Dickens and Ridley see Stanley Friedman, 'Ridley's *Tales of the Genii* and Dickens' *Great Expectations*', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 44 (1989), 215-18. Coleridge makes reference to reading tales concerned with genii in his letters: *The Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Leslie Griggs, 6 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), I, 354; while John Beer argues that 'Kubla Khan' was influenced by the *Tales*: Coleridge, *Poems*, ed. John Beer (London: Dent, 1974), p. vi. Leigh Hunt mentions them in 'My Books', in *The Selected Writings of Leigh Hunt*, ed. Robert Morrison and Michael Eberle-Sinatra, 6 vols (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2003), III, 23-37 (p. 29); 'Sadak in Search of the Waters of Oblivion' is the subject of an 1812 painting by John Martin; and

equally palpable. There are a number of parallels between the characters and action

of the 'History of Mahoud' and Scott's representation of authorship, particularly as it

appears in the preface to *Nigel*. *Tales of the Genii* is a collection of stories, written in

imitation of the *Arabian Nights*, with 'The History of Mahoud' making up a small

part of a much larger tale. Like Scott, Ridley usually published under an assumed

name. The *Tales* themselves are reported to be the work of Sir Charles Morell, the

translator of an original Arabic author, Horam. This narrative structure mirrors that

of *Don Quixote*: itself a supposed translation from Cid Hamet Benengeli's Arabic

manuscript. In each case the actual originator of the text is disguised. Seemingly, the

only way in which to imagine one's own authorship is through the authorship of

another. Scott's allusion acts as an *ad infinitum* mirror. The 'Author of *Waverley*' is

reflected in each subsequent narrator or author (Mahoud; Horam; Morell; Ridley),

but these reflections do not focus his identity. Instead, they stress the elusive and

referential nature of authorial personality as, with the exception of Ridley, each new

character proves to be fictional. The exoticism of author figures such as Horam and

Benengeli only compounds readers' perception of the author as 'other': external and

unknowable. The 'true' author is distanced in both space and time. Such deferrals of

authorship provide the context for Scott's representation of the 'Author of Waverley'

as indeterminate. The 'Author of Waverley' and (albeit fictionally) translated texts,

like those of Cervantes and Ridley, are re-representations of an original person or

work. Neither can ever actually be the person, or work, itself. They exist between

source and reader, mediating and reinterpreting, as opposed to simply reproducing,

their originals. By imagining Clutterbuck's encounter with the 'Author of Waverley'

through Ridley's pseudo-oriental work, Scott suggests how even the author himself

Shelley is also thought to have contributed a poem to *The Keepsake* on the same subject: 'Sadak the Wanderer: A Fragment', in *The Keepsake*, ed. F. M. Reynolds (London: Hurst, Chance, & Co., 1828), pp. 117-119.

is alienated from textual representations of his identity (a notion I will explore further in the final chapter on De Quincey).

But it is not merely the context of Ridley's work that echoes Scott's formal tendencies. The events of the story itself inform *Nigel*'s preface in significant ways. 'The History of Mahoud' recounts its protagonist's journey from a rich youth, to profligacy, destitution, renewed comfort in the house of Bennaskar, naive complicity in the magician's plans, rebellion, execution, and, ultimately, transformation.[23] Clutterbuck paraphrases the passage in which Bennasker, the magician, leads Mahoud to a subterranean chamber to aid him in a secret task, of which the latter must never speak: 'taking a lamp in his hand, he led me through a long variety of apartments [...] we arrived at a small vaulted room, from the centre of which hung a lamp'.[24] The maze-like 'apartments', the 'vaulted room', the 'lamp', and the atmosphere of secrecy are all present in the Captain's description of Ballantyne's. By introducing the 'Author' in this closely mirrored setting, Scott indicates the thematic importance of Ridley's 'vaulted' chamber, and what is discovered there. Mahoud's task is to abuse an innocent princess into submitting to the magician's indecent desires. This princess is imprisoned in a singular fashion. She is buried beneath a trapdoor, up to the waist in the dirt, insensible, and guarded by a dwarf. Her lifelessness is the result of a protective spell placed upon her by the genius Macoma. It will not allow Benneskar in sight of the princess without apparently killing her. He must therefore act upon her through an intermediary (Mahoud in disguise as a Moorish slave), while the princess remains imprisoned in his crypt-like basement in a state half alive, half dead.

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[23] Scott in fact misquotes Ridley; Mahoud is the son of the jeweller from Delhi, not the jeweller himself.

[24] James Ridley, *Tales of the Genii*, 2 vols (New York: D. Mallory, 1825), I, 185.

Neither of the bodies discovered in the vaulted rooms of either text can be described as alive in any straightforward sense. The princess hovers between life and death and the 'Author', discovered in Ballantyne's 'crypts', is at best an ambiguous presence. Though the princess's death-in-life state is more literal than the 'Author's', both tales are ambivalent about the propriety of the external gaze and anxious over the bodily possession it might entail. Bennaskar's overtly lascivious stare renders the princess insensible; this insensibility, however, is designed to save her from his improper designs. 'Rather let me die,' she says, 'than let me be the *property* of the vile Bennaskar' (p. 187, my emphasis). It is not simply that the magician wishes to look upon her, but that he wishes to possess her that render his looks inappropriate. His possessiveness can subsequently be related to the possessiveness of Scott's readers and their desire to expose the true identity of the 'Author of Waverley'. Scott satirises his public's need to see his private body: they are welcome to possess his works, but not his person. The more their gaze is focussed on him, the more evasive he becomes, to the point that he will not even deny rumours about his identity or his previous life: 'to say who I am not,' he argues, 'would be one step towards saying who I am' (*EEWN*, XIII, 9); and, in relation to his possible military service, 'I have – or I have not, which signifies the same thing' (*EEWN*, XIII, 11). Happy to discourse with the Captain on a number of literary issues, he refuses to confirm aspects of his personality. He steadfastly situates himself in the in-between of 'am' and 'am not', 'have' and 'have not'. As with the body of Hogg's sinner, the interrogative and possessive gaze causes the authorial body to decay. Interlopers into the crypts of Ballantyne's shop and Bennaskar's mansion are confronted either with the silence of the dead or the evasions of a 'Representation'.

The narratives problematise instances of direct contact between observers and the objects of their scrutiny. Bennaskar must not see the princess directly; the Captain cannot see the 'Author' clearly; and the *Private Memoirs'* editor cannot preserve the physical evidence of Wringhim's corpse for others' observation. Instead, their gaze is mediated, with books playing the central role in this process. *Nigel*'s preface implicitly represents the 'Author' as book-like. Ballantyne's back rooms are the resting place of the 'old volumes' and 'less saleable modern books' that have been left to fall into 'obscurity': a term also used to describe the 'Author's' vaulted chamber (*EEWN*, XIII, 4, 5). Like these 'old volumes', he is contained, first, within the storage rooms of the publishing-house and, secondly, between the pages of Scott's novel. Readers' and characters' interactions with this figure are also characteristically text or book based. Previous to their meeting in Ballantyne's, his primary form of communication with Clutterbuck, for instance, has been through the exchange of manuscripts (as in the preface to *The Monastary*). Not only is the 'Author' like a book, so are those that encounter him. The Captain's consciousness that he is, himself, a textual construct – a product of the 'Author's' pen – is equally telling. At one point in the 'Epistle', he is even addressed as if he were a book: 'At any rate, you have been read in your day' (*EEWN*, XIII, 15). The importance, for Scott, of the book as symbolic intermediary between reader and writer is further implied by Ridley's use of this object in the 'History'. Wracked with guilt for his part in the torture of the princess, Mahoud returns to his chamber, where he finds a small copy of the Koran open on his desk. As he is reading it, Macoma, the princess' protective genius, addresses him by means of the text. 'Take this book in thy bosom,' she informs him, 'which at all times shall admit thee to a sight of the princess' (p. 190). Mahoud then returns to the princess who is 'awakened at the

touch of the book' (p. 191). 'Sight' of the princess is guaranteed only by engagement with a text, just as the 'Author of Waverley' can only be interacted with by means of his books. This is not to say that the external body of the author becomes accessible by means of his or her works. Textual signifiers of identity are notoriously slippery. Rather, Scott's symbolic use of the book confirms the intermediary nature of the textual, and of textual representations of identity. An author's works stand between the external author and his readership just as the preface stands between the reader and the main body of the text and the 'Author' lingers between existence and non-existence. Mahoud may not touch the princess, but he may touch her with the book. She, like Scott, is unavailable to her spectators save through the mediation of the text.

Publication and Consumption

In this way, the book-like 'Author of Waverley' stands in for Scott. By configuring his relationship with his readers thus, Scott signals his pragmatic understanding of the print culture of his day. His pragmatism, however, is balanced by his sensitivity to the problematic demands that publication can place on an author. Though he remains sanguine about the fact that his books, and the 'Author of Waverley' himself, exist as goods to be consumed, he denies his readers' right to consume his private persona.

A comparison between the introduction to *Nigel* and the 'Prefatory Letter' to the novel that followed it in 1823, *Peveril of the Peak*, demonstrates this point. The preface to *Peveril* is constructed as a rejoinder to that of *Nigel*, containing a number of interesting oppositions to and correspondences with its predecessor. In contrast to *Nigel*'s introduction, where the 'Author' is a 'Representation' and a formless

Eidolon, here the letter writer – the Reverend Jonas Dryasdust – describes him in overtly materialistic terms. He is 'a bulky and tall man' with 'heavy,' 'largely shaped' features (*EEWN*, XIV, 5). He is also an adept consumer. He exhibits 'dexterity as a trencher-man' when working his way through a large portion of the Reverend's 'beef-steak, and toast, and tankard' (*EEWN*, XIV, 6). And, on mentioning his invitation to join the Roxburghe Club, seems more interested in their 'mountainous sirloin, and […] generous plum pudding' than their books (*EEWN*, XIV, 7).[25] This corporeal 'Author' is preoccupied by material concerns. By conflating his membership of the Roxburghe club with his eating habits in *Peveril*, he conflates books with material goods. They are not merely the receptacles of ideas, they are sustaining objects. The Roxburghe Club's ostensible aim was to reprint and re-distribute rare, antique texts among its members. The 'Author of *Waverley*', though, values it more for its supplementary role as a dining club, showing that he is comfortable with the concept of books as consumer objects, as comestibles, and even that he himself might be an appropriate object for public consumption.

'I do say it,' he exclaims in *Nigel*'s introduction, 'in spite of Adam Smith and his followers, that a successful author is a productive labourer' and that literature can be thought of as no less than 'that which is created by any other manufacturer' (*EEWN*, XIII, 14). This is not a unsophisticated expression of mercantilism. I do not agree with Margaret Russet that Scott's 'management of his author function' was 'frankly commercial' or 'pragmatic'.[26] While Scott was undeniably a shrewd

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[25] In a characteristic blurring of fiction and reality, the 'Author's' reference to the Roxburghe Club invitation acts as a codified admission of Scott's authorship. Scott had been invited by Dibdin in the same year to join the society, but only in lieu of the 'Author of *Waverley*'. In an amusing exchange of letters between the two, the correspondents play on their covert understanding that the 'Author' and Scott are one and the same. The latter revels in confounding the distinction between the actual and the textual and the willingness of others to participate with him in this jest: *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, ed. H. J. C. Grierson, centenary edn,12 vols (London: Constable & Co., 1934), VII, 341-42 (25 February 1823), and pp. 382-83 (1 May 1823).

[26] Russett, pp. 160, 164.

businessman (for the most part at least), the 'Author's' advocacy of consumerism is not just about selling books. It is also about their role as mediatory objects: a self-reflexive, metafictional consideration of the processes of authorship and publication. Scott ponders how, if at all, an author is available to his readership. The self-justificatory tone of his comment on Smith, in fact, suggests a latent anxiety over the public perception of his work and the commodification of literature. By comparing his authorship with 'manufacture' and 'labour', Scott masculinises his chosen career as well as including it under the heading of commercial productivity. Novel reading and writing, even in the 1820s, was still considered a predominantly feminine pursuit. It was a leisure activity, not 'productive labour'. Scott is sometimes thought of as reclaiming the novel as a legitimate genre for male authors, but this does not mean he was without anxiety over the propriety and respectability of this endeavour.[27] The exaggerated manner in which the 'Author' refers to his works as a form of goods allows him to simultaneously agree with and contest critics of the genre. When making capitalistic statements, the 'Author' appears as a model hack, but this should not be taken as evidence that Scott himself was unusually calculating or mercenary in his literary aims. Rather, like Lamb, he understood what it was to have a profession outside of the rarefied atmosphere of the republic of letters. This may have resulted, in the case of both Scott and Lamb, in a degree of pragmatism as regarded their literary pretentions. It does not mean that either was entirely comfortable with the concept of the book as a consumer object.

Scott's use of food metaphors, for instance, illustrates his conflicted relationship with his 'goods' and their consumers. In *Nigel*, the 'Author' describes himself as his critics' 'humble jackal, too busy in providing food for them, to have

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[27] See Ina Ferris, *The Achievement of Literary Authority: Gender, History, and the Waverley Novels* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 10, 80, 91.

time for considering whether they swallow or reject it' (*EEWN*, XIII, 9). Again, there is an attempt to stress the industry and busyness of authorship. The 'Author' is a 'provider'. He does not merely provide the public with entertainment; he provides them with one of the essentials of life: food. His 'humble' status suggests that he is, in fact, ruled by his critics and readers. They force his prolificacy and drag down the quality of his work as he struggles to match his production to their appetites. However, he also disdains their opinion of that same work. To 'swallow' something can be to 'accept [it] mentally without question or suspicion' (OED) and mindless consumption benefits him. Readerly credulity in turn feeds the 'humble jackal'.

In the *Magnum Opus* introduction to *Peveril*, though, consumption is described in less savoury terms. Scott opens the preface with the assertion that he is as desirous of giving up romance writing and remaining as 'the "ingenious author of Waverley"' as was Falstaff:

> of the embowelling which was promised him after the field of Shrewsbury by his patron the Prince of Wales. "Embowelled? If you embowel me to-day, you may powder and eat me tomorrow!"
>
> (*EEWN*, XXV(B), p. 205)

Ending his career entails his decay: he will become 'powder' and then foodstuff. In giving up authorship he, in effect, completes his works and finalises his corpus. Once complete, his authorial identity is fixed and can be consumed whole: perhaps in the form of a posthumous collected edition like the *Magnum Opus*. The image of Scott being 'embowelled' suggests his consumers' desire to see that which should not be seen: to pull his innards out. Writing as Scott (though the authority of this version of his identity is also questionable) he seems reluctant to be associated with

the comestible 'Author of Waverley'.[28] When he was anonymous and the figure provided a shield he was useful, but now – his true identity revealed – the 'Author' has lost his appeal: his materialism feels too visceral.

Hence, regardless of the 'substantiality' of the 'Author of Waverley' in *Peveril*'s preface, he is again only partially materialised. At the close of the letter, the 'Author of Waverley' is described storming out of the Reverend's apartment, offended by a particularly cutting critique of his latest novel, which Dryasdust has received in manuscript. Having been upbraided by Dryasdust throughout for seeking 'some enjoyment of life in society so congenial to my pursuits' (*EEWN*, XIV, 8) – namely eating and drinking to excess – the 'Author's' final departure ingeniously reverses the position of himself and his companion. When the Reverend calls his servant to enquire of his guest:

> he denied that any such had been admitted—I pointed to the empty decanters, and he—he—he had the assurance to intimate that such vacancies were sometimes made when I had no better company than my own.
>
> (*EEWN*, XIV, 12)

Not only can the Reverend be unsure whether or not he has actually seen the 'Author' – who leaves only a 'vacancy' behind him – he is also transformed into the more voracious of the two consumers. Rather than having fed and entertained his creator, he is left with the *Peveril* manuscript that his creator has fed and entertained him with. In a similar fashion, Scott leaves his readers in possession of his texts, but not of his person. Any 'factual' information gleaned about the 'Author', the supposed physical evidence of his existence, is so refracted through the complexities

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[28] See Robertson's analysis of the *Magnum Opus* prefaces in *Legitimate Histories*.

of textual representation and narrative play as to be rendered immaterial and insubstantial: like the 'vacancies' at the Reverend's table.

The use of food metaphors to describe the dangers of literary consumption was not uncommon in the period. Readers, particularly female readers, were represented as being in danger of overconsumption, of devouring literature of a lesser sort too quickly and too copiously.[29] It is this kind of consumption and literature that Ferris argues Scott distances himself from: instead allying his output with a periodical discourse that privileged 'the hierarchic, male, and basically aristocratic model of the republic of letters'.[30] This discourse, however, seems a far cry from the mercantile expressions of the figure found the novels' prefatory material, who is apparently unconcerned by being thought 'base' (*EEWN*, XIV, 14). The point is that, by making the 'Author of Waverley' overtly mercantile, Scott is able to obscure his external identity. His readers can consume the 'Author', who is so prepared to provide them with 'food' and so accomplished at consuming it himself. As a book and as a comestible, he replaces Scott; he and the works he appears in (and figuratively writes) are commodified while the actual author avoids this fate.

Sometimes, popularity can be as unpleasant as it is profitable, particularly when the external personality of an author is implicated in his or her readers' consumption of their works. I do not wish to rehearse the well-known arguments concerning Hogg's interactions with *Blackwood's Magazine* and its contributors

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[29] See Karin Littau, *Theories of Reading: Books, Bodies, and Bibliomania* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006), pp. 40-42; Lucy Newlyn, *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism: The Anxiety of Reception* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 42; and Patrick Brantlinger, *The Reading Lesson: The Threat of Mass Literacy in Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998).

[30] Ferris, p. 7 (see also pp. 94, 253).

here: much scholarship has already been devoted to the topic.[31] It is, however, worth

examining the way in which the *Blackwood's* writers and others, including Scott,

envisioned Hogg as a 'hoggish body'.[32] Ian Duncan finds the Shepherd's

'hoggishness' most interesting for the manner in which it epitomises his animalistic

vitality, but it also expresses his contemporaries' tendency to cannibalise his

character. In the *Noctes Ambrosianae* particularly, contributors such as Wilson and

Lockhart, often roasted Hogg. The 'tavern sages' were notable for their

gourmandising and, in various instalments – such as that of July 1829 – pork is on

the menu.[33] Tickler calls for supper: 'the boar's head, the sheep's head, some

lobsters, the strawberries and cream'. The Shepherd is especially impressed by 'how

bonnily they've dressed up the cauld porker' which he eagerly offers to help carve.

Despite being disgusted by a dinner companion's tale of the brewer who fed on raw

hog – 'O the heathens! Did they really eat the meat raw?' – he is ready to receive his

'slice' of that same meat: 'as raw as you sit there, my hearty,' Theodore responds,

'come, another slice'.[34] It is characteristic that Hogg is made complicit in his own

consumption. The Ettrick Shepherd was his creation and chosen designation. The

character is most famous, though, for his appearances in the *Noctes*, appearances that

Hogg had relatively little creative control over. As much as they provided him with

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[31] See, for example, Karen Fang; Thomas C. Richardson, 'James Hogg and *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*: Buying and Selling the Ettrick Shepherd', in *James Hogg and the Literary Marketplace: Scottish Romanticism and the Working-Class Author*, ed. Sharon Alker and Holly Faith Nelson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 185-200; and Russett, *Fictions and Fakes*: 'Hogg's special misfortune [with regard to *Blackwood's*] was to be both an acknowledged, named contributor and a puppet animated by other hands' and for this reason he was 'central to the *Blackwood's* experiment and its most conspicuous victim, [and] his careers as writer and magazine personality can never be fully disentangled' (pp. 174, 172).

[32] Ian Duncan, 'Hogg's Body', *Studies in Hogg and His World*, 9 (1998), 1-15 (p. 3).

[33] See Marion Gymnich, and Norbert Lennartz, *The Pleasures and Horrors of Eating: The Cultural History of Eating in Anglophone Literature* (Goettingen: V&R unipress GmbH, 2010).

[34] John Gibson Lockhart, *Noctes Ambrosianae*, in *Blackwoods Edinburgh Magazine*, 26 (1829), pp. 120-142 (pp. 138-39).

welcome public recognition, they also belittled him: his authorial persona was transformed from Romantic shepherd to boar-ish Hogg.

Cannibalism is a recurrent theme in his novels, especially *The Three Perils of Man* (1822). Having been trapped in an upper chamber of the citadel without food, it is decided that if rescue does not arrive one of the group will have to be sacrificed in order to sustain the others. A storytelling contest is suggested. The teller of the least popular tale will be sacrificed. In the end, the Laird of Peatstacknowe, or Gibby Jordan, loses.[35] This decision is not based solely on Gibby's storytelling skills. The Master (who is elected judge) deems his tale the least worthy, but when, for fairness' sake, the decision is deferred to the drawing of lots, fate confirms the warlock's ruling. The outcome is potentially poignant for Hogg who, I would suggest, identifies closely with the character of Gibby. The Laird is by far the novel's most prominent taleteller: he can barely finish a conversation without referring to some legend or fable. Everything 'minds [him] of a story that [he has] heard' (p. 97, and also, though not an exhaustive list, pp. 98, 100, 110, 114, 146, and 153). He tells a tale, entitled 'Marion's Jock', that Hogg was later to publish separately in his *Altrive Tales* (1832). The story is lively and entertaining, Charlie Scott deems it 'ane o' the best tales *o' the kind* that ever I heard' (p. 224) and, in its later incarnation, it is often accounted one of Hogg's best productions.[36] Regardless of such praise, Gibby is cannibalised for telling it. Its traditionary origins and the Scots dialect in which it is related may provide a clue to its reception. As Charlie remarks, it is a good tale, but only '*o' the kind*'. Equally, as much as Hogg was accepted into Edinburgh's literary circles, he was never truly granted the respect he craved. He was always a marginalised figure of fun: an autodidact who told quaint Scots tales; the Ettrick

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[35] James Hogg, *The Three Perils of Man: A Border Romance*, ed. Judy King and Graham Tulloch (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), pp. 311-14.
[36] See the notes to the tale in James Hogg, *Altrive Tales*, p. 209.

Shepherd, but not a true man of letters.[37] His tales were ripe for consumption, but not for high literary appreciation.

'Marion's Jock' is the story of a gluttonous boy with an acute craving for 'fat flesh', who ends in murdering his employer over the death of the latter's favourite pet lamb (pp. 210-23). It transpires that the Laird's tale refers to one of his fellow prisoners in the castle, Tam Craik: alias Marion's Jock; alias the Devil's Tam. Tam is a voracious consumer and this leads him to sign his soul away to the devil later in the novel. For three years of readily available 'fat flesh', Tam agrees to eternal damnation (p. 330). His excessive consumption is his downfall, but it is also the downfall of his documenter. Tam may have signed his soul away forever, but, for his part in the tale – as its teller – Peatstacknowe is forced to serve the Master who torments him day and night by transforming him into various edible creatures. 'The dinner was made up of me,' he tells his companions after his escape, 'I supplied every dish, and then was forced to cook them all afterward' (p. 434). In Hogg's novel, to be a storyteller is to be consumed and ridiculed by the auditors (or readers) of your tales.

Like the 'Author of Waverley', then, the Ettrick Shepherd consumes and is consumed. Unlike the 'Author', his character and not his productions often provided the meat for his public. A further comparison between the *Private Memoirs*' exhumation scene and what can be described as the exhumation of the 'Author of Waverley' in Ballantyne's publishing-house, illustrates the differences, but also the essential similarity, between their experiences of early nineteenth-century

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[37] As Gillian Hughes points out: 'if Hogg appealed in his work to his reading rather than to tradition, he moved from strong to weak ground. His sense that his equality as an author (as opposed to a tradition-bearer) was not fully admitted is surely behind his description of himself as "a step-son" in the ideal Scott family where Lockhart was "a legitimate younger brother": '"Robert Wringhim's Solitude", in *James Hogg and the Literary Marketplace*, pp. 71-80 (p. 72); see also Sharon Alker and Holly Faith Nelson, 'Scottish Romanticism and the Working-Class Author: An Introduction', in *James Hogg and the Literary Marketplace*, pp. 1-20 (pp. 9-12).

publication. When the 'Author' is unearthed in Ballantyne's 'crypts', he is not defenceless. He speaks for himself and can readily and convincingly respond to the Captain's criticisms. He may be a spectre and an eidolon, but he is also animate and communicative. In contrast, the inanimate, disinterred corpse of the *Private Memoirs*' Robert Wringhim suffers a far more ambivalent fate. Items found on his body are distributed as souvenirs to various curious parties.[38] His clothes and hair are cut up, 'his broad blue bonnet was sent to Edinburgh' (p. 168), and as for the clasp knife found in his pocket, 'Mr. Sc—t took it with him, and presented it to his neighbour, Mr. R____n of W__n L__e, who still has it in his possession' (p. 173). The author's body and associated paraphernalia are initially of more interest to his investigators than his writings. Where the 'Author' is afforded respect, 'awe' even (*EEWN*, XIII, 5), Hogg's authorial body is violated.

In each instance, though, the text works in favour of obscuring the identity that lies behind the authorial body. Wringhim's corpse may be despoiled, but the pamphlet found on his body (*The Private Memoirs*) remains intact and, more importantly, inscrutable. The author's identity, represented by his mummified remains, cannot be comprehended through an investigation of his literary remains. In a similar fashion, though the 'Author' offers himself up for consumption, he is adept at confounding attempts to interpret his identity. He may reveal himself to the curious Clutterbuck and Dryasdust, but he does not satisfy their need to understand him. Ultimately, both authors leave their readers in possession of their texts, but not of their persons.

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[38] On the related subject of the souvenir trade that rose up around the late Romantic poets, see Samantha Matthews, *Poetical Remains: Poets' Graves, Bodies, and Books in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

Authorial Possession: Scott's Demon

By distancing the actual author from the author's textual persona, Hogg and Scott

seek to protect their private identities. This distancing project, however, can come

into conflict with their authorial pride. They wish to protect their proprietary and

creative rights as well as to avoid commodification. The difficulty lies in the fact that

to secure their intellectual property they must in some way acknowledge their

authorship. They are at once wary of and complicit in the processes of possession,

consumption, and appropriation associated with publication.

A recurrent character in the annals of print culture, and these author's works,

the printer's devil is a particularly apt figure through which to examine this paradox.

Another intermediary character, he is representative of the pains of publication, but

also of the desire to produce and be acknowledged. Authors' business relationships

with their publishers (and printer's devils) are represented as satanic compacts.

Unless choosing to self-publish, the author must sign a contract with a publisher in

order to distribute his works. The publisher promises wealth and fame, but in order

to receive these benefits the author must produce for him, must sign away his or her

works. In the case of the satanic contract, the devil gains power over the signatory's

soul; in the case of the literary contract, the printer's devil gains power over the

author's text. With literary productions so closely associated with authorial identity

in the period, writers risk signing their souls away with their copyrights. In Hogg's

writing, Satan often appears as himself, but is closely allied with printer's devils by

his connection to the written or printed word. The most obvious example is that of

Gil Martin in the *Private Memoirs*. It is reported that 'the Devil [...] appeared twice

in the printing house, assisting the workmen at the printing of [Robert Wringhim's]

book' (p. 153). He causes such a stir that the proprietor of the establishment orders

all copies of the pamphlet to be burned, despite the fact that the Gil Martin is merely

fulfilling his role as a printer's devil: a necessary employee of the printing house.

These devilish assistants are less prominent in Scott's work, but still significant. He

often characterises authorship as a form of demonic possession and his novels re-

imagine the literal scenes of satanic contract signing found in Hogg's texts as legal

and cultural acts which question, according to Piper, 'the reliability of the signed

document'.[39]

In the notes to his 1803 poem *The Press*, John McCreery writes that 'the

Printer's Devil is a character almost identified with the origin of the art' of

printing.[40] Certainly, he is a character that lurks in much Romantic period writing on

the processes of authorship. 'Printer's devil' was the common term for a boy

working as an assistant in a print shop: the name supposedly arising from the fact

that his face and hands were blackened by printing ink. One of his most prominent

characteristics is his mischievous and interfering nature. Responsibility for

typographical errors is often laid at his feet. The author of 'Ode to the Printer's

Devil' (1823) embeds this aspect of his character within his description. He puns on

the devil's 'poor' reputation as a type-setter by calling him a 'small poor *type* of

wickedness, *set up*'.[41] Sometimes, he is even depicted actively altering texts or

misleading readers as to their nature. 'The Printer's Devil's Work' (1832), a poem

from the *Comic Magazine*, depicts the devil writing leaders. His chosen titles tend to

be sensationalist and satiric, realigning the arguments and purpose of the copy. 'A

speech on Reform', for instance, is denominated '"FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE"' in

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[39] Andew Piper, *Dreaming in Books: The Making of the Bibliographic Imagination in the Romantic Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), p. 119.

[40] John McCreery, *The Press: A Poem Published as a Specimen of Typography* (London: Cadell and Davies, 1803), p. 4n.

[41] Ned Ward, 'Ode to the Printer's Devil', *The London Magazine*, 7 (1823), pp. 644-45 (l. 66).

mockery of its disjointed style; and a 'speech of H__t's', miraculous only for its poor use of Latin, is termed 'a "HORRIBLE MURDER"'. The latter title also references a previous sensationalist, and literal, headline from the poem, implying the mercantile devil's plan to increase public interest in the piece at the same time that it ridicules it.[42] Printer's devils frequently appear in the guise of messengers: pestering authors for copy or returning copy to them for correction. This usually occurs at an inappropriate moment. 'I don't like to be hurried,' Chrystal Croftangry complains in *Chronicles of the Cannongate*, 'and have had enough of duns in an early part of my life, to make me reluctant to hear of, or see one, even in the less awful shape of a printer's devil' (*EEWN*, xx, p. 52). The devil draws the writer into the world of public recognition, transplanting their writings from the private study to the print house. In many respects this is desirable. Croftangry, for example, is 'ambitious that my compositions […] travel as much farther to the north as the breath of applause will carry their sails' (*EEWN*, xx, p. 52). Yet, interactions with printer's devils are also imagined as a kind of trap: what the 'Ode to the Printer's Devil' calls 'the bondage which the Printer presses'. The author is 'pressed' into writing or releasing his work, which is then literally 'pressed' into print.[43]

The concept of the printer's devil as the bearer of a satanic, publishing contract is compounded by his connection to the story of Faustus. This tale is sometimes cited as the origin of the term and is supposed to derive from the experiences of Guttenberg's financer and onetime partner Johann Fust. Having been disappointed in money matters by his associate, Fust, so the story goes, chose to make up his capital by selling a number of printed bibles in Paris. Word of the beauty of these bibles travelled abroad and the books were compared. When each

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[42] 'The Printer's Devil's Work', *The Comic Magazine: Volume 1*, ed. Robert Seymour and Robert Cruikshank (London: James Gilbert,1832), pp. 51-57 (ll. 45-48, 29-32).
[43] 'Ode to the Printer's Devil', (l. 43).

copy was found to be identical, cries of witchcraft arose. 'Two such Bibles,' writes

T. C. Hansard in an account from 1825, 'were the work of a man's life-time to

transcribe; and upon enquiry, he was found to have sold a much greater number.

Hereupon orders were given to apprehend Faustus, and prosecute him as a

conjuror'.[44] A later retelling claims that 'the red ink by which they [were]

embellished' also led to a belief that the bibles had been printed in blood.[45]

Eventually, Fust was released and commended for his typographical efforts. The

story's ending ultimately celebrates the printer's devil and his commitment to the

dissemination of knowledge. In this guise, the figure recalls the character of

Aldobrand Oldenbuck in *The Antiquary*, who is also persecuted for his work as a

printer. An ancestor of the novel's eponymous hero, Aldobrand is run out of

Germany for pressing copies of the outlawed *Augsberg Confession*. Jonathan

Oldbuck venerates him for this deed. As in Fust's tale, superstition and narrow-

mindedness are viewed as the enemies of enlightenment; printing is not the devil's

work, but an honourable occupation. The Antiquary is certainly of the view that

literature should be shared and not censored. Aldobrand is held up as a figure of

righteous rebellion, admirable for his connection to print and desire to spread

learning (*EEWN*, III, 73, 85).

Despite these appreciative readings of the early advocates of print, the

association of printing with devilry persists in various, if more benign, forms through

to Scott's and Hogg's time. Printing devils themselves may be rather figures of fun

than genuine fear in the Romantic period, but negative elements of the Faustus and

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[44] See T. C. Hansard, *Typographia: An Historical Sketch of the Origin and Progress of the Art of Printing; with Practical Directions for Conducting Every Department in an Office: with a Description of Stereotype and Lithography* (London: Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, 1825), p. 301. De Quincey also makes reference to this fable in *Suspiria* (*WDQ*, VI, 174).

[45] Douglas Jerrold, 'The Printer's Devil', *The Evergreen: A Monthly Magazine of New and Popular Tales and Poetry*, 1 (New York: J. Winchester, 1840), p. 54.

Aldobrand legend are repeated in rationalised terms by commentators on the expansion of print. Medieval observers of Fust's Bibles are upset by their uniformity and their cheapness. Hansard states that questions began to be asked about Fust when he reduced the prices of his bibles from seven-hundred-and-fifty crowns to just fifty, while Aldobrand's *Confession* is problematic for its defiance of censorship. The commodification of literature, the loss of the artisanship involved in manuscript production, and the dissemination of questionable knowledge and incendiary ideas to a general, enlarged, and perhaps unready reading public, are concepts familiar to Romantic period accounts of the expansion of print. New technology offered increased access to scholarship and information, expanded avenues of communication, and broadened public learning, but it also commanded a power which was at times perceived as devilish.

Scott's engagement with the figure of the printer's devil speaks to the coincident anxieties and satisfactions associated with the printed form, particularly as regards the issues of increased production and market saturation. His printer's devil can be split into two primary figures: the literal printer's devil, and the 'dæmon' he used to characterise his creative impulse. 'I think there is a dæmon who seats himself on the feather of my pen when I begin to write,' the 'Author of Waverley' tells the Captain, 'and leads it astray from the purpose' (*EEWN*, XIII, 10). This 'dæmon' promotes a flood of creativity, but its issue may not always be of the best quality. The 'Author' uses him to excuse his 'rapidity in publication' and the flaws in the arrangement of his novels (*EEWN*, XIII, 10). Though writing under his devilish influence is pleasurable – the 'Author' likens it to the joy of a 'dog merrily chasing his own tail, and gambolling in all the frolic of unrestrained freedom' (*EEWN*, XIII, 10) – his 'dæmon' is also coercive. Immediately preceding this

character's introduction, the 'Author' notes that productivity needs to be self-sustaining: 'if a successful author keeps not the stage, another instantly takes his ground' (*EEWN*, XIII, 10). Scott's inborn generative capacity is at once gratifying and pressurising. The 'Author' fears being superseded or being unable to live up to his previous reputation (*EEWN*, XIII, 10).

More troubling, the 'dæmon' makes Scott endlessly reproduce himself. It has a particular proclivity for character creation. As well as 'lead[ing Scott] astray from [his] purpose' he causes 'Characters [to] expand under [his] hand' (*EEWN*, XIII, 10). Many of these characters are versions of Scott. In an effort to avoid saturating the market with works by the 'Author of Waverley', and to further confuse the public's perception of his identity, Scott wrote numerous authorial figures into his works. The similarity between Scott and several of his creations – most famously the Antiquary – has been well noted. Although, according to Scott, Jonathan Oldbuck was a pastiche of George Constable, it also clearly functions as a self-portrait.[46] The characters of the novels' framing material closely resemble his private persona, too. Clutterbuck, Dryasdust, Croftangry, and Laurence Templeton (of *Ivanhoe*) are all antiquaries, bibliophiles, editors, and sometime writers. They emphasise the concept that the author is an irreducible and fictive textual construct, but they also implicate Scott's personality. The more texts he produced, the more his readership clamoured to discover the true identity of their author: an author who, though disguised by a multitude of writers, narrators, and editorial figures, could also be detected in these 'Representation[s]' (*EEWN*, XIII, p. 4). With each new novel and each new persona, therefore, a little more of Scott's authorial identity was presented for consumption, a consumption promoted by the fecundity of his imagination.

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[46] See Jane Millgate, *Walter Scott: The Making of the Novelist* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), p. 89; and Nicola J. Watson, 'Introduction' to *The Antiquary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. xiii.

The creation of these substitutive Scotts is imagined, in the introductory epistles to *Nigel* and *Peveril*, as a form of parenthood. Scott does not just produce them textually, he gives birth to them. The Reverend calls the 'Author' both 'great parent' and 'great progenitor' (*EEWN*, XIV, 3), and the Captain salutes him with a Latin version of the same – '*Salve, magne parens*' (*EEWN*, XIII, 5): an interesting choice of greeting (especially considering Clutterbuck's previous confusion over the Author's gender), as the motto can be translated as 'Hail, mighty mother'. Scott's eidolon is father and mother both, then. Often, his characterisation is wholly patriarchal: he lectures his children, who preserve for him a 'filial awe' (*EEWN*, XIII, 5) and writes, according to Clutterbuck, works which contain too much of what is male – '*Quæ maribus sola tribuuntur*' (*EEWN*, XIII, 5) – for him to be considered otherwise. But his ability to generate a wealth of characters and literary works could also be described as maternal: the kind of overproduction usually associated with female readers and writers. In Newlyn's words, 'there was a widespread and explicit association of excessive writing with women whose reproductive capacities were seen to be out of control'.[47] As previously mentioned, Scott is thought to distance himself from this kind of novelistic endeavour by aligning himself with more masculine forms of reproduction.[48] The multiple Scotts he creates live in a male world of scholarly book appreciation. They make up a fictional Roxburghe Club: swopping and discussing rare manuscripts; translating ancient languages; and debating historical source material. Each one is a collector who creates with that which he has collected. They typify the composite mode of creativity that represents an uncomfortable paradigm for the authors in this study. If women do appear in the prefaces it is usually in the form of readers, sources, or supporters of this antiquarian

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[47]Newlyn, p. 43.
[48] Ferris, *The Achievement of Literary Authority*, pp. 94, 253.

club. At the close of *Old Mortality,* for example, the tale's writer-compiler, Peter Pattieson, discusses its ending with a female companion, Martha Buskbody. She is deemed qualified to help him with this task, having read 'through the whole stock of three circulating libraries' (*EEWN*, IV(B), 349): a particularly feminine pursuit. She is also primarily interested in a 'happy ending' and learning the details of Edith's and Morton's marriage and 'future felicity' (*EEWN*, IV(B), 349). In *Chronicles of the Canongate*, Mrs Baliol is given a more authoritative role, but she is overshadowed by Croftangry who ends up editing the manuscript packet she bequeaths him.

Scott's masculinisation of popular print culture suggests a latent anxiety over the nature of literary productivity: its possible feminisation, but also its links to consumerism. The more works Scott produces and the more popular those works are, the more he is consumed by the public. Again, his works are associated with the kind of voracious, but inconsistent, reading practices normally considered typical of female readers: 'a species of guilty, excessive consumption'.[49] The enduring nature of mass produced works is questionable. 'Like many a poor fellow, already overwhelmed with the number of his family, [the 'Author'] cannot help going on to increase it'. The larger the family, the more likely that some, or 'perhaps the whole', of its members will be 'consigned' to 'oblivion' (*EEWN*, XIII, 15). Though popular now, there is always the danger that the 'Author' may 'barter future reputation for present popularity' (*EEWN*, XIII, 16). By producing an abundance of novels in a short period, rather than 'tak[ing] time at least to arrange [his] stor[ies]' (*EEWN*, XIII, 10), his books will be quickly read and quickly forgotten.

Although Scott's examination of his productivity appears conflicted, it was a positive boon to his booksellers. This may be why it is sourced to a 'dæmon' akin to

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[49] Newlyn, p. 42.

the printer's devil. The 'Author', and Scott, are pragmatic about and enjoy composition and publication, but they are also aware of the pressures and obligations involved in these processes. The 'Author' is discovered in Ballantyne's working on a '*revise*' (a provisionally altered proof-sheet) and at the close of the 'Epistle' is visited by a printer's devil seeking his corrections: 'here our dialogue terminated; for a little sooty-faced Apollyon from the Canongate came to demand the proof-sheet on the part of Mr. McCorkindale' (*EEWN*, XIII, 17). The 'sooty-faced Apollyon' is able to navigate the publishing-house's labyrinths and 'demand' his employer's proofs. Where the 'Author' has previously controlled the situation, the printer's devil challenges his autonomy by imposing McCorkindale's deadline on him. The occurrence suggests that Ballantyne's is as much a prison as a sanctuary, and that the messenger boy may in fact be the 'Author's' jailer. He is, after-all, likened to the incarcerated princess of Ridley's tale. The boy is not merely a devil, but an 'Apollyon': a Biblical designation that can mean both 'the destroyer', or 'place of destruction', namely Hell. Its application implies that publication can have a destructive effect on literary works (as a result of poor editing or type-setting, for example), and emphasises the 'Author's' compact with the hellish printing house. Ultimately, he is beholden to the two devils who force his hand. He is spurred on by his creative 'dæmon' and hurried on by a printer's devil. The 'Author' may not see any reason 'for gratitude, properly so called' (*EEWN*, XIII, 9) to exist between an author and his readership, but an obligatory relationship between an author and his publisher must exist. This relationship confirms the link between the author and his texts. Though his fictional companions and readers are denied access to the 'Author's' true identity and physical whereabouts, the printer's devil can always find him.

Authorial Possession: Hogg's Devils

The satanic contract, perhaps more than the printer's devil himself, is a key motif in Hogg's work. Its appearances suggest that his view of contracts was, at best, ambivalent. In the first place, signatures are problematic signifiers, both in his life and in his work. There is often a disjuncture between the name and the body, the assignation and the intent. This distance is only increased by the gap between the handwritten signature – the actual event of signing one's name – and the printed sign. Signatures are supposed to indicate the responsibility of the identities they designate. But even handwritten signatures can be forged. As we saw in the previous chapter, the correlation between a name appearing in a book and responsibility for or the right to possess that book is hardly straightforward. 'I soon found out,' Hogg writes in his *Memoir*:

> that the coterie of my literary associates had made it up to act on O'Dogherty's [*sic*] principle, never to deny a thing that they had *not* written, and never to acknowledge one that they *had*. On which I determined that, in future, I would sign my name or designation to every thing I published, that I might be answerable to the world only for my own offences. But as soon as the rascals perceived this, they signed my name as fast as I did.
>
> (p. 74)

In Hogg's works, the only way the signature can truly correspond to its signified is if it is literally made part of the body of the signee, if it is written in blood. There is a preponderance of 'red ink' in his texts, reminiscent of Fust's sanguinary bibles. Gil Martin's Bible, in the *Private Memoirs*, is 'all intersected with red lines, and verses'

(p. 85); Michael Scott, in *The Three Perils of Man*, usually writes his spells and missives in red (pp. 148, 330, 337); and, more explicitly, numerous characters either do, or come close to, signing their name in blood. These characters include Colin Hyslop in 'The Witches of Traquir', and Michael Scott and Tam Craik in *The Three Perils*. The danger is clear: red writing is the devil's work. Those who sign their name in red usually end up in the power of those who write in 'red characters' (*Three Perils*, pp. 148, 330). Signing in blood confirms the connection between the body of the signatory and the signature itself; the consequences of this undeniable acknowledgment are often visited upon the signatory's body. Hogg may not have signed his 'name or designation' in blood, but the appendage of it to a text often resulted in the same kinds of punishment as if he had.

The appearance of his signature in *Blackwood's* was particularly problematic. Despite having obtained a 'promise' from William Blackwood '"that my name should never be mentioned in his mag. without my own consent"', he writes to Scott, 'yet you see how it is kept and how I am again misrepresented to the world'. He argues that the slurs on his character affect his wife more than himself, but is clearly angered by *Maga*'s representation of him as a 'drunkard', 'ideot [*sic*]', and 'a monster of nature'.[50] The last of these descriptions confirms Duncan's point that articles referencing the author in *Blackwood's* are unusually concerned with his physical form. Writing about Wilson's review of *The Three Perils of Woman*, Duncan notes that 'it is not long before – in place of the book which is its ostensible topic – the body of the author comes into focus, as the chief object or exhibit of the review'.[51] The shift from the discussion of the book to a discussion of the authorial body reveals how closely the two were associated. Hogg may as well have signed the

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[50] James Hogg, 'Letter to Sir Walter Scott, Altrive Lake, 3rd Oct. 1821', in *The Collected Letters of James Hogg*, ed. Gillian Hughes, 2 vols (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), II, p. 116.
[51] Duncan, 'Hogg's Body', p. 2.

Ettrick Shepherd away to Blackwood in blood for the indelible connection between his body and his signature assumed by the magazine's contributors and readers. Hogg is made personally and, in a sense, physically responsible for his own and others' works with little remuneration or recourse. The signing of his name results in the same kinds of 'monstrous' physical transformation that occur in *The Three Perils of Man* when characters like Gibby Jordan give in to the power of Michael Scott. In *Blackwood's*, Hogg is transformed into a great boar, his prominent front teeth mocked for their resemblance to porcine tusks; in his novel, characters are 'transformed into some paltry animal' for the amusement of fiends who revel in 'tormenting that animal to death, by dissecting it while living' (p. 433).

Hogg asks Scott for advice on his situation with William Blackwood. Aside from going bankrupt in the late 1820s – when Ballantyne's publishing company, of which he was half owner, collapsed – Scott enjoyed unprecedented literary success with the *Waverley* novels and, for the most part, without compromising his authorial identity. Ballantyne's bankruptcy forced him to reveal his identity as the 'Author of Waverley' in 1827, but previous to this he was largely able to manage the appearance of the name of Walter Scott in his publications and the publications of others. Originally, for instance, Hogg had intended to name the *The Three Perils'* character Sir Ringan Redhough Walter Scott. Scott vetoed the plan. As much as the Shepherd was reluctant to alter 'the character of the Warden' or to 'alter the whole of my romance', the letter he writes to Scott concerning this veto is sensitive to his contemporary's reluctance to be named in the work. He calls the scene in which the Warden is introduced 'dangerous' and 'uncongenial', saying 'if you think it *better* to alter the names I will send for the M. S. and begin immediatly [sic]. I think it would be better if I had not put them in at first'. The tone of the letter is difficult to gauge:

at times sycophantic, and at others sarcastic. Hogg does seem to have intended some compliment to Scott in his portrait, however. Referring to the novel's final battle, which sees Sir Ringan emerge victorious, he writes that: 'of his share in the catastrophe I should scarcely like to see my chief deprived'. At this point, his words could refer to Scott or Sir Ringan; it was not unknown for Hogg to refer to the baronet as his 'chief'.[52] Russett reads the event as an example of Hogg's enjoyment in taking liberties with Scott's name: an attempt to puncture the pomposity of his 'brand'.[53] But the character of the Warden also appears to celebrate Scott's burlesquing of his authorial identity.

Sir Ringan is a schemer. He refrains from entering the battle against Musgrave until he is convinced that it would be a propitious step and his plan is successful. He interprets Michael Scott's prophesy concerning the outcome of the siege correctly and triumphs. Considering that the Shepherd was sympathetic to cunning rogues – in his fiction and in reality – the portrait of Redhough may be understood as flattering rather than derisive. Although straightforward characters, such as Charlie Scott in *Three Perils* or Tibby Hyslop in the 'Dreams and Apparitions' section of *The Shepherd's Calendar*, are admirable and, ultimately, immune to the machinations of devil and scoundrel, their honest credulity can get them into trouble. In 'Tibby Hyslop's Dream', the eponymous character almost has her reputation ruined by trusting her lascivious employer, Mr Forrit; while Charlie and his band are transformed into highland cattle after falling drunkenly under the thrall of the Master. Characters like the rambunctious, but gentlemanly Charlie serve as parallels for the immature Hogg, first making his way in literary Edinburgh. He admits in his *Memoir*, that when he submitted his first collection of poems for

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[52] See James Hogg, 'Letter to Sir Walter Scott, Altrive Lake, 3rd Oct. 1821', II, p. 115.
[53] Russett, pp. 182-83.

publication he 'knew no more about publishing than the man of the moon'. The result of which was that:

> no sooner did the first copy come to hand, than my eyes were open to the
>
> folly of my conduct; for, on comparing it with the MS. which I had at
>
> home, I found many of the stanzas omitted, other misplaced, and
>
> typographical errors abounding in every page.
>
> (*Memoir*, p. 21)

The printer's devil had been at work and 'in a few days', Hogg says, 'I had discernment enough left to wish my publication at the devil' (p. 21). His naivety and social status lead him into situations where his works were butchered and, later, his person insulted and loyalty imposed upon.[54]

Characters such as the aristocratic Warden lack Charlie's and Hogg's naivety. Their education and social position equip them with the tools required to negotiate complex situations that rely on the correct interpretation of the written word. Hogg admired the perspicacity of these characters. Though he was denied the status afforded his non-labouring-class associates in the Edinburgh literary scene, jealousy need not have prevented him looking up to them. His gentlemanly, though roguish, acquaintances fascinated as well as frustrated the Shepherd. Of Lockhart (one of his primary tormenters) he says: 'I dreaded his eye terribly; and it was not without reason, for he was very fond of playing tricks on me, but always in such a way, that it was impossible to lose temper with him'.[55] Though occasionally bitter at his treatment, Hogg also aspired to a place within the upper-echelons of his

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[54] 'Hogg's often subversive writings tended to be vulnerable to the imposition of changes at the hands of publishers who were anxious to make his texts more widely acceptable (and thus more saleable)': Douglas S. Mack, 'James Hogg and his Publishers: *The Queen's Wake* and *Queen Hynde*', in *Authorship, Commerce and the Public: Scenes of Writing, 1750-1850*, ed. E. J. Clery et al. (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 67-83 (p. 67).

[55] James Hogg, *Reminiscences of Former Days*, in *Altrive Tales: Featuring a Memoir of the Author's Life*, ed. Gillian Hughes (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), pp. 53-78 (p. 73).

immediate society: a position of consequence that was related, but not equal to the position of authors such as Scott. In this light, Charlie's social elevation at the close of the *Three Perils* can be read as a form of wish fulfilment. It places him in a respected, yet subordinate position beside his chief. He retains his homely character, yet is honoured. Hogg seeks just such a position within Edinburgh literary society. Charlie is Hogg, and his wise patron, Sir Ringan, is Sir Walter Scott.

The Warden's conclusive achievement in *The Three Perils* is to evaluate the Master's divination: a prediction 'dark and full of intricacies' (p. 339). Sir Ringan is unable to decipher it alone. The novel's conclusion, however, proves that he has 'understood the Master's signs and injunctions properly' (p. 339). This is an impressive feat, considering the Master's possessiveness over the 'black book of fate' (p. 327) from which the prophesy is taken. The book is bound by 'massy iron clasps' and all at the castle are advised to completely cover their eyes while the weird is read as:

> if any one of [them] were to look but on one character of [the] book, his brain would be seared to a cinder, his eyes would fly out of their sockets, and perhaps his whole frame might be changed into something unspeakable and monstrous.
>
> (p. 327)

Michael Scott, alone, is able to read the book and avoid the destruction of his mind or transmogrification. The Warden, however, does not need to see the weird first hand to comprehend it. He prudently avoids a trip to Aikwood Castle, and the resultant transformations and torments undergone by his vassals. He reaps the benefits of scholarly understanding, yet remains in the background of the novel's action: much as Scott was able to keep his involvement in the planning, writing, and

scandals of journals such as the *Quarterly Review* and *Blackwood's*, predominantly private. Both chiefs of the Scott clan evade the unflattering transformations suffered by Charlie and Hogg at the hands of actual wizards and periodical devils.

Sir Walter and his doppelgänger are also masters of the signed document. Douglas draws up a grant, in *The Three Perils*, promising Sir Ringan substantial lands if he can put the former in possession of Roxburgh Castle. Though the grant is 'signed, sealed, and witnessed' (p. 380; also, in variant, p. 349) at the behest of Douglas, it is much to Sir Ringan's advantage. This stands in contrast to the bloody signatures solicited by the Master's devilish associates in Aikwood Castle, the rewards of which are much less pleasant. His deft negotiation of the legal document allies the Warden with his real-life counterpart who, as a lawyer, was well aware of the authority of a document 'signed, sealed, and witnessed' and able to use it to his advantage. Both the Warden and Scott impress through their ability to comprehend the devil's 'red characters', and their ability to sign their name, or withdraw it, as the situation and their benefit requires.

Despite the successes of Scott in the world of literature, and the Warden in the world of the novel, there are Scotts in *The Three Perils* who find themselves bound by less than favourable contracts. Hogg is mindful that all authors are vulnerable to the demonic machinations of the press. The Warden may rejoice in his transaction with Douglas, but there is another prominent Scott who has reason to regret his satanic deal. Michael Scott obtains his black book by making a Faustian pact with the devil: 'renouncing, for ever and ever, all right in a Redeemer, and signing the covenant with his own blood' (p. 194). While he is proud of the supernatural powers he gains by this agreement, he is also conscious that anyone of true Christian faith has 'the power of counteracting these mighty spirits' (p. 194): a

fact made clear by the friar's ability to trick and subdue him with scriptural and scientific knowledge. The friar triumphs over the Master's weighty black book with his 'little book' of the Gospels (pp. 129, 193). The narrator notes that, as with most who sign the devil's contracts, Michael realises the limitations of his powers after the fact: 'his eyes were opened when it was too late' (p. 194).

His character arc illustrates the conflict, experienced by writers like Hogg, between authorial pride and authorial caution. The Master affirms, regardless of the friar's commendation of 'heavenly mercy', 'his resolution to abide by his covenant' (p. 194). Although he acknowledges the inferiority of his ruling spirits, he refuses to repent. He honours his written acknowledgment of responsibility by accepting his reward: the retention of his black book. At the close of *The Three Perils*, he is forced to fight a battle with the devil to retain it. 'This black book and this divining-rod are mine,' he states. 'They were consigned to my hands by thyself and the four viceroys of the elements, and part with them shall I never, either in life or in death' (p. 440). His prophecy again proves correct. The archfiend fails to regain his magical artefacts, but Michael must pay for this victory with his life. The book and its owner are materially and supernaturally bonded. Before the battle 'the Master ha[s] the black book belted to his bosom, with bands of steel, that were hammered in the forge of hell' (p. 440) and after his death 'no force of man could sever [the book and the staff from his corpse], although when they lifted the body and these together, there was no difference in weight from the body of another man' (p. 446). As in the exhumation scene from the *Private Memoirs*, book and body are combined. Unlike the former instance, the black book remains inviolable; it cannot be separated from

the Master.[56] Even in Scott's version of the Michael Scott legend – *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805) – the wizard maintains control of his text. When the black book is stolen by Lord Cranstoun's goblin page (III, stanzas 8-10), only a small portion of it can be read. The book then unleashes a spell which causes distress to the lady who ordered its exhumation and results in the damnation of the dwarf who opened it. In both versions, the Master is the book's ultimate possessor.

Parallels can be made not only between the book and Michael's body, but the book and Michael's soul. In keeping his book from the fiend, the wizard retains his soul, control of his identity, and of his literary property. Like the *Private Memoirs*, it is a text that protects its author. After all, he wears it like a shield, strapped to his chest. Whereas Wringhim's text denies interpretation and confounds its readers, though, Michael's text is simply unreadable. That the 'black book [is] belted to his bosom, with bands of steel, that were hammered in the forge of hell' suggests an underlying anxiety over the extent of the bond between author and book. Just as Scott is unable to resist the demands of his 'dæmon' or avoid McCorkindale's 'sooty Apollyon', in the end the devil catches up with Michael Scott. He must fight for the book's possession through a number of scenes of comedic bickering with the archfiend. At points, he even admits his own fear: 'with all his power and mysterious art, the terrors of death still encompassed him about' (p. 189). His terror is well justified as the final, irrefutable proof of his right to the book is his death. The difficulty, here, is that Michael's book is too closely bound to his body. Whereas

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[56] Perhaps significantly, variants of the Scots word for 'book' – 'beuk' 'buik' and 'bouk' – can also be applied to the body: specifically the torso. This suggests that the connection between the two objects may run deep in Scottish thought and culture. For instance, 'he gets it frae some auld-fashioned beuk,' (*Three Perils*, p. 142); 'I was at the winding of the corpse; and when the bluid was washed off, he was a bonny bouk of man's body' (*Bride of Lammermoor*, p. 177); 'he says he has it market on his buik': James Hogg, 'Tibby Hyslop's Dream', in *The Shepherd's Calendar*, ed. Douglas S. Mack (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002), pp. 142-62 (p. 159). See also, *Dictionary of the Scots Language* <http://www.dsl.ac.uk/> [accessed August 2011].

figures, like the 'Author of Waverley' or Robert Wringhim, are disguised by their textual substitutes – their bodies allowed to fade into the background – the unreadability of the black book means that it cannot mediate between the wizard and his foes. It does not stand in for the Master's body; it is his body. Excessive possessiveness over intellectual property draws the external identity of the author further into his text, leaving him vulnerable to the possessive gaze of his readers, publishers, editors, and critics.

Scott's characters also walk, and sometimes cross, the fine line between authorial possessiveness and authorial impotence. Often this process is complicated by the interference of intermediaries, such as the printer's devil, but particularly by the vagaries of the law. In his novels, characters sign their names in ink rather than blood, but are still held accountable in a number of painful ways. Daniel Cottom has argued that in Scott's novels the law could 'be the source of a greater insecurity and a worse violence than ever existed prior to this advancement in civilization'. Where Cottom sees the law as problematic for its duplicity – it allows men to wear 'masks to their individuality' – it is also problematic for the way in which it interprets identity as static and accountability as straightforward.[57] Some are enabled to 'wear masks', but others are condemned by its literality. Signatures can fix responsibility and identity, regardless of the complexities and fluidity of the selfhoods they signify.

Scott's discomfort with the concept of a binding contract is apparent in his treatment of the Covenanters in *Old Mortality* (1816). In *The Three Perils*, Hogg's Master signs a 'covenant'; in *Old Mortality* (and historically), so do the Scottish people. They sign two in fact: the National Covenant (1638) and the Solemn League and Covenant (1643). The Master's dogged adherence to his unfortunate creed is

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[57] Daniel Cottom, 'Violence and Law in the *Waverley* Novels', *Studies in Romanticism*, 20 (1981), 65-84 (p. 66).

reminiscent of the extremism of the seventeenth-century Covenanters whom Hogg had written about in *The Brownie of Bodsbeck* (1818) and Scott in *Old Mortality*. The National and the Solemn League and Covenant were legal documents which underwrote Scottish Presbyterianism, questioning the rule of Charles I. Disagreement over the correct way in which to adhere to their tenets was a central cause of the Covenanting Revolution. According to Roger A. Mason, 'as a covenant, its religious form and content drew on a deep rooted tradition of biblical literalism which read the Old Testament as a source book of legal precedent of universal validity'.[58] The Covenanter's 'biblical literalism', their unquestioning acceptance of the rule of the written word is, perhaps, their greatest failing. In *Old Mortality*, at least, the refusal of Scott's Cameronians to compromise their beliefs leads them on a path of violence and brutality unabated even after the coronation of William of Orange sanctions their cause in 1689.

The validity of the signature as a signifier of self or intent is also problematised in Scott's novels. The tragedy of the *Bride of Lammermoor*, for instance, hinges on the authenticity of its heroine's signature. Like Hogg, Lucy Ashton is plagued by its misuse; in contrast to him though, she suffers at the hands of those who force, as opposed to forge, it. Having signed a contract of engagement to Edgar Ravenswood, she is coerced by her mother into signing alternative marriage deeds which promise her to the Laird of Bucklaw. There is no doubt that the signature on both documents is genuinely hers, but the autograph on the latter does not express the signatory's intent. The marriage deeds express her mother's wishes rather than her own. Lucy's timidity renders her incapable of contradiction. Lady Ashton embarks upon a campaign of intimidation which involves leading her

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[58] Roger A. Mason, *The Oxford Companion to Scottish History*, ed. Michael Lynch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 436.

daughter to believe that her first engagement is 'scandalous, shameful, and sinful' (*EEWN*, VII, 235) and employing an ill-famed local woman as a nurse to poison her mind with superstition and fear (*EEWN*, VII, 239-41). At the final crisis, when Ravenswood arrives at the signing of the marriage deeds, she invokes scriptural precedent to affirm her right to parental veto. Considering the methods employed in obtaining the autograph, it is fair to say that Lucy Ashton's signature is as inauthentic as if it had been forged. Its materiality is attested to by the novel's narrator, Peter Pattieson, who is supposed to have 'seen the fatal deed […] in which the name of Lucy Ashton is traced on each page' (*EEWN*, VII, 246), but this method of verification is also destabilised by the fact that document and narrator are both fictional constructs. In her notes to the Penguin edition of the novel, Robertson considers it unlikely that Scott ever saw Janet Dalrymple's marriage contract – the historical source for the substance of *The Bride of Lammermoor* – meaning that even the actual material evidence of the tale is elusive.[59] Regardless of its insubstantiality and insincerity, the innocence of the bride is contradicted by legally binding evidence. As a result, she is held accountable for her mother's scheming. Ultimately, she falls prey to madness: stabbing her husband on their wedding night and then dying herself.

Lady Ashton also controls Lucy's ability to distribute text in the manner that a publisher might control the distribution of an author's work. Lucy is only allowed to express herself under the strict editorship of her mother who intercepts and destroys her letters to Ravenswood (*EEWN*, VII, 236).[60] Just as the printer's devil

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[59] Walter Scott, *The Bride of Lammermoor*, ed. Fiona Robertson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), n. 320, p. 442.
[60] It may also be relevant that Lucy's father is the Lord Keeper. In the period that the novel is set, he would have been involved in censoring literature, having responsibility over the licensing of texts. See Ronald Deazley, *On the Origin of the Right to Copy: Charting the Movement of Copyright Law in Eighteenth-Century Britain (1695-1775)* (Portland: Hart Publishing, 2004), p. 7.

reminds the author of print deadlines, Lady Ashton imposes time constraints on Lucy: St Jude's day for the signing of the marriage deeds, regardless of Ravenswood's response to her upcoming nuptials, and before the hour of noon on that date, ironically, 'in order that the marriage might be happy' (*EEWN*, VII, 244). The Lady's partner, Ailsie Gourlay (Lucy's nurse), is also a manner of devil. Scott may describe the 'guilt of witchcraft' as 'imaginary', but he still terms Ailsie an 'ally of the great Enemy of Mankind' (*EEWN*, VII, 239). Lucy is obliged to a satanic force that she cannot escape. Responsibility is assigned to the signatory and not the authority that forces the signatory's hand. The only way to avoid this kind of culpability, it would seem, is to emphasise the disjuncture between textual and actual identity: as in the case of Scott and his 'insubstantial' stand in, the 'Author of Waverley'. In both his and Hogg's work, the fluidity of textual identity is emphasised. Be it in aid of avoiding the imposition of the press and readers, or because the author takes an intellectual pleasure in creating various, Elian personas for himself, these writers repeatedly confounded the relationship between the name on the back of a book and the person it referred to.

Writers, Compilers, and Redactors

As much as it might have been prudent for authors in the early nineteenth century to distance themselves from their literary productions, they did so at the risk of losing creative control over their intellectual property. A work may be possessed by its readers as a commodity, but it can also be possessed by the peripheral figures that regulate its material production: its publishers and printers, its compilers and redactors. In *The Three Perils*, the Master is willing to give his life to retain possession of his book, and in Scott's work – for all the obfuscations of the 'Author

of Waverley' – the right of textual possession is similarly contested. The 'Author' will not simply relinquish his property.

The figure of Jedediah Cleishbotham typifies this conflict. He is usually described as the editor or compiler of the *Tales of My Landlord* series, but neither title is entirely appropriate. The actual writer of the series is a character called Peter, or Patrick Pattieson. As his possession of two interchangeable Christian names implies, his authorial persona is, like the 'Author's', rather shadowy. Where the latter's spectral nature is implied, Pattieson is a literal spectre, in that he is deceased. He is also an author whose work comprises multiple narrative voices. Much like Scott, he can be described as a re-writer. In addition to himself and Jedediah, the tales contained within the *Landlord* novels are also attributable to a number of other storytellers (Old Mortality and Dick Tinto, for example) who provide Peter with his historical source material (not to mention the eponymous landlord to whom the *Tales* titularly belong). Significantly, none of the numerous narratorial figures found in the series' framework seem to want to claim responsibility for them. Despite this, a complex dispute for the possession of the texts is enacted within the novels' paratextual material.

'I am NOT the writer, redactor, or compiler of the Tales of my Landlord; nor am I, in one single iota, answerable for their contents, more or less', says Cleishbotham in the introduction to the first instalment of the *Tales* (*EEWN*, IV(A), 6). Though emphatic, this declaration is also specious. Considering Pattieson is deceased at the time of their publication, a degree of personal responsibility for the *Tales* must rest with their reluctant promoter. Perhaps this is the 'more or less' referred to. Either Cleishbotham means that he should be absolved from responsibility for the text to both a greater and lesser extent, or he is partially

acknowledging his connection to the production and his desire to partake of the as yet unconfirmed literary fame of Pattieson. Cleishbotham's construction is correct insofar as he is not the 'writer' of the tales. Nor does he, strictly speaking 'compile' them. He does not collect and consolidate the material that constitutes the series; that task, again, was Peter's. His use of the term 'redactor' is more complex. In the sense that 'to redact' is 'to put in an appropriate form for publication; to edit' (OED), his role is dubious. He asserts that he has in no way meddled with the *Tales*, but only 'dispose[d] of one parcel thereof, entitled, "Tales of my Landlord," to one cunning in the trade (as it is called) of bookselling' (*EEWN*, IV(A), 8). It is this assertion that aligns him with another form of redaction, especially common in seventeenth-century Scottish usage and reminiscent of the 'sooty-faced Appollyon' that appears in Ballantyne's publishing house. In this second instance, 'to redact' is 'to reduce (a material thing) *to* a certain form, esp. as an act of destruction', or 'to reduce to a certain state or condition, esp. an undesirable one' (*OED*).

His 'disposal' of Pattieson's papers can be described as 'reductive' or 'undesirable'. He explains that they had been left to him on the latter's demise 'to answer funeral and death-bed expenses' (*EEWN*, IV(A), 8). The only way that they can fulfil this role is to be sold, or commodified. The papers are there to meet costs, a tradable item, and that is all. Cleishbotham's treatment of Pattieson's manuscripts presents the reader with another image of the author's body as comestible. Peter's material form, his corpse, can only be 'disposed' of when his writings are 'disposed' of. Without the revenue provided for by their publication, his funeral expenses cannot be met. True, this is Peter's intention, but Jedediah seems especially concerned with popularising the *Tales*. He sells them to one sufficiently 'cunning in the trade' to ensure his personal gain, as well as remuneration for Peter's burial.

Cleishbotham's behaviour mirrors that of Cuddie and Burley in *Old Mortality*. Following the battle of Louden-Hill, Cuddie returns to Morton with a number of items he has claimed from the body of the cavalier soldier, Francis Bothwell. Bothwell is by no means a sympathetic character, but the stripping of his corpse seems, nonetheless, distasteful. Understandably, Cuddie first reclaims some silver which had been extorted from Morton's uncle. However, he also takes the Sergeant's pocket-book, which contains a number of private documents, along with some useful military information. Both Cuddie and Burley are concerned only with what is of use to them; the latter considers the military papers, for instance, but throws Bothwell's love letters and verses 'from him with contempt' (*EEWN*, IV(B), 6). That which is most personal and sacred is discarded and Bothwell's humanity and his body are reduced to 'material objects' to be mined for gain. As in Hogg's *Private Memoirs*, the effects of the authorial body are consumed.

Regardless of his decay, it is the author – Pattieson or Wringhim – who is left to bear the onus of responsibility for that which he leaves behind. Cleishbotham is keen to 'reduce' his readers' opinion of Pattieson's authorial skill. His description of the papers denies their quality. Their author 'hath more consulted his own fancy than the accuracy of the narration' and 'if thinking wisely, ought rather to have conjured [Cleishbotham …] to have carefully revised, altered, and augmented' his papers (*EEWN*, IV(A), 8, 9). The tutor lists a related triptych of duties that he would willingly claim in place of the roles of 'writer, compiler, and redactor'. While Pattieson's efforts as a 'writer, compiler, and redactor' are supposed insufficient, apparently Jedediah's editorial prowess might have offered some redress. He would 'revise' the text, in places 'augment' it, and 'alter' its original composition with a view, one assumes, to making Peter's papers more saleable and less subject to

criticism. His 'act of destruction' would be to modify the texts in his care (much in the vein of a mischievous printer's devil). Fortunately, Cleishbotham respects the 'will of the deceased' and leaves the papers in their original state (*EEWN*, IV(A), 9). His behaviour recalls that of the Editor of Hogg's *Private Memoirs*, who leaves Wringhim's pamphlet unaltered, 'there being a curse pronounced by the writer on him that should dare to alter or amend' (p. 174). Their motives for staying their editorial hands are also related. Hogg's editor may attribute his caution to a 'curse', but it also absolves him of responsibility for the work's contents: 'I have let it stand as it is. Should it be thought to attach discredit to any received principle of our Church, I am blameless' (p. 174). It is criticism that Cleishbotham, too, fears above all else. Having supposedly 'proved that [he] could have written them if [he] would', he appends his name to the series, taking partial possession of the text, yet hoping to avoid the 'censure' which, in his opinion, 'should deservedly fall, if at all due, upon the memory of Mr Peter Pattieson' (*EEWN*, IV(A), 8). 'The work', to him:

> is as a child is to a parent; in the which child, if it proveth worthy, the parent hath honour and praise; but, if otherwise, the disgrace will deservedly attach to itself alone.
>
> (*EEWN*, IV(A), 8)

He takes an alternative view of parenting to that great *magne parens*, the 'Author of Waverley'. The latter admits responsibility for his progeny, whatever their quality. The purpose of all three editors/writers is influenced by their pecuniary interests, but while Cleishbotham appends his name without accepting responsibility, and Hogg's editor presents Wringhim's work to the public with criticism, but without alteration, the only true author of the three – the 'Author' himself – is both careless of his fame and unwilling to disown his children.

Neither Scott nor Hogg allows their editors to shift the blame so easily, though. The misplaced empiricism of the Editor of *Private Memoirs* is well noted by critics.[61] Despite editing the pamphlet, he cannot comprehend it: 'I dare not venture a judgement,' he states (p. 174). His attempt to verify the sinner's history is also abortive. He is unable to explain the supernatural elements of the narrative which defy his enlightenment reading of the text, even though he claims that the tale 'corresponds so minutely with traditionary facts, that it could scarcely have missed to have been received as authentic' (p. 175). But the tale's supernatural events are not the only aspect of the text that frustrates his analysis. Even his empirical data is spurious. The dates mentioned in the text repeatedly fail to add up. Wringhim's final diary entry, for example, is dated September 1712 and his body is unearthed in September of 1823. According to a local source, however, September 1823 represents the 'one hundred and five' year anniversary of the sinner's suicide, a period that does not correspond with the date provided in the pamphlet itself. Though the Editor would claim authority over the text, he is shown not to deserve it. If he criticises the author of the *Private Memoirs* as one not 'fully qualified for the task' of producing what he vaguely supposes to be a religious allegory (p. 175), neither is he one 'fully qualified for the task' of editorship.

In the same way, Scott undermines Cleishbotham. In an anonymous *Quarterly* review of the *Tales of My Landlord* series, he says that it is 'upon a race of sectaries who have long ceased to exist, that Mr. Jedadiah Cleishbotham has charged all that is odious, and almost all that is ridiculous, in *his* fictitious narrative'.[62] Although more aware of the authorial intricacies of the series' framing narrative than

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[61] See Victor Sage, 'The Author, the Editor, and the Fissured Text: Scott, Maturin, and Hogg', in *Authorship in Context: From the Theoretical to the Material*, ed. Kyriaki Hadjiafxendi and Polina Mackay (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007), pp.15-32.
[62] Walter Scott, 'Art. VIII. Tales of My Landlord', *The Quarterly Review*, 16 (1817), pp.430-80 (p. 480), my emphasis.

anyone else, Scott chooses to attribute *Old Mortality* to its custodian Cleishbotham.

Regardless of the tutor's protestations, it is termed '*his* fictitious narrative', while the

reviewer proceeds to criticise the style of Jedediah's preface rather than to muse on

Pattieson's skill, whom he terms the *Tales*' 'compiler' (p. 442). The review also

ignores the Landlord's claim to the tales, drawing attention to the purposefully

obtuse nature of their title. 'They are entitled "Tales of my Landlord": why so

entitled, excepting to introduce a quotation from Don Quixote, it is difficult to

conceive: for Tales of my Landlord they are *not*' (pp. 441-42). Cleishbotham's fears

are confirmed. 'Censure' is falling on him, and not Pattieson. What the

complications of the series' general introduction and the *Quarterly* review indicate is

the meaninglessness of knowing the author's actual identity. This is further

confirmed by the fact that the review not only ignores Cleishbotham's disownment

of the *Tales*, it also undermines Scott's anonymity. Having gone to the trouble of

creating a new pseudonymous character under which to publish the *Landlord* series,

the *Quarterly* review proclaims the true author of these new volumes to be none

other than the 'Author of Waverley' (p. 430). One can only speculate as to why Scott

would choose to blow his cover a mere month after the novels' first publication (the

first instalment of the *Tales* was published in December 1816 and the review came

out in the January edition of the *Quarterly* for 1817). If early sales of the series were

poor then it may have been necessary to call on the selling power of the 'Author'.

William Todd and Ann Bowden's *Bibliographical History* of Scott suggests

otherwise, though. It records eight thousand copies of the first three editions, with

three thousand more on the way, as sold by the 30th of January 1817.[63] As such, the

review appears to be another example of the increasingly complex network of

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[63] William B. Todd and Ann Bowden, *Sir Walter Scott: A Bibliographical History, 1796-1832* (New Castle: Oak Knoll Press, 1998), pp. 414-15.

prefaces, acknowledgments, and paratextual material with which Scott obscured and fictionalised his authorial identity. *Old Mortality*'s introduction would have readers believe that Pattieson is the *Tales'* author, but, just as this new author is accepted, Scott reveals that Pattieson himself is only a fiction: though perhaps no more of a fiction than the 'Author of Waverley'. If the review is intended as a satiric rejoinder to Cleishbotham's misplaced arrogance, then the 'outing' of the 'Author' not only reveals Pattieson's unreality, but also questions Jedediah's right to claim ownership of and then dis-own the *Tales* placed under his care.

In a complete *volte-face*, having disowned the first series of the *Tales of My Landlord*, the introduction to *The Heart of Midlothian* sees Jedediah praise his literary offspring. Presumably due to the favourable reception of *Old Mortality*, he no longer fears the 'censure' of his, or Pattieson's, readers, who are now represented as 'courteous', 'esteemed and beloved' (*EEWN*, VI, 3, 4). He is instead willing 'to assert his property in a printed tome' and 'to put his name in the title page thereof' (*EEWN*, VI, 4). This 'property' remains dubious, however, as later confirmed by the 'Author of Waverley's' petulant behaviour in the introductory epistle to *The Monastery* (1820). The 'Author' has been sent a packet of manuscripts, the joint production of a mysterious Benedictine monk and his mentor, by Captain Clutterbuck. The Captain, like Jedediah, is reluctant to act as the editor of these texts and so asks the 'Author' to undertake the task. He will, however, assent 'to march in the front with you—that is, to put my name with your's [*sic*] on the title-page' (*EEWN*, IX, 23). This plan is, in no uncertain terms, rejected by the 'Author'. 'I am sorry,' he writes, 'I cannot gratify your literary ambition, by suffering your name to appear upon the title page' (*EEWN*, IX, 28). His editorship, he reasons, has been careful and arduous, and has involved rewriting much of the manuscript: it should,

therefore, be him that 'announce[s his] property in [his] title-page' (*EEWN*, IX, 29).

Had Clutterbuck not wished to relinquish possession of the manuscripts, he should

have edited them himself. Cleishbotham, too, is guilty of claiming authorial dues for

editorial and authorial work not his own. He complains that critics have 'impeached

my veracity and the authenticity of *my* historical narratives' (*EEWN*, VI, 4, my

emphasis) when, in the first series, he cannot make it clear enough that he is 'NOT

the writer, redactor, or compiler of the Tales of my Landlord' (*EEWN*, IV(A), 6).

Both characters are false editors. They demonstrate the difference between

intellectual and material property. Scott exposes their misplaced pride of ownership,

even as he disguises his own literary ownership behind various fictive

denominations. His authorial pride may be camouflaged by his anonymity, but that

does not mean it does not exist. The ownership of a text is earned through work, be it

imaginative or editorial. In the latter instance, the editor must make some material

contribution to the text he presents. He must remain sensitive to his materials while

working with and amending them; he cannot simply claim authority through

possession.

Nor can simply writing one's name on a text confer ownership: as is

attempted by Sir Arthur Wardour in the introduction to *Ivanhoe*. Laurence

Templeton, the fictional editor-author of the novel, gathers the materials for the

romance from the:

> singular Anglo-Norman MS., which Sir Arthur Wardour preserves with
>
> such jealous care in the third drawer of his oaken cabinet, scarcely
>
> allowing any one to touch it, and being himself not able to read one
>
> syllable of its contents. I should never have got his consent, on my visit
>
> to Scotland, to read in these precious pages for so many hours, had I not

promised to designate it by some emphatic mode of printing, as THE
WARDOUR MANUSCRIPT; giving it, thereby, an individuality as important
as the Bannatyne MS., the Auchinleck MS., and any other monument of
the patience of a Gothic scrivener. I have sent, for your private
consideration, a list of the contents of this curious piece, which I shall
perhaps subjoin, with your approbation, to the third volume of my Tale,
in case the printer's devil should become impatient for copy, when the
whole of my narrative has been imposed.

(*EEWN*, VIII, 12-13)

Sir Arthur, in this instance, represents the worst kind of bibliomaniac. He is a book
owner who does not promote the public good – keeping his manuscript locked 'in
the third drawer of his oaken cabinet' – and, perhaps worse, is incapable of
comprehending the treasure he covets: 'being himself not able to read one syllable of
its contents'. Templeton seeks to remedy Sir Arthur's shortcomings by disseminating
the contents of the manuscript himself. Significantly, he translates, rewrites, and
summarises, rather than merely reprinting the work (as might a member of the
Roxburghe Club). He claims authority over his own literary production, *Ivanhoe*, not
the manuscript that his novel mediates for the reader. Sir Arthur, on the other hand,
can only engage with the text by imposing himself on it. Similarly to Clutterbuck –
who does not wish to edit, but is happy to put his name on the title page of *The
Monastary* – the baronet appends his name to the script. In being termed 'THE
WARDOUR MANUSCRIPT', *Ivanhoe*'s source material has 'an individuality' forced
upon it. Rather than the 'individuality' of its author or subject taking precedence, its
possessor claims authority over it. This 'individuality' is compounded by its
'emphatic mode of printing' (in most editions of the novel, blackletter type).

However, this attempt to confer antiquity on the owner's designation – the use of the antiquated script to emphasise the title – only belies the newness of Wardour's entitlement. The manuscript itself is the product of 'a Gothic scrivener'. Handwritten, it will never bear the true signature of Sir Arthur's ownership, printed or otherwise, on its physical form. His name will appear in other printed texts – bibliographical catalogues, for example – but is connected to the manuscript by association only. He cannot not even, as in the case of the Valdarfer Boccaccio, claim to have had any hand in the object's production. Valderfer, at least, was the *Decameron*'s printer at a time when the art of printing was, indeed, an art.

The passage illustrates some of the difficulties arising from the practice of anonymous publication and the fictionalisation of authorship. When the author distances himself from his productions, he runs the risk of losing creative control of them. Figures such as Sir Arthur, Cleishbotham, or Hogg's Editor can inscribe their name on the author's text. Hogg and Scott seek to undercut the property of unentitled 'writers, compilers, and redactors' through their representation of foolish or arrogant editors. Both are equally aware, though, of their contractual engagement with such figures, and of their relation to them. Cleishbotham, Clutterbuck, and Wardour are, after all, the 'Author's' doubles and children. Ultimately, each is obligated by the 'bondage the printer presses' ('Ode to the Printer's Devil', l. 43). Sir Wardour's relationship to the *Ivanhoe* manuscript is a reminder that the ownership of a book or manuscript is fluid, depending on whether it resides in the collector's, the borrower's, the reader's, or the writer's hands.

The annotated book belongs to its marker and its writer, the lent book to its owner and its borrower, and all books to their readers and writers. Scott's preface implies that Sir Wardour has little right to figuratively emblazon his name on the

title page of his manuscript, but, like any owner, he might have the right to stamp his *ex libris* on it. At the same time that Scott mocks the baronet's pride of ownership, he shies away from claiming a stake in his own literary productions. The medium of *Ivanhoe*'s source, the 'found manuscript', enacts another disappearance of the author. Authorship is conceptualised instead as discovery. As Russett puts it, 'stories of found texts erase the labour of writing: these texts were born, not made. Thus in addition to whatever idiosyncratic needs they may serve, such stories fulfil the fantasy of finding one's works, indeed one's destiny, *already written*'.[64] Scott does not own up to what he produces; he finds the text he edits. In doing so, he effaces the significance of his name and bodily connection to his publications. The manuscript bears the onus of identity, both physical and imaginary. While complicating and obscuring the relationship between author and book can serve to protect the author from the incursions of his readers, publishers, and critics, it also suggests the selflessness of the author. He is perpetually 'lost' in 'other men's minds' (*WCML*, II, 172). The period's definitions of authorship may have been confused, leading to anxiety and insecurity on the part of numerous writers, but this confusion could also be creatively liberating. Certainly, this seems to be the case for both Scott and Hogg. For the former, the combination of 'writing', 'compiling', and 'redacting' proved an extremely successful method for producing books. For the latter, a fictional re-enactment of his cannibalisation by Edinburgh's literary elite proved just how un-boorish the Ettrick Shepherd actually was.

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[64] Russett, p. 28.

Chapter 4

Thomas De Quincey, Autobiography, and 'self-combating volumes'

While authors, such as Scott, Hogg, and Lamb, took pleasure in 'confounding' their authorial identities by drawing readers' attention to the ambiguity of the printed word, others were much more concerned by what that ambiguity might imply. Thomas De Quincey is one such author. The book-as-object was both disease and anodyne for many early nineteenth-century authors, but for him in particular. In many ways, he is this thesis's archetype. His writing gives overt expression to the latent anxieties found in my other subjects' works. His Romantic bibliomania is everywhere in evidence. Charles Rzepka estimates that he spent approximately £1,300 on books between 1804 and 1815: a vast sum, amounting to almost half of his inheritance.[1] He is troubled by the multiplication of printed matter: attached to the book as an antique object, but also conscious of its important, modern role in the dissemination of knowledge. He was a book lender, after all. He is scholarly: an antiquarian, a linguist, and a reader. He is highly anxious over public (and published) representations of his identity; and more, perhaps, than any of my other subjects, concerned by the written or printed inscription of his name (recall his dismay at the misapplied Esq. in Chapter 2). This final chapter examines the ways in which De Quincey's bibliographic writing informs his representation and conceptualisation of identity. For De Quincey, I argue, the multiplication of books – which he saw as a troubling symptom of his age – is synonymous with an even more disturbing multiplication of the self.

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[1] Charles J. Rzepka, *Sacramental Commodities: Gift, Text, and the Sublime in De Quincey* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995), p. 178.

De Quincey's autobiographical mode – the mode in which he most often wrote – is at the root of his anxiety in this regard. I have already considered autobiographies in Chapter 1, but De Quincey's case is slightly different, or perhaps more intense. For him, writing a bookish autobiography did not only affect his conception of his authorial identity. The relationship between book and autobiographer in his works reveals the extent to which he felt that his essential selfhood was destabilised by textual representation. Like Hunt and Dibdin, De Quincey collects vast numbers of books because they are integral to the way in which he perceives his identity. When he writes about himself he uses books as a means of metonymic representation. When these books are misread or disputed so too, he feels, is his projected identity. For this reason, if De Quincey invited his readers to interpret his autobiographical persona in the form of a book, he also challenged their ability to interpret that same book. His interpretation was the only really valid one. However, the representational control De Quincey sought was undercut by unconscious currents and 'alien natures' that disrupted the unity of the identity he wished to project, and of the selfhood that lay behind it.[2] His narrative persona strives to create a sense of experiential and interpretative authority, but whether or not De Quincey achieved or truly believed in any such authority is questionable. Ultimately, his autobiographical works can be best described as 'self-combating volume[s]' (*WDQ*, XV, 197).

They are 'self-combating' in their mode of address and their reluctant and sensational representation of an identity that is at once assured and fractured. They are confident in the interpretative power of their author, but disturbed by the profound and unknowable depths of the mind. One might wonder why a writer, so

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[2] Thomas De Quincey, 'The English Mail Coach', in *The Works of Thomas De Quincey*, gen. ed. Grevel Lindop, 21 vols (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2000-2003), XVI, 401-28 (p. 422).

cautious and particular about the representation of his identity, should choose to

reveal the darker, highly personal, and more confused aspects of his psyche to his

readers: aspects he can neither explain nor control, his 'sighs from the depths'.

Surely, this constitutes a tearing down of the barriers between reader and

autobiographer he so eagerly seeks to construct? Perhaps because he has 'no power

to hide from [his] own heart' these subconscious anxieties over textual replication,

'no, not through one night's solitary dreams' (*WDQ*, II, 149), he is compelled to

express them in his works as well. There was a very real financial need behind De

Quincey's publication history, but his writing is also cathartic. It depicts his search

for the scholarly book he meant to write and the scholarly identity that was meant to

be represented by it. His autobiographical works, in particular, constitute an attempt

to understand and unify his self through extended contemplation even though that

self remains an impossible fiction. Robert Folkenflik considers autobiography as 'an

extended moment that enables one to reflect on oneself' in the manner of Lacan's

'mirror stage', but carried through into adulthood and not purely narcissistic in

nature.[3] De Quincey's autobiographies are not so much opportunities for 'reflection',

as they are mirrors perpetually 'reflecting', and distorting, the selfhood they purport

to represent.

'*Monsieur Monsieur de Quincy, Chester*':

In 1802, at the age of seventeen, De Quincey received a letter addressed to

'*Monsieur Monsieur de Quincy, Chester*' (*WDQ*, II, 148). A simple case of

misdirection, the letter was intended for an obscure French emigrant probably

working as a teacher in the city, but fell into the wrong hands. It was a reasonable

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[3] Robert Folkenflik, 'The Self as Other', in *The Culture of Autobiography: Constructions of Self Representation*, ed. Robert Folkenflik (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), pp. 215-34 (p. 234).

mistake, Thomas being 'the oldest male member of a family [with that name] at that time necessarily well known in Chester' (*WDQ*, II, 149). Despite the straightforward nature of the event, De Quincey's response is complex. He is disconcerted by the letter's deformation of his name and identity, and unable to separate himself from the letter's addressee:

> I was astonished to find myself translated by a touch of the pen not only into a *Monsieur*, but even into a self-multiplied *Monsieur*; or, speaking algebraically, into the square of Monsieur; having a chance at some future day of being perhaps cubed into Monsieur[3].

$$(WDQ, \text{II}, 149)$$

This passage, from the 1856 revised edition of the *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*, represents the 'pen' as an instrument of reduplication. It only requires a 'touch' to not merely double, which would be disturbing enough, but to 'square' the young *Monsieur*'s identity. De Quincey[2] 'speaking algebraically', does not equal two De Quinceys – the actual fact of the case – but might produce four, or nine, or sixteen, or only one, depending on the manner in which De Quincey choses to quantify the self. These multiplied individuals present a problem to the extent that they represent different readings of the first De Quincey's actions. The *Messieurs* might travel abroad, in a number of guises, independent of their original referent, and undermine his good name. It is possible that, should the affair be '*made known to the public*', then the possessor of the letter will be exonerated. However, that same public might also generate 'ugly rumours' about the accused, rumours which might 'cling to one's name' in the minds of those who 'would hear only a fragmentary version of the whole affair' (*WDQ*, II, 151). As in the case of the 'Esq.' incident detailed in Chapter 2, De Quincey fears the public defamation of his name. He

worries that 'without a distinct explanation in my own person, exonerating myself, on the written acknowledgement of the post-office', confusion might arise as to his intentions and he is 'most reluctant to give up the letter' (*WDQ*, II, 150-51). An accompanying, physical representative is required to prevent his textual identity from degenerating into an unflattering falsehood, squared, not only by the 'pen', but by multiple misreadings.

This episode in the Opium-Eater's life has received scant critical attention, despite the fact that the letter problem preoccupies the revised *Confessions*' narrative for some time. De Quincey is 'most reluctant to give up the letter' figuratively, as well as literally. He can hardly decide on how best to dispose of or interpret it. Eventually, he passes it on to a woman, a stranger he happens to meet beside the river Dee, with instructions to redeliver it to the Chester Post Office. It does not seem the most efficient way of returning the letter; nor could De Quincey have been sure that his agent was trustworthy. The act is justified by his fear of 're-capture' in his flight from Manchester Grammar School (*WDQ*, II, 161). The building causality, repetitions, and expanding sentences of the passage emulate the seventeen-year-old De Quincey's increasing panic at this juncture. Being the only person, aside from *Monsieur Monsieur*, to know of the letter's misdirection:

> More urgent consequently would have been the applications of 'Monsieur Monsieur' to the post-office; and consequently of the post-office to the Priory; and consequently more easily suggested and concerted between the post-office and the Priory would be all arrangements for stopping me, in the event of my taking the route to Chester – in which case it was natural to suppose that I might *personally* return the letter to the official authorities.

(*WDQ*, II, 161)

Initially, De Quincey is 'reluctant to give up the letter' 'without a distinct explanation in my own person': considering the 'consequences' of actually visiting the Post Office, however, his '*personal*' appearance there becomes a less attractive prospect. Many of my authors are concerned with being 'captured': whether they are imprisoned, like Hunt; or cannibalised, like Hogg. They explore the problems arising from the text's implication of the author's physical body. De Quincey's desire to be known and to justify himself 'in person' is counteracted by the knowledge that personality is gained at the risk of 'capture', of being possessed by his family and acquaintance, his readers and his critics. These parallel desires are paradigmatic of the anxieties that permeate his autobiographical writing, and the writing of the authors in this study more generally.

In many ways, De Quincey is proud of the identity he chooses to present to the world and his readers. He footnotes his description of the receipt of the letter with an explanation of the origin of his family name: referring his reader to an appendix on the subject at the end of the *Confessions* (*WDQ*, II, 148-49n†).[4] De Quincey is ever keen to assert the purity and particularity of his familial heritage: a tendency previously observed in the passage on 'mixing' books, discussed in Chapter 2. His name, and his 'flocks' (*WDQ*, X, 322), are his pride. However, this pride is complicated and intensified by the fact that, strictly speaking, De Quincey is not his true name; he chose it. Born Thomas Quincey, he adopted the aristocratic *de* with his mother, on their move to Bath in 1796. The true '*de Quincey*'s' letter, therefore, has only found its way into his hands because of his titular posturing. Although his mother later reverted to their original name, Thomas permanently retained the prefix.

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[4] De Quincey believed that its origin was Norwegian and not French: 'a Norman origin argued pretty certainly an origin *not* French'. This distinction was so important to him, that he even corrected George III on this point (*WDQ*, IXX, 101, author's emphasis).

Interestingly, in his discussion of De Quincey's class consciousness, Rzepka points

out that Thomas 'not only retained the addition throughout his life, but in 1802, the

year he ran away from school [and received the letter], apparently took such

inordinate pride in it that his mother felt forced to take him down a peg or two'.[5] The

letter, the pride he takes in his name, and his departure from school are all connected.

Clearly being known as a De Quincey was of the utmost importance to Thomas at

this formative stage of his life. Receiving the letter not only 'confirm[s]' (*WDQ*, II,

148) his decision to abscond from Manchester Grammar, but also 'confirm[s]' his

assertion of his chosen identity. In a reversal of a later episode in the *Confessions*,

when he is suspected of 'counterfeiting [his] own self' (*WDQ*, II, 29) and his

financial expectations by the money-lender Dell, De Quincey finds his self confused

with and by textual matter. In the case of the letter, his person is not called into

question even though, as is later suspected of him, he is in the possession of another

man's property. In his dealings with Dell, his documentation is genuine and his

person doubted erroneously. Both instances of mistaken, or doubtful, identity force

De Quincey, a perpetual procrastinator, to act. Whether this involves liberating

himself from the expectations and protection of his mother and guardians, or seeking

out financial backing on his own terms, these confrontations with dubious textual

selves prompt a desire to reinforce his personal construction of his identity. As others

failed to recognise him for himself – transforming him into an 'alien' (*WDQ*, XVI,

423), an Esq., a *Monsieur* – it became all the more necessary for De Quincey to cling

to the selfhood that he did conceive of as his own.

Coexistent with his 'inordinate pride' and confident self-assertion, though, is

an equally inordinate fear. De Quincey might not only be condemned for the

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[5] Rzepka, p. 151.

fraudulent possession of *Monsieur Monsieur*'s letter, but also for the fraudulent possession of the name itself. How could he assert an identity that was not really his own? The accolade of being 'necessarily well known in Chester' (*WDQ*, II, 149) by the name and, in his later journalistic career, of being 'necessarily well known' to his readership by it and other sobriquets, is a double-edged sword. It might lead to discovery, and not just by his guardians or readers. The 'capture' of *Monsieur* De Quincey may, in fact, reveal that no such person exists. De Quincey, more than his pursuers, is conscious of and disturbed by the slipperiness of his identity: the possibility that his preferred and projected selfhood is, essentially, a fiction.

Partly for this reason, the incident of the *Monsieur Monsieur* letter haunts De Quincey and this chapter. It is in many ways representative of his output, catching the 'mixed' character of his authorial address: at once frivolous and sincere, punctilious and philosophical. Its tone, for instance, is superficially humorous. The narrative persona playfully takes, according to De Quincey, the outmoded French fashion for iterated *Messieurs* to its illogical conclusion. But at the time of receiving the letter and, importantly, the draft for forty guineas that accompanies it, he can only read 'evil chances' in its receipt. Its author, he speculates, is very likely 'the Fiend' (*WDQ*, II, 149). Though accident has placed the letter in his hands, and French courtesy has 'self-multiplied' his identity, the young De Quincey cannot help but read sinister omens in this chance event. It is a prime example of the 'cloud-scaling swing' of his narrative, whose 'ups and downs' will 'tempt you to look shyly and suspiciously at [...] your guide, and the ruler of the oscillations' (*WDQ*, XV, 169). De Quincey scholars have frequently noted the complexities and dualities of his mode of address: the way in which the reader is both courted and shunned, so that his autobiography seems to be 'born out of a dual combination of experience and

analysis, of extreme insularity and critical objectivity'.[6] Frederick Burwick sees such tensions as integral to De Quincey's creativity. 'Adversarial dynamics', he argues, 'inform both the manner and the matter of De Quincey's prose':

> [His] mind wrestled with "great antagonisms." Some of these, to be sure, were engendered by the tides of his own opium addiction, some by his irrepressible casuistry, some by his whimsical cavorting with the mundane and trivial.[7]

And some by the medium through which he represented them. De Quincey's conception and representation of the self is in its nature antagonistic. Not only outwardly, towards the 'others' who might be guilty of misinterpreting his motives and actions, but internally, too. Selfhood fractures within and is distorted by textual representation. The textual confusion and illegibility of *Monsieur Monsieur de Quincy*'s letter disrupts Thomas' sense of self, but also reveals a lot about the way in which he constructed his public identity. In its entirety, the passage deals with his sense of himself as a respectable gentleman-scholar; as a *De Quincey*; as a young man; as a defiant individual; and as the uneasy interpreter of the events of his own autobiography. These concepts are tied up with bibliographic and textual modes of identity representation. It is particularly in seeing himself 'translated by the touch of the pen' – as an addressee or as an author – that he is able to discuss these diverse aspects of self.

Mary Jacobus argues that the language of books in the Romantic period was thought of as 'ordering the chaotic multiplicity of the self'. 'Writing', supposedly, 'defends against incoherence, but, because it is always of and from the past, it

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[6] John C. Whale, *Thomas De Quincey's Reluctant Autobiography* (London: Croom Helm, 1984), p. 15.
[7] Frederick Burwick, *Thomas De Quincey: Knowledge and Power* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 23, 22.

defends against presence – and against the future too'.[8] She admits that this is a troubled definition, but overstates writing's ability to 'order' the past and the self. She views De Quincey's palimpsest, for instance, as 'an image of management, controlling the unruly discontinuities of past experiences as it creates them, and (in theory, at least) preventing a perplexed interweaving of texts, since only one can be read at a time'. That 'in theory' is important. Often in De Quincey's works texts do interweave, usually with the events of his life and, despite attempts to secure 'past experiences' and the 'desire to reintegrate past and present selves', textual identities tend to degenerate into a 'chaotic multiplicity'.[9] This is not to deny that textual representations of the self offer a fantasy of self-control. As the 'the ruler' of his works' 'oscillations' (*WDQ*, XV, 169), De Quincey also believes he is their most authoritative interpreter. In his 'solitary dreams' the fractured self rises to confound his intellection, but the detached and, apparently, omniscient narrative interpreter hopes to manage these shifting and multiple identities. De Quincey encounters a difficulty in that the text is as shifting in its nature as the self. Texts provide opportunities for misinterpretation and distortion as much as for interpretation and control. Even the text's material obverse, the book, is prone to mathematical expansion and representational confusion. Dualistic by nature, books – like the identity De Quincey wishes to project – can be as difficult to manage as his readership's response or the 'sorrowful auguries' (*WDQ*, II, 149) that plague his internal world.

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[8] Mary Jacobus, 'The Art of Managing Books: Romantic Prose and the Writing of the Past', in *Romanticism and Language*, ed. Arden Reed (London: Methuen and Co., 1984), pp. 215-46 (p. 219).
[9] Jacobus, p. 237.

The Book as Stand-In for Self

Books often symbolically replace De Quincey's person in his works. They act as

physical sites on which identity and meaning can be read. Paul Youngquist has

drawn attention to the notion of the '*Confessions* [as] a physiological substance' –

De Quincey's book as body and *visa versa* – in which the material and immaterial

merge and interact.[10] The body, its irregularities and limitations, preoccupies the

Opium-Eater's narrative, reminding the reader of its claims to scholarly, medical

authority. The body it describes is beset by ailments, including the bibliomaniacal

'disease'. De Quincey attempts to ameliorate these ailments through the use of

opium: 'eloquent opium! that with thy potent rhetoric stealest away the purposes of

wrath' (*WDQ*, II, 51). The drug may numb the body and open the mind to a

magnificent variety of psychological experiences, but it also brings both to breaking

point. 'Wrath', or De Quincey's defensiveness, is not always stolen away. Instead, it

is turned inward or projected outward, depending on the nature of the anxiety that

produces it. Opium uncovers psychic disturbances and generates new physical

frailties. In the same way, writing can seem to offer a means to unify, purify, and

clarify the self. The self-as-book is conceived as an immediate representation of

mind, presenting an imagination unsullied by the frailties or constraints of the

physical. However, writing the self leads De Quincey into the same kinds of

paradoxical, and sometimes terrifying, internal dreamscapes as his opium use.

Neither books nor opium can ameliorate the pains of existence or eschew material

realities.

In terms of the critical treatment of the *Confessions* and other works, my

recognition of the parallelism between opium and the text, or the act of writing, is

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[10] Paul Youngquist, 'De Quincey's Crazy Body', *PMLA*, 114 (1999), 346-58 (p. 354).

nothing new. But books are important in De Quincey's writing for more than their resemblance to opium. He is an English Book-Eater as much as he is an English Opium-Eater.[11] His bibliomania is integral to the representation and understanding of his authorial and autobiographical persona. His presentation of himself as a scholar, linguist, and philosopher requires that he advert his familiarity with books.

In respect to his scholarly pretensions, the compulsion to amass textual matter, to the detriment of his financial security, can be partially explained by a comment found in his 'Letters to a Young Man Whose Education has been Neglected' (1823). Counselling his addressee against the need for a degree, De Quincey states that university libraries are ineffectual tools for the scholar due to restrictions of access: 'for mere purposes of study', he states, 'your own private library is far preferable to the Bodleian or the Vatican' (*WDQ*, III, 42). Personal possession of the texts intended for study allows the man of letters leisure to read his books 'slowly, and many times over' (*WDQ*, III, 64) in line with conscientious scholarly practice. But to consider the facilitation of study as the sole aim of De Quincey's bibliomania is to oversimplify his relationship with books. A book's utility, purely as an object of intellectual study, might be exhausted once the reader's scholarship is complete. Save for those texts to be preserved and read 'many times over', the rest of the library is in danger of becoming obsolete. Yet, De Quincey did not consider any of the five thousand constituents of his personal library extraneous. Apparently, 'not one of [his] volumes, even with financial ruin staring him in the face and a growing family to support, could De Quincey bear to part with until

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[11] Of those critics who do consider the significance of his bibliomania, Josephine McDonagh makes the important connection between this impulse and forms of masculine self-fashioning, while Rzepka – with the focus on gift-economy discussed in Chapter 2 – considers the way in which material concerns might be factored into an author's reception anxiety: Josephine McDonagh, 'De Quincey and the Secret Life of Books', in *Thomas De Quincey: New Theoretical and Critical Directions*, ed. Robert Morrison and Daniel Sanjiv Roberts (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 123-42; Rzepka, *Sacramental Commodities*.

bankruptcy placed their disposition legally beyond his power'.[12] Like Hunt, he

clearly felt it was necessary to be 'in contact' with one's volumes.[13] De Quincey's

ever-expanding library stands in metaphorical relation to the ever-expanding range of

his knowledge. His reading and ownership of a book work together to testify to the

extent of that knowledge: one in a material, visible form, the other in an ideal one.

Though he argues that his memory is rather remarkable – 'rarely', he says, 'do things

perish from my memory that are worth remembering' (*WDQ*, XV, 153) – he yet feels

the need to retain a physical reminder of the contents of that memory, in the form of

his library.

As with Hunt, books act as the markers of De Quincey's industry.

Considering his periods of literary and journalistic inactivity (the result both of his

opium addiction and of a mind with a propensity to prorogation), Rzepka argues that

his desire to accumulate and consume books was a way of replacing 'material

productivity' (his literary output) with 'ideal' productivity (his reading and collecting

of books).[14] In a similar fashion to Coleridge's marginalia, De Quincey's library

stood in for the literary works he failed to produce, specifically, his *magnum opus*:

De Emendatione Humani Intellectus or a *Treatise on the Correction of the*

Understanding. The title of the thesis is a misquotation of Spinoza – a fact that does

not instil confidence in that infallible memory – and encompasses a vast subject area.

'I had devoted the labour of my whole life, and had dedicated my intellect, blossoms

and fruits, to the slow and elaborate toil of constructing one single work', he states,

but 'this was now lying locked up, as by frost, like any Spanish bridge or aqueduct,

begun upon too great a scale' (*WDQ*, II, 63). The task is impossible, not only because

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[12] Rzepka, p. 175.
[13] 'My Books', in *The Selected Writings of Leigh Hunt*, ed. Robert Morrison and Michael Eberle-Sinatra, 6 vols (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2003), III, 23-37 (p. 24).
[14] Rzepka, p. 175.

of De Quincey's weakened physiological and mental state during the more intense periods of his opium addiction, but because to 'correct' human understanding within a single work is unfeasible. The work, by its nature, is paradoxical. How can a 'correction' of 'human understanding' proceed from an equally fallible human mind? There would always be supplementary points to make, references to insert, and new examples to include.

De Quincey argues that the notes for *De Emendatione* were 'likely to stand a memorial to [his] children of hopes defeated, of baffled efforts, of materials useless accumulated' (*WDQ*, II, 63). A secondary tombstone, they are a material reminder of their father's failure. The portion of the 'materials' amassed that constituted his library, however, need not be considered a 'useless' accumulation. The five-thousand-strong collection 'stands a memorial' to his mind, as well as his failure. It is proof of his 'life of labour' and of his potential and capacity to conceive of, if not produce, a delineation of human understanding. Ultimately, his library is irreducible; it cannot be condensed into one study. Identity, within his autobiographical works, suffers from the same kind of irreducibility. Textual identity is as un-writeable as *De Emendatione Humani Intellectus*. A library or the mind cannot be condensed into a single unity, cannot become an explanatory master-work, without risking oversimplification or, perhaps more worryingly, a complete breakdown of the subject. All of his books are required to attest to the complexity of his identity and mind. Though associated with his failure to complete the work 'God had best fitted [him] to promote' (*WDQ*, II, 63), the irreducibility of his library mirrors the irreducibility of the complex identity he self-consciously presents and defends to his readers.

De Quincey had perhaps hoped, in *De Emendatione*, to produce the work with which his name would be forever reverentially associated in the manner of canonical texts such as Bocaccio's *Decameron* or Milton's *Paradise Lost*. In such instances, book and author stand for one another in a non-autobiographical sense. Conversely, books in which he is the subject (namely, autobiographies) might not camouflage or embody his self as well as he would like. For this reason, books by different authors, or other impersonal objects, usually stand in place of his autobiographical persona. The *Confessions*' episode in which he asks his readers to paint him at home, at the end of the 'Introduction to the Pains of Opium', is a case in point (*WDQ*, II, 60-61). Rather than offering a description of his person, he substitutes the figure of the Opium-Eater for 'a quart of ruby coloured laudanum' and 'a book of German metaphysics placed by its side'. These, apparently, 'will sufficiently attest to [his] being in the neighbourhood; but, as to [himself],– there [he] demur[s]' (*WDQ*, II, 60). The material evidence of his dual addictions characterises the Opium-Eater. His choice of book is also significant. De Quincey informs his reader that German metaphysics was a particular area of interest for him. Beyond this, though, that metaphysics (the study of identity and ontology) should be referenced within a self-portrait seems appropriate. At this point, De Quincey is dealing with his own metaphysical questions: querying the nature of textual identity and his readers' ability to form a valid impression of the Opium-Eater. Though he terms opium the 'true hero of the tale' (*WDQ*, II, 74), opium and book in fact take centre stage together. He situates himself firmly within 'the library':

> painter, put as many [books] as you can into this room. Make it populous
> with books: and, furthermore, paint me a good fire; and furniture, plain and
> modest, befitting the unpretending cottage of a scholar.

(*WDQ*, II, 60)

This passage may be introduced as a portrait of the Opium-Eater, but its early preoccupation is with depicting a 'scholar'. It is in books that the Opium-Eater is 'richer than [his] neighbours', books that he has 'collected since [his] eighteenth year'. The presence of books attests to his presence as much as the 'wine-decanter' of 'ruby-coloured laudanum' described thereafter (*WDQ*, II, 60-61). Be it *Suspiria*'s palimpsest (*WDQ*, XV, 171-77), the 'dread book of account, which the Scriptures speak of' (*WDQ*, II, 67), or the 'book of German metaphysics', textual artefacts repeatedly appear as emblems of the human mind and body in his works.

De Quincey's use of material substitutes in the 'paint me' passage means that the character of the Opium-Eater remains elusive. Even if he were to make up the foreground of his picture, it would be as a '*body*' to 'be had into court' or merely the 'Opium-eater's *exterior*' (*WDQ*, II, 61, my emphasis). The philosophical and imaginative depths of the human psyche are objectified and rendered in terms of the philosophical and imaginative depths of material artefacts. Either this, or they are elided completely and the physical body, rather than the mind, is the site on which selfhood is inscribed. Despite mitigating self-revelation through the metonymic use of objects, De Quincey remains anxious over his employment of the confessional narrative form. Like Hunt or Dibdin in their memoirs, he presents a carefully crafted, scholarly, and bibliophilic, version of his self to his readers. More so than either of these authors, however, De Quincey worries what the reading public will make of this persona, and how they will possess the books in which he appears.

He fears misunderstanding and misrepresentation: a fact well illustrated by a comparison of the 1821 and 1856 versions of the *Confessions*. In the latter, his anxiety appears to have increased; a number of sections from the original text are

extended in aid of the Opium-Eater's self-justification. For instance, the final line of the 'paint me' episode is expanded from 'the interior of a scholar's library, in a cottage among the mountains, on a stormy winter's evening' to 'the interior of a scholar's library, in a cottage among the mountains, on a stormy winter's evening, rain driving vindictively and with malice aforethought against the windows, and darkness such that you cannot see your own hand when held up against the sky' (*WDQ*, II, 61, 239). Understandably perhaps, the De Quincey of 1856 is more sensitive to the sting of criticism, having been a literary name for over thirty years. He will have frequently seen himself through the eyes of his readers, not all of whom he considered 'attentive'. Some – like the 'upright critic' who queries his knowledge of Oxford Street – will bring his 'accuracy' under suspicion through their inattention, a thing which 'is no trifle' (*WDQ*, XV, 196). The 'malicious' and 'vindictive' rain of the expanded passage might, therefore, signify the criticisms of his readers, with De Quincey closeted and, seemingly, protected inside the cottage he has pictured for himself. Equally significant is the suffocating 'darkness' that now surrounds the cottage. In a scene that finds him actively engaged in sublimating the figure of the Opium-Eater, it makes sense that his refuge is disconnected from the external world by a screen of opacity.

Similar screening techniques appear in the prefatory notes affixed to *Suspiria* and the 1856 *Confessions*, both of which are apologist in tone. They build on a tendency, apparent in the original *Confessions*, towards self-justification and pre-emptive criticism. Constructions such as the following are not uncommon: 'thirdly, and lastly, was it [*Yes*, by passionate anticipation, I answer, before the question is finished]' (*WDQ*, II, 103). The expectation of censure and his attempts to diffuse it are markers of his assumed role as the sole interpreter of his works. Persistently

troubled by his printed identity, he performs the role of interpreter, as well as subject, in an attempt to maintain control of the identity projected within his texts. He seeks to avoid the multiplication of textual identities, such as De Quincey Esq. or De Quincey[2], which are posited by others and unsanctioned by him. As John Whale puts it, 'having taken the reader into his own hands, De Quincey throws out a challenge by anticipating questions and forestalling objections'.[15] Such 'challenges' can seem unduly antagonistic. Though he has put forward a public face, his readers' queries are taken as an attack on the self that lies behind the mask of the Opium-Eater. He cannot help but suspect his 'courteous' readers (*WDQ*, II, 9) of discourtesy. Rather than leave them free to make up their own minds, he controls the reception of his textual identity by answering their questions before they have been asked. 'The public (into whose private ear [he is] confidentially whispering [his] confessions)' (*WDQ*, II, 61) have become too close for comfort. The oxymoronic nature of this phrase – 'the public' with their 'private ear' – suggests that De Quincey was aware of the irony of metaphorically bringing his readers physically closer to him, so that he may 'whisper' in their ears, while simultaneously pushing them away. However, he cannot extricate himself from the paradox which informs this mode of address: a consequence of the frail boundary between willing disclosure and forced confession.

De Quincey's narrative mode may be controlling, but even this cannot defend against the infinite opportunities for (mis)interpretation offered by the text. He has a clear, if unstable, notion of the identity he wishes to project. This identity is not two-dimensional. It encompasses, among others: the English Opium-Eater; the narrating persona; and De Quincey himself.[16] Autobiographical writing, by its nature, involves

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[15] Whale, pp. 36, 166.
[16] 'The overall effect of the *Confessions*' self-consciously literary rhapsodies is to construct a completely different version of the narrator from the one established in the apologetic introduction, the one that identifies him exclusively as the 'English Opium-Eater' (the man who lived this

the representation of numerous versions of the self. These identities are, superficially, under the author's control. However, when each is released into the public domain (like *Monsieur²* or *Monsieur³*) their actions, regardless of De Quincey's mediating schemes, can be reinterpreted. The self is already multiplied by the reflective surface of the autobiographical text; it is also multiplied in the reflective, and refractive, mirror of the reader's mind.

The Multiplication of Books and Selves

By the 1850s (when De Quincey was revising the *Confessions*) further advances in the technologies of steam printing, stereotyping, and paper production, along with the advent of the railways and subsequent improvement of postal systems meant that the mass production and distribution of books was possible in a way that it had not been half a century earlier.[17] Rather than straightforwardly welcoming the publishing opportunities offered by these now established printing techniques, De Quincey was troubled by the possible cheapness of the mass produced text and by its implications for the expression and understanding of the autobiographical self. The multiplication of printed matter is intimately connected to forms of psychic disturbance: be it 'madness'; portents of 'evil chances'; or, ultimately, one's own death.

De Quincey directly tackles the issues attendant on the multiplication of print in his 'Letters to a Young Man'. In the third letter, the multiplicity of literature prompts feelings of insignificance. 'In my youthful days', he says:

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narrative). Rhetorical excess produces instead the figure we know as Thomas De Quincey: the professional author, the man of letters, the purveyor of a unique brand of eloquence': James Treadwell, *Autobiographical Writing and British Literature 1783-1834* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 175.

[17] James Raven, *The Business of Books: Booksellers and the English Book Trade 1450-1850* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 321, 325-26; John Feather, *A History of British Publishing* (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 135

> I never entered a great library, suppose of 100,000 volumes, but my predominant feeling was one of pain and disturbance of mind – not much unlike that which drew tears from Xerxes, on viewing his immense army, and reflecting that in 100 years not one soul would remain alive. To me, with respect to the books, the same effect would be brought about by my own death. Here, said I, are 100,000 books – the worst of them capable of giving me some pleasure and instruction: and before I can have had time to extract the honey from 1-20th of this hive, in all likelihood I shall be summoned away. – This thought, I am sure, must often have occurred to yourself; and you may judge how much it was aggravated, when I found that, subtracting all merely professional books – books of reference (as dictionaries, &c. &c. &c.) – from the universal library of Europe, there would still remain a total of not less than twelve hundred thousand books over and above what the presses of Europe are still disemboguing into the ocean of literature.

> (*WDQ*, III, 63-64)

De Quincey presents his 'Young Man' with an example of the mathematical sublime. The letter goes on to calculate the probable maximum number of books it is possible for a scholar to read in his lifetime: working, perhaps optimistically, on the assumption that one could read a duodecimo of 'four hundred pages – all skipping barred' in a day. The result of his arithmetic only proves the insignificance of this endeavour. In his lifetime he can only hope to have read five percent of all that European literature has to offer. De Quincey is also aware that his numerical reasoning is specious because the numbers he is working with are not fixed, but ever increasing. He may hope to read five percent of '*current*' literature, but the volume

of '*current*' literature is increasing daily (*WDQ*, III, 64). On the one hand, these calculations are used to promote discernment. De Quincey signals his scholarly prowess by demonstrating his skill as a selective reader and judicious instructor: teaching his addressee to read well rather than much. This does not, however, negate the 'pain and a disturbance of mind' that troubles his 'youthful days' and pervades the letter as a whole. The passage may be written in the past tense, but De Quincey's 'disturbance' is persistent.

The final line of the passage – 'there would still remain a total of not less than twelve hundred thousand books over and above what the presses of Europe are still disemboguing into the ocean of literature' – is of particular note. Typically for De Quincey, his obscure vocabulary – specifically the verb 'disemboguing' – is at once unfamiliar and unsettling, but also completely appropriate. 'To disembogue' is to 'come forth as from a river's mouth' (*OED*). The image created is one of the numerous individual streams of literature emptied into the sublime unity of the ocean. Though the books contained in the library are apparently ordered, neatly shelved and categorised, when viewed in their totality they are also impossibly intermingled: combined into one vast, indistinguishable whole. The hundreds of thousands of books De Quincey will never find the time to read rush past him, impelled by the swift currents of modern production. A breakdown of communication occurs. Just as De Quincey's lexical choices might alienate his readers, he is alienated by the ocean of books presented to his view. Their text, too, has become illegible: akin to the 'reference works' and their '&c. &c. &c.'.

Multiplication, as Brian McGrath has also noted, results in the collapse of the subject. Contemplation of vast repositories of printed matter does not convince the viewer of mankind's ability to order human knowledge. Rather, the viewer sees the

boundaries of his frame of reference recede impossibly away, 'for he cannot imagine finding the time to read every book'.[18] Ultimately, the scene forces the observer to consider his own mortality: the fact that he will be dead before he can have tackled '1-20th' of the material he contemplates, a realisation compounded by the reference to Xerxes' perishing armies. Both De Quincey and the Persian King are doomed over-reachers. Despite his command of a vast army, Xerxes fails to conquer Greece; in a related fashion, De Quincey knows that he will fail to conquer the vast 'hive' of knowledge before him. Implied in his 'discomfort' and Xerxes' tears is a consciousness that even the exceptional individual may ultimately prove to be insignificant. His command of the multitude, whether of men or of books, is temporary and unstable. Algebraic expansion depersonalises the self. Each of the 100,000 volumes in the library can be generically defined as part of a whole, but that whole is too massy to allow for the individual to distinguish between or master them.

Still more troubling, for De Quincey, is the way in which this textual multiplication might reflect human multiplication. As he subsequently notes, 'if books and worlds of art existed by millions, men existed by hundreds of millions' (*WDQ*, III, 64). The crux of the issue is a sense that, as in the case of the increasing volume of printed matter produced by modern presses, human reproduction might, too, have become cheap. In the famous passage from *Suspiria de Profundis*, in which he describes the human mind as a palimpsest, he notes that the technology of printing cannot fail to have been discovered prior to Caxton. 'All that is essential in printing,' he argues, 'must have been known to every nation that struck coins and medals'. Instead, 'the want of a cheap material for *receiving* such impressions, was the obstacle to an introduction of printed books' (*WDQ*, XV, 172, author's emphasis).

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[18] Brian McGrath, 'Thomas De Quincey and the Language of Literature: Or, on the Necessity of Ignorance', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 47 (2007), 847-62 (pp. 850, 857).

The transition in the history of print, according to De Quincey, is from making precious impressions on gold and silver to making 'cheap' impressions on paper. The vellum palimpsest, he claims, fills the opening left by the 'scarcity affecting all materials proper for durable books' (*WDQ*, XV, 172). The material is valuable in itself because of this scarcity, to the degree that it exceeds the value of the textual inscription it bears. Hence, it is repeatedly erased and re-inscribed. The vellum confers dignity on the text it receives, rather than the other way round (the case for most books), for each text must be accounted rare enough to warrant the (albeit reversible) erasure of its predecessor. The palimpsest preserves each text intact and separate, but also allows them to exist in simultaneity, to interact and be re-interpreted with each (re)discovery. What, then, is to be made of the 'cheaply' printed text in relation to the '*natural* and *mighty* palimpsest [that] is the human brain' (*WDQ*, XV, 175, my emphasis)?

With the production of texts divested of artisanship, anything might be published, and published in vast numbers. For De Quincey, these technological fears are tied up with his xenophobia. In the *Confessions*' opium dreams, for instance, it is not only books, but bodies that are being reproduced too cheaply. This is particularly so in the orient of his imagination. Printing technologies may have advanced to allow for increased material production, but so has the output of what he calls 'the great *officina gentium* [workshop of peoples]' in the East (*WDQ*, II, 70). There 'man is a weed' and their 'vast empires', expanding through space and time (he also mentions 'the vast age of the race'), 'give a further sublimity to the feelings associated with all oriental names or images' (*WDQ*, II, 70). In an instance of Kant's mathematical sublime, De Quincey contemplates a number of people so immense that it becomes limitless. In this case though, it is not merely their number, but their

'otherness' that renders them threatening. Like the '&c. &c. &c.' of the reference works in the library, De Quincey refuses to engage in any depth with this Eastern population. They are illegible to him. Instead, he attempts to repress them by terming them 'weeds'; these are men printed on paper, not transcribed on vellum or pressed onto gold and silver.

Yet, as with many of De Quincey's xenophobic fears and personal anxieties, the cause often lurks not in the 'other', but within. The multiplication of the Eastern races in his opium dreams might not be an Eastern phenomenon at all. This is one of the reasons that the comparison between himself and the Persian Xerxes in the 'Letters' is so interesting. It suggests that De Quincey is as much a 'weed' as any actual oriental figure, and that his own works might themselves constitute little more than an '&c. &c. &c.'. All these multiplications ultimately bring us back to *Monsieur Monsieur* De Quincey. At the heart of his anxieties over the multiplication of books and selves, is the consciousness that he might be complicit in these uncontrollable forms of reproduction. In this instance, De Quincey has been textually multiplied, as *Monsieur*², but also physically multiplied: he is mindful of the actuality of his namesake, of the other man with whom he has been confused. A material and an immaterial duplication have occurred. Perhaps even more problematically, though, De Quincey is multiplied by the texts he writes. He is the '*officina gentium*' of his own self. It is not the writer of the *Monsieur Monsieur* letter who has squared his identity, but he himself, by publishing his autobiographical works. And these, in turn, contribute to the vast number of books 'disemboguing into the ocean of literature'.

Social Anxiety and the Scholar as Duellist

De Quincey's 'self-multiplied', or published, identity acts as a reminder, not only of the fact that he might be just one of many, cheap and not unique, but of the various interpretations that his readership might ascribe to his actions as presented in his autobiographical works. The *Confessions*' discussion of the *Monsieur Monsieur* letter indicates De Quincey's intense reception anxiety, coupled with a heightened sensibility to the way in which his public persona was perceived. His obsessive particularity over the writing of his name – be it in the form of an address, or as inscribed in a book – reveals a writer, not only concerned by what readers may make of his literary credentials, but also by what they may also make of his social status. Having entered the contested field of Romantic period publication, he is careful to monitor the particular version of De Quincey[2] that is to be subjected to public scrutiny: to construct an acceptable autobiographical, as well as authorial, persona.

The more times his identity is reproduced, though, the more opportunities arise for misinterpretation. Of particular concern, in the *Monsieur Monsieur* letter, is that the episode might be *'made known to the public'* (*WDQ*, II, 151). That 'public' will then misconstrue events and reflect on Thomas as a common fraudster and thief. This would be disastrous for De Quincey's self-image, much of which is based on notions of respectability and honour. In his conception, he is a gentleman scholar, a philosopher, and a linguist (as his propitious use of the word 'disemboguing' proves). As such, he considers himself imbued with an innate morality. 'As man grows more intellectual', he writes, 'the power of managing him by his intellect and his moral nature, in utter contempt of all appeals to his mere animal instincts of pain, must go on *pari passu*' (*WDQ*, IXX, 190). The morality of the intellectual can be relied upon, as his actions are guided by higher instincts. For this reason, De

Quincey resents, and is deeply troubled by, the suggestion (raised, in fact, by no one but himself) that he would steal the money enclosed in *Monsieur Monsieur*'s letter out of base necessity when, as a scholar, he is governed by nobler interests.

In the 'Letters to a Young Man', his attempts to appear not only scholarly, but respectable and moral are clear. He insists on the need for a class of men devoted entirely to literature – 'to compose a garrison on permanent duty for the service of the highest purposes which grace and dignify our nature' (*WDQ*, III, 48). Such a 'garrison' is markedly similar to Coleridge's concept of the clerisy, outlined in *On the Constitution of Church and State* (1829). Coleridge argues for 'a permanent class or order, with the following duties': 'cultivating and enlarging the knowledge already possessed [in the humanities]'; 'watching over the interests of physical and moral science'; and 'to preserve the stores, [and] to guard the treasures, of past civilizations'.[19] Both authors maintain the superiority of this class of learned instructors in a 'moral' and an intellectual sense. For, as Coleridge attests, 'it is folly to think of making all, or the many, philosophers, or even men of science or systematic knowledge' (*CWSTC*, X, 69). De Quincey's preoccupation with respectability, and his membership of the clerisy, is connected to concepts of masculine agency. His mode of self-assertion is often combative. For De Quincey, and Coleridge, the clerisy are not merely benevolent teachers but '*guards*' of the 'treasures of past civilizations', a '*garrison* on permanent duty', watchful and ready to defend, perhaps violently if necessary, 'the highest purposes which grace and dignify our nature'. Wordsworth, too, whose influence on De Quincey cannot be overstated, speaks of the poet as a leader in an 'advance, or a conquest' of poetic genius. All see themselves as versions of Dibdin's 'book-knights' fighting in the

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[19] S. T. Coleridge, *On the Constitution of Church and State*, ed. John Colmer, in *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, gen. ed. Kathleen Coburn, in 16 parts (London: Routledge, 1969-2002), X, 43.

'great book fight'.[20] For each, the intellectual few must march forward and lead an amorphous and ignorant public; they must define, protect, or create a learned taste.

The combative character of this scholarly class correlates with critics' representations of periodical circles as particularly violent in the years following the Napoleonic wars. Richard Cronin has charted the numerous figurative and literal aggressions of the period's literary practitioners, anxious over the masculinity and gentlemanly status of their authorship; while Mark Schoenfield notes that journalists were often characterised as a 'phalanx' in a 'cultural war'.[21] Bookishness, as I have argued, was a significant factor in allaying such anxieties and preserving an image of the author as both masculine and gentlemanly. Each of the authors treated in this thesis aligns himself with this cultural 'phalanx' when they advertise their bibliophilia. They argue that their productions may be distinguished from the 'ocean of literature' by dint of their position within that 'garrison on permanent duty for the service of the highest purposes which grace and dignify our nature'. De Quincey, certainly, is concerned to stress his masculinity and intellectual superiority, but, in particular, to confirm his gentlemanly status as a man of letters.

Adopting a role within the clerisy, which is privileged and elite but not necessarily dictated by social class, allows him to achieve this. 'Though many things may detract from the comparative fitness of individuals, or of particular classes, for the Trust and Functions of the NATIONALITY', Coleridge concludes, 'there are only two *absolute* Disqualifications': 'Allegiance to a Foreign Power' and not

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[20] William Wordsworth, 'Essay Supplementary to the Preface' (1815), in *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. W. J. B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), III, 62-84 (p. 82); T. F. Dibdin, *Reminiscences of a Literary Life*, 2 vols (London: John Major, 1836), I, pp. 357, 361.
[21] Mark Schoenfield, *British Periodicals and Romantic Identity: The "Literary Lower Empire"* (New York: Palgrave, 2009), p. 2; Richard Cronin, *Paper Pellets: British Literary Culture after Waterloo* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

recognising the monarch as the head of the church (*CWSTC*, X, 81). Considering De Quincey's social aspirations, and his sensitivity to the question of honour or respectability, membership of the clerisy (his learned 'garrison') ameliorates his class anxiety. When, as a fifteen year old accompanying the young Lord Westport to Dublin, he is insulted by 'an awful personage – a wit, a blue-stocking' on the ferry, recourse to this persona is an essential element of his defence. Sensing his humble social status in relation to his friend, the lady makes him the 'passive butt to [her] stinging contumely, and the arrowy sleet of her gay rhetoric'. De Quincey is clearly incensed, not only by her inappropriateness, but by a sense of his 'defect in all those advantages of title, fortune, and expectation which so brilliantly distinguished my friend' (*WDQ*, IXX, 209). The lady's harangue is concluded by the arrival of the boys' champion, Miss Blake. Chivalrous violence is implicit in the scene. De Quincey can be confident in his superiority to the blue-stocking lady and the 'justice' of his position because, as his new companion recognises, he 'had immense reading' and a 'vast command of words' which allow him to become 'the lion of the company which had previously been most insultingly facetious' (*WDQ*, IXX, 209, 211, 212). His learning 'arm[s him] a hundredfold for retaliation' (*WDQ*, IXX, 209). Without his ally he cannot at first make use of his armoury, but once the tide has turned in his favour he is eager to aggressively defend himself, to make war on the wit, and to drive her from the deck of the ferry. The fact that his aggressor and rescuer are both female suggests a further reason for the masculinsed aggressiveness of his written account. It is his place as a man to command the company, at least as far as any learned debate is concerned. The Blue-Stocking is duly represented as a harridan, whose confidence and impudence stride before her learning, and Miss Blake acts as his rescuer only insofar as she recognises his intellectual superiority. She does not

herself vanquish the Blue-Stocking, but rather makes the space for De Quincey to do so himself: enabling him to reassert both his masculinity and his scholarly prowess.

Miss Blake also moves the discourse away from the subject of social status, seemingly agreeing with Hunt that the rank of one's mind should stand before the rank of one's birth. De Quincey's literary achievement is supposed to confer on him a social standing that his ancestral heritage cannot. He is always careful to stress the respectability of his family:

> Because I have had occasion incidentally to speak of various patrician friends, it must not be supposed that I have myself any pretension to rank and high blood. I thank God that I have not. I am the son of a plain English merchant, esteemed during his life for his great integrity, and strongly attached to literary pursuits (indeed, he was himself, anonymously, an author).
>
> (*WDQ*, II, 33)

Like Dibdin in his *Reminiscences*, De Quincey cannot help but refer to his noble acquaintance – evidence of social ambition, despite his arguments to the contrary – but he also defends his own background on the basis of literary achievement. Both his father and mother are described as having significant literary talent, like himself. 'These are [his] honours of descent', honours more 'favourable to moral, or to intellectual qualities' than 'a station which raises a man too eminently above the level of his fellow-creatures' (*WDQ*, II, 33-34). This is not to say that literary talent does not raise a man 'above the level of his fellow-creatures'. De Quincey has already been seen to affiliate himself with a superior class of readers, able to lead the general public in their literary forays. He sees himself as an interpreter elect: feeling, in *Suspiria*, that he has been chosen by nature, or the shadowy muse-like figures he

terms the four Ladies of Sorrow, to 'read elder truths, sad truths, grand truths, fearful truths' (*WDQ*, XV, 182). His skill in comprehension is a gift and a curse, but, most importantly, particular to him. In accordance with prevalent notions of the Romantic reading public and of Romantic genius, only a few are capable of reading well. 'To be a reader is no longer, as it once was, to be of a meditative turn', De Quincey argues in 'The Life and Adventures of Oliver Goldsmith' (1848), and many readers are now 'poor in capacities of thinking, and are passively resigned to the instinct of immediate pleasure' (*WDQ*, XVI, 315, 316). It is therefore his duty to lead them in their interpretations, especially in their interpretations of his identity.

One way in which De Quincey seeks to prove his aptitude and trustworthiness in the role of critic/interpreter is by showing off his linguistic prowess. 'At fifteen', he says, 'my command of that language [Ancient Greek] was so great, that I not only composed Greek verses in lyric metres, but could converse in Greek fluently, and without embarrassment – an accomplishment which I have not since met with in any scholar of my times' (*WDQ*, II, 14). The paradoxical way in which De Quincey advertises his linguistic skill is noteworthy. Classical accomplishments are paraded in an attempt to verify his interpretative skill, but are also used to withhold information from the reader and wield interpretative power: the choice to include 'disemboguing' in the 'Letters', for instance. Not all of his classical examples are explained, even though he admits that some of his readers will be deficient in this area of study and none of them as knowledgeable as he. Rzepka notes this particular tendency of De Quincey when discussing the *Confessions'* passage in which he encounters the Malay at Dove Cottage. In this episode, the Opium-Eater's attempt to communicate with the Malay by quoting the *Illiad* at him is less about mutual comprehension and more about asserting his superiority and

protecting his self-image.[22] It proves that De Quincey is not a frank translator; language is used to obscure, as much as illuminate, meaning for the reader.

As a linguistic virtuoso, the Opium-Eater is 'antagonistic' toward his readers in every sense of the word. Etymologically, the word 'antagonism' is derived from the Greek 'agon': defined as either 'a public celebration of games, a contest for the prize at those games' or 'a verbal contest or dispute between two characters in a Greek play' (OED). The antagonistic mode of address adopted by De Quincey in his linguistic guise is concerned with 'contest' and, most importantly, victory. He wishes to convince his readers that he is a formidable antagonist. When he feels his honour has been violated, he usually resorts to the dramatic 'agon' to seek reparation: as, for instance, in his dealings with the Bishop of Bangor in the *Confessions*. He is offended by his landlady when she mentions that she had been warned, by the Bishop, against the reliability of her lodger. De Quincey responds to this minor and inadvertent slight by quitting her house. He then ruminates on a plan to impress his respectability upon the Bishop and his landlady through linguistic means:

> I thought of letting him know my mind in Greek: which, at the same time that it would furnish some presumption that I was no swindler, would also (I hoped) compel the bishop to reply in the same language; in which case, I doubted not to make it appear, that if I was not so rich as his lordship, I was a far better Grecian.
>
> (*WDQ*, II, 19)

As in previous examples, this passage is extended in the 1856 *Confessions*. De Quincey not only spends more time on the episode in general, but makes different

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[22] Rzepka, pp. 6-7.

lexical choices: exchanging 'no swindler' for 'in behalf of my respectability'; and 'far better Grecian' for 'my superiority as a versatile wielder of arms, rarely managed with effect, against all the terrors of his lordship's wig' (*WDQ*, II, 176). As with the blue-stocking terror, his scholarship 'arms' him for combat. In 1856, the episode is couched in terms of a duel. The Bishop has insulted De Quincey's reputation and undermined his self-conception; in response, De Quincey offers him a 'silent *challenge*' (*WDQ*, II, 177, my emphasis) with a view to reasserting his self-image. Admittedly, the challenge is all the more 'silent' because he never actually goes through with his plan, but it is important for De Quincey to narrate the process for his readers so that he may convince them, if not the Bishop, of his imagined victory. The challenge is a matter of honour, and the weapon of choice language. The pair will duel in Greek and De Quincey, styling himself as an exemplary scholar, has the upper hand; he holds the interpretative key to both the language and his identity.

His linguistic challenge is commensurate with Cronin's notion of Romantic periodical duelling: 'issuing a challenge and administering a whipping are both of them aggressive acts, but the duelling pistol acknowledges the right of the man who is challenged to be admitted within the same social circles as the challenger'.[23] De Quincey may choose to eschew the literal 'duelling pistol', but the Greek challenge represents an even more genteel means of contest. As in the case of the *Monsieur Monsieur* letter, De Quincey's anxieties over misrepresentation have to do with his social anxiety, as well as his belief in the respectability of scholarly endeavour. Hence, in the 1856 version of his duel with the Bishop, he stresses the 'respectability' of his person. Having discovered his excellence in all matters Greek,

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[23] Cronin, p. 123.

De Quincey assumes that the Bishop will be convinced of his morality, his intellectual superiority, and his right 'to be admitted within the same social circles as the challenge[d]'. Because the Greek language is invested with the respectability of a classical education, it becomes an ideal substitute for De Quincey's duelling body. The contest with the bishop reverses Cronin's account of literary antagonism. Rather than the insult being printed and the duel occurring in reality, the insult is real and the reparation printed (or written).[24]

As in previous chapters, the correspondence between text and flesh is crucial: an insult to the one constitutes an insult to the other. The Bishop may not meet De Quincey in person, but in the autobiographer's fantasy he will meet his Greek words. He will be drawn into a conception of the author that is controlled by the medium in which he encounters him. The writer's identity is again displaced onto a material or linguistic signifier (here, the Greek alphabet). At the same time, De Quincey is unequivocally shown to be the best and most knowledgeable interpreter of this sign system. The Bishop is invited to read a version of De Quincey's public persona, but not to interpret it freely. It is a version of the metafictional stratagems employed by Scott and Hogg, though for different reasons and to slightly different effect. De Quincey's elusive manoeuvres have not only to do with his social anxieties, but the anonymity of audiences and the machinery of publication, as perceived by authors in the early nineteenth century. As with the Bishop, the reader of the *Confessions* is not freely invited to interpret the opium dreams. Their referents and significances are pre-emptively explained by the earlier autobiographical sections of the book. 'The tyranny of the human face' is a result of De Quincey's time in London; the nightmarish 'Asiatic scenes' are brought forth by the encounter with the Malay; and

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[24] Cronin, p. 153.

the Easter Sunday dream by the death of his sister Elizabeth and the loss of Ann of Oxford Street (*WDQ*, II, 70-74). Standing alone, the opium dreams represent an imaginative dreamscape replete with interpretative possibility; read alongside preceding chapters, their meaning is partially fixed and their interpretation controlled by De Quincey's personal and non-transferable experience.

The 'scholar' finds it difficult to relinquish interpretative power to anyone, save himself. If he admires another's conception of literature or events, he tends to admire it only insofar as it agrees with his own. His sanction is required for alternative explanations to be validated. See, for instance, his description of a fellow pupil's interpretation of Grotius' 'Prolegomena' at Manchester Grammar. Though De Quincey admires G_____'s innovative interpretation of the work, he cannot allow him the final say. Unsure 'whether G_____ were entirely correct in this application of a secret key to the little work of Grotius', he excuses his own inability to reach a better explanation by arguing that the book was taken off the syllabus soon after he joined the Sunday evening lectures in which it was debated (*WDQ*, II, 132). In the same footnote, he also conjectures that he may have solved the problem anyway, but has merely forgotten his solution: 'perhaps, after all, I *did* clear it up' (*WDQ*, II, 132n). Either way, De Quincey stresses his authority as an interpreter, admitting no rival or defeat in purpose. Unless, that is, his rival turns out to be his own self.

The 'Self-Combating Volume'

It is all too easy for the supposedly autonomous identity De Quincey presents in his autobiographical works to be adulterated by the intentions, motivations, and desires of others: especially as that identity appears in print. Books may seem to offer a

solid, material site of interpretation, but they also multiply in a material and ideational sense with each subsequent attempt to locate the meaning of the text or the self contained therein. In their most terrifying incarnation, books combine both of these functions and bind the autobiographical identity, and by extension the external self, with 'alien nature[s]' (*WDQ*, XVI, 423). Rather than the book room resembling a cell, the material form of the book itself becomes a prison. This is what De Quincey fears when he considers the possibility that a volume comprising not only his own *Confessions*, but those of Mr Brunell, the attorney he lodges with as a youth in Greek Street, could be published:

> Me there was little chance that the attorney should meet; but my book he might easily have met (supposing always the warrant of *Sus. per. col.* had not yet on *his* account travelled down to Newgate.) For he was literary; admired literature; and, as a lawyer, he wrote on some subjects fluently; Might he not publish *his* Confessions? Or, which would be worse, a supplement to mine – printed so as exactly to match? In which case I should have had the same affliction that Gibbon the historian dreaded so much; viz. that of seeing a refutation of himself, and his own answer to the refutation, all bound up in one and the same self-combating volume.
>
> (*WDQ*, XV, 197)

The book and the self merge in this description. Brunell is more likely to 'have *met'* De Quincey in book form and, meeting him thus, more likely and more able to misinterpret and reconfigure the author's textual identity. He can rewrite another's life in his own words. More troubling than the 'self-combat' seen in the annotated books of Chapter 2 – where the commenter pens his 'refutation' in an original work – this 'self-combating volume' is to appear entirely in print. The 'refutation' is

authorised by its publication. Worse still, due to the concurrence between book and body in the passage, the attorney's supplement would not only be a 'refutation' of the argument or veracity of the *Confessions*, but a refutation of their original author. The unscrupulous confessor of the supplement may hide behind his limited, literary 'fluency', but cannot escape his Newgate associations. When print and flesh are connected, a challenge to the one constitutes a challenge to the other. Brunell is shown to deserve execution not only for his actual criminal conduct, but also for his murderous attempt on De Quincey's works and person, in the form of a book.

Like Coleridge, Brunell is De Quincey's unsettling double. His book can 'exactly […] match' the latter's as there could be nothing in the binding to differentiate the two. On the shelf, each version is, superficially, as valid as the other. De Quincey's autobiographical personas have again been imprisoned with an 'alien nature', 'bound up in one and the same self-combating volume'. His distress partly stems from the general, physical appearance of books in the period. During the first part of the nineteenth century, books were not conventionally sold pre-bound: 'In 1800, books were still bound by hand, usually after being sold to the bookseller or private individual as flat sheets or in paper-covered boards which were not intended to be durable'.[25] A book was not, therefore, immediately recognisable by its cover. Instead, it was the owner's identity, his or her taste and library, which were expressed by a book's binding. To begin with, then, copies of the *Confessions* are not necessarily outwardly identifiable as such. Materially, the identity of the confessor has been erased. The book, acting as a stand-in for the body, is not – as in the relationship between body and mind – solely identified with its author. It is a commodity that belongs to someone else: their binding covers it, their stamp, *ex*

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[25] Rob Banham, 'The Industrialization of the Book 1800-1970', in *A Companion to the History of the Book*, ed. Simon Elliot and Jonathan Rose (Malden: Blackwell, 2007), pp. 273-90 (p. 280).

libris, adorns the title page. In the case of Brunell's *Confessions*, the problem

extends to the fact that not only the binding, but also the text itself, deforms the

identity of the author. Whereas De Quincey is recognisable once the owner of the

book begins to read the original *Confessions*, in these joint 'self-combating'

Confessions the supplementary text may cancel out the first or at least strip away

some of the linguistic and presentational devices that constitute the autobiographical

persona. Notice how the 'refutation' comes first in this description. De Quincey's

identity is primary no more; it has become – in a similar vein to his predilection for

pre-emptive justification – a secondary communication, a mere 'answer' to his

critic's refutation. Suddenly, someone else is narrating the confessor's life and the

identity propounded in the first text is revealed to be as skewed by individual

perception and opinion as any other. De Quincey's autonomous self, the self who

supposedly alone can know his 'entire history' (*WDQ*, II, 62), has collapsed and

become anterior.

In the same way that the books he lent to Coleridge fuelled De Quincey's

anxiety over his possible secondariness – the fact, for example, that his notes in

Leibniz's *Theodicee* come after Coleridge's – the Opium-Eater finds an 'alien

nature', which might be but another version of himself and a further iteration of De

Quincey[2], bound-up and confused with the identity he more readily identifies with.

As John Barrell argues, the:

> "alien nature", once its presence within one has been suspected can
>
> sometimes be represented, it seems, as a repetition or a "double" of one's
>
> own nature, not the self, exactly, but not the other, either – a "that" to one's
>
> own "this". To treat it like this is to produce a psychic economy which is
>
> bearable, but barely so; the self may still be a kind of sanctuary, though

hardly an inviolable one. It may be, however, that the "alien nature" is so
very alien as to be the enemy of one's own, in which case it will have to be
represented as beyond the *cordon sanitaire* which defines what can be
accepted as one's own nature, and which constitutes that nature. But what if
it won't go quietly?[26]

The identity presented in the 'self-combating volume', be it a lent book or a dual
Confessions, must not only parry the intrusions of the 'other' but is also, as De
Quincey's phrase suggests, locked into a conflict with itself. De Quincey sees the
second *Confessions*, in contrast to Coleridge, as an unequivocal 'enemy' and
'beyond the *cordon sanitaire* which defines what can be accepted as one's own
nature'. Even so, the material book that contains this 'enemy other' is not an 'alien-
combating volume', but a '*self*-combating volume'. This may be down to the
material similarities discussed above, which suggest to outsiders that the work is
singly authored, but contradictory. It may also be that the 'agon' involved in social
interaction, in defeating the 'alien other', has been transformed into a different form
of antagonism, one directed inward.

Internal antagonisms need not always result in the collapse of the subject.
The paradoxical nature of De Quincey's phrase – 'self-combat' – is consistent with
prominent stylistic and philosophical features of his writing. It is a further
manifestation of the 'cloud-scaling swing' (*WDQ*, XV, 169) of his conflicted
narrative mode: a narrative mode which manifests the 'mighty and equal
antagonisms' (*WDQ*, II, 51) he identifies as a primary feature of his ideal creative
state. Looking down in reverie over Liverpool, De Quincey states that though he
might remain 'from sun-set to sun-rise, motionless, and without wishing to move',

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[26] John Barrell, *The Infection of Thomas De Quincey: a Psychopathology of Imperialism* (New
Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), pp. 18-19.

his intellect is active, perceiving 'infinite activities' in 'infinite repose' (*WDQ*, II, 51). This description recalls D'Israeli's representation of the man of letters' occupation: 'labour without fatigue; repose with activity; an employment, interrupted without inconvenience, and exhaustless without satiety'.[27] For both, it seems, contradiction fuels creativity. To be in a state which combines 'mighty and equal antagonisms' is to be a man of letters. Combative forces are at work within the passage and within the oscillatory structures of De Quincey's prose, but in contrast to the antagonistic mode of address arising from his reception anxiety or fears of the external 'other', here they are not defensive. Opposition stimulates perception and gives his autobiographical narrative momentum. Dreamscapes originating from tension and antagonism make art out of reality.[28]

But, though crucial to the 'potent rhetoric' of 'eloquent', 'subtle, and mighty opium' (*WDQ*, II, 51), creative antagonisms can produce unsettling as well as 'tranquil' scenes. The 'mighty' dreams they produce 'oscillat[e] under the impulse of lunatic hands', under the impulse of the 'lunacy' which 'may belong to human dreams' (*WDQ*, XV, 169). Creative antagonism is central to the prose style of De Quincey's 'Postscript' to 'On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts'. In his delineation of John Williams' second massacre, the text's actors (Williams and the journeyman who escapes him), 'like chorus and semi-chorus, strophe and antistrophe', 'work each against the other. Pull journeyman, pull murderer! Pull baker, pull devil!' (*WDQ*, XX, 62). Their antagonism creates the drama of the piece

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[27] Isaac D'Israeli, *An Essay on the Manners and Genius of the Literary Character* (London: Cadell and Davies, 1795), pp. 14-15.

[28] As Gregory Dart notes, the antagonisms of this passage are reminiscent of Lessing's *Laocoon,* in which it is argued that art's "'main attraction' 'is in the very antagonism between the transitory reality and the non-transitory image of it reproduced by Painting or Sculpture'": 'Chambers of Horror: De Quincey's "Postscript" to "On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts"', in *Thomas De Quincey: New Theoretical and Critical Directions*, ed. Robert Morrison and Daniel Sanjiv Roberts (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 187-210 (p. 201).

and is necessary for an appreciation of the aesthetics of the murder scene. But these antagonisms also suggest a troubling duality of self. Williams and the journeyman act in the contrary roles of murderer and victim, but as De Quincey's musings on the 'mighty and equal antagonisms' of the brain has shown, this does not render their personalities mutually exclusive. Not only does their dramatic opposition reinforce their connectedness, but so does their initial presentation. Both are described as of dubious nationality (a dangerous characteristic in De Quincean terms). Williams' 'birth-place was not certainly known' (*WDQ*, XX, 69) and the narrator states that he has forgotten the class of the young journeyman, 'neither [does he] remember of what nation he was' (*WDQ*, XX, 56). The proximity of murderer to potential victim echoes the proximity of the conscious self to the unmanageable, and possibly dangerous, antagonistic, multiple identities that spring from within: self-combating or self-confounding 'others'.

In their evocation of classical theatre – 'chorus and semi-chorus, strophe and antistrophe' – the 'Postscript's' antagonisms are related to the Dark Interpreter of *Suspiria de Profundis*. The Interpreter is described as 'bear[ing] generally the office of a tragic chorus at Athens' (*WDQ*, XV, 185n) and is therefore engaged in the same dramatic interactions with De Quincey, whose double it is, as those performed between murderer and potential victim. As the chorus turns one way (strophe) it must turn back upon itself (antistrophe). So too the self must respond to the interpretations of 'the reflex of [his] inner nature' and know that, though he may 'not always know him […] as [his] own parhelion' (*WDQ*, XV, 184-85), they are essential parts of the same drama. The conscious self has a relational proximity to its Dark reflex. Nor can the narrative voice of De Quincey's autobiographical works always subdue these potentially sinister doubles. Thus his philosophical vacillations can

result in 'sorrowful auguries that [he has] no power to hide from [his] own heart'
(*WDQ*, II, 149). They often burst forth from his writing unbidden, violating the
fragile boundaries of autobiographical discourse that the author might prefer to leave
intact. The Dark Interpreter is capable of 'reflecting to the daylight what else must be
hidden forever', and does this as an 'intruder into [De Quincey's] dreams'. In other
words, the revelation of these inner mysteries cannot be fully controlled. De Quincey
sees fit to 'warn' his readers that the Interpreter 'will not always be found sitting
inside my dreams, but at times outside, and in open daylight' (*WDQ*, XV, 184-85).
Similarly, though the 'alien nature[s]' of 'The English Mail Coach', as 'horrors from
the kingdoms of anarchy and darkness', are said to 'gloomily retire from exposition',
they are also, says De Quincey, '*necessary* to mention' (*WDQ*, XVI, 423, my
emphasis). The Interpreter and the 'alien natures' may tend toward retirement, but
they also insist on their own expression.

Of course, though they 'intrude' uncontrollably into his dreams, De Quincey
does control their intrusion into his works. What he cannot control is their reception:
how they will appear 'in open daylight' to his readers in published form. The 'self-
combating volume' not only reflects the internal antagonisms of De Quincey's self,
it likewise speaks to the difficulties associated with publication. The realities of the
press – the periodical press in particular, as noted in previous chapters – meant that
authors could be trapped into misrepresentation. Whale's *Thomas De Quincey's
Reluctant Autobiography* takes for its focus the at once mutually beneficial and
strained relationship of De Quincey with his publishers. The tension between the
two, he argues, was heightened by the 'corrections, omissions and refusals' of De
Quincey's editors. These were not always sanctioned, but still appeared as his own

work.[29] He felt that his editors deformed the identity he wished to present to his readers. Once the text had gone to press it could not be retracted. Errors within it, self-made or otherwise, were not only permanently set down, but apparently intentional. Unlike Coleridge's erroneous 'Esq.', they cannot be erased. For, 'even in a case of unequivocal mistake, seen and acknowledged, […] it is open to remedy only through a sudden and energetic act, then or never, the press being for twenty minutes, suppose, free to receive an alteration, but beyond that time closed and sealed inexorably' (*WDQ*, II, 101). The extract recalls the dread of being bound with one's enemy in the 'self-combating volume' passage, or that of being 'captured' in the *Monsieur Monsieur* episode. De Quincey is again 'closed and sealed inexorably' with an alien 'other' (the editor and his modifications). The punctiliousness of his written style and his overbearing interpretative presence partly ameliorates the pains of publication. As the reader's interpreter, De Quincey can resolve conflict, can tame, domesticate, and recuperate any misleading 'other' who threatens to adulterate his textual identity. Then again, this same authoritative, scholarly identity is itself 'self-combating' and fractured. Most of the interpreters described in De Quincey's works are versions of De Quincey himself, not all of them, though, are tameable. As a result, the role of interpreter does not succeed in stabilising or unifying textual identity. It cannot wholly resolve the anxieties associated with self-representation and publication. Utilisation of the interpretative mode may ease tensions between the self and 'other', but it equally heightens the autobiographer's awareness of the irreducibility and inscrutable nature of the self he is attempting to describe. Self-interpretation is tantamount to 'self-combat'.

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[29] Whale, p. 26.

The Dark Interpreter and the Violence of Analysis

If De Quincey is determined to act as the sole interpreter of his self and works then he must also account for the fact that versions of his self, in an interpretative guise, have a tendency to 'swerve[] out of [his] orbit, and mix[] a little with alien natures' (*WDQ*, xv, 185). Such is the case with the Dark Interpreter. Although essentially a 'reflex' of his self, it is a 'reflex' which problematically reveals what should perhaps stay hidden. This figure is an 'intruder' and also De Quincey himself. As the author explains, its purpose is 'not to tell you any thing absolutely new […] but to recall you to your own lurking thoughts', capable of 'deciphering the mystery' of events before the conscious mind has had time to decipher them itself (*WDQ*, xv, 185). A pre-emptive interpretation occurs, in which the interpretative faculty De Quincey recognises as his own is anticipated by that of the Interpreter. In much the same way, he anticipates his readers' criticisms and pre-emptively neutralises them. His reflex's interpretation is effectively the same as his – they are his 'lurking thoughts' – but the process of their revelation is unclear. They have emerged unthought-of, compounding the notion that the Interpreter is, in fact, more alien than kindred after all.

According to Folkenflik, 'the idea of the self as other is a condition of the autobiographical narrative'. In autobiography 'the pastness of a false self versus the presentness of a true self frequently provides the point of departure for the writing'.[30] De Quincey's autobiography takes this concept of 'the self as other' to extremes. 'Self-combat' or antagonism provide a 'point of departure', but the internal doubles of his 'self-combating volumes' are also difficult to reconcile with his desire to represent a primary or unified identity. The Dark Interpreter is not simply a past,

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[30] Folkenflik, p. 234.

false self, whose activities can be corrected, or whose difference is neutralised via the processes of contemplation and narration. Instead, it is a timeless or even a future identity. In the dream of 'Savannah-La-Mar', the Interpreter as self and the Interpreter as 'other' are confused. The Interpreter's meditation on the nature of time and the present, infinitely divisible and 'distinguishable only by a heavenly vision', speaks to its own temporal fluidity. It is able to repeat explanations before they have been conceived, for example (*WDQ*, XV, 186). In this way, the Interpreter exists outside of the chronological organisation of conscious thought, appearing wholly 'other' as it partakes of a divine cognitive power from which the perceiving self is excluded. It cannot be thought of as under the control of the present and 'true self' in quite the way the Folkenflik describes. The narrating identity almost becomes a 'false self' whose knowledge the Interpreter anticipates and exposes. De Quincey and the Interpreter are products of the same mind: one conscious, the other subconscious. The Interpreter's words will always be De Quincey's own: firstly, because the Interpreter 'recall[s] you to your own lurking thoughts'; secondly, because De Quincey has scripted his words. De Quincey's 'quotation' of it is coloured by the artificial structures and processes of writing.

Still, the Dark Interpreter invades the internal realms of the mind, destabilising the conception of a singular self. It may be as much a textual construct as the other identities De Quincey presents to his readers, but it is also a spontaneous, revelatory, psychic drive that he struggles to manage and comprehend. Robert M. Maniquis links his discussion of the Dark Interpreter to psychoanalysis. Freudian notions of the 'patient [of psychoanalysis] as self-interpreter' are discussed alongside the psychic violence encompassed by self-reflexivity and self-

interpretation.[31] The Interpreter represents another of De Quincey's failed attempts to retain authoritative control over his self-presentation. It is able to explain to De Quincey that which he already knows but was not yet conscious of, just as the psychoanalyst can review his patient's symptoms and guide him to answers which 'immediately confirm[…]' his own 'interpretation'. In Freudian terms, the knowledge of the analyst 'become[s] the patient's] knowledge, too'.[32] This relationship is complicated by the fact that the Dark Interpreter is manifestly not external to the self, but a sentient 'reflex' of it. In Maniquis' account, where the analyst's role is played by the narrative persona as opposed to the Interpreter, the analytic identity is only another version of the author: a textual creation emanating an authority that belies its unstable and self-conscious nature. De Quincey's nascent Freudianism represents just such an illusion of power and self-control as *De Emendatione Humani Intellectus*. A man cannot 'correct' human understanding, because he is a man himself, and a man cannot act as his own analyst without undermining the necessary distinction between patient and doctor. The Dark Interpreter reveals the fractures in De Quincey's representation of himself as the master-interpreter of his books. For, as the Interpreter proves in its revelatory capacity, not all aspects of the self may be manageable or consciously understood.

The self cannot be singular or unified if aspects of it are not consciously recognised. The *Monsieur Monsieur* letter presented an unfamiliar version of identity that was at once akin to and separate from the identity the young De Quincey had fashioned for himself. The confusion was between the self and an actual 'other', the second *de Quincey*. More terrifying are the 'others' that stem from within, like the

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[31] Robert M. Maniquis, 'The Dark Interpreter and the Palimpsest of Violence: De Quincey and the Unconscious', in *Thomas De Quincey Bicentenary Studies*, pp. 109-39 (pp. 117).

[32] Sigmund Freud, 'An Outline of Psychoanalysis', in *The Penguin Freud Reader*, ed. Adam Phillips (London: Penguin, 2006), pp. 1-63 (pp. 32-33).

Dark Interpreter or the *Mail Coach*'s 'alien natures'. These intruders, too, threaten to multiply in an instance of 'numerical' growth that might prove 'too mighty to be sustained' (*WDQ*, XVI, 423). 'Not one alien nature, but two, but three, but four, but five' might occupy the once 'inviolable sanctuary of himself' (*WDQ*, XVI, 423). De Quincey writes this passage in the third person – 'his brain', 'himself' (*WDQ*, XVI, 423) – but his observations grow out of his musing on the dream of the crocodilian coachman of the Bath Road. The 'alien natures' plague De Quincey individually as much as they plague mankind. His use of the third person, in fact, serves to confirm the sense of alienation that the duplicated mind feels in contemplation of its 'numerical doubles'. It is the same dislocation of self that occurs in the transformation of 'true self' into 'false self'; or the perceived anteriority of the primary self that results from Brunell's supplementary *Confessions*. In the 'Mail Coach' we find an instance of mathematical, as well as alien, invasion. Horrifying as it is to be bound to, or find within oneself, a mirrored identity – perhaps springing from the same internal source as the primary consciousness – once a second nature has been introduced into this 'chamber of the brain', who is to say how many more might follow? The event defies the notion of selfhood as singular and of the primary self as 'I' rather than 'him'.

Worse, this 'alien nature' is potentially violent: what 'if the alien nature contradicts his primary nature, fights with it, perplexes, and confounds it?' (*WDQ*, XVI, 423). If the squared *Messieurs* and Brunell are socially problematic, related to De Quincey's fears over the public misinterpretation of his actions, then the 'alien natures' and the Dark Interpreter internalise this anxiety. There is no external 'other' to blame for the psyche's fractured nature. The self encompasses murderer and victim both, Williams and the journeyman combined by the 'mighty and equal

antagonisms' of the creative mind. Interior realms of the psyche become battlegrounds over which De Quincey has only a notional level of control, and where the battles are waged against himself. In *Suspiria*, 'God [may smite] Savannah-la-Mar' (*WDQ*, xv, 185), but in the *Autobiographic Sketches* it is De Quincey who smites Gombroon. Gombroon is the kingdom he imagines in play with his elder brother (William's kingdom being the rather fiercer sounding empire of Tigrosylvania). These two nations are at war, predominantly as a result of William's overbearing and aggressive nature. But though William makes war, De Quincey holds the power of creation and destruction over his fictive island:

> Oh reader, do not laugh! I lived for ever under the terror of two separate wars in two separate worlds: one against the factory boys, in a real world of flesh and blood, of stones and brickbats, of flight and pursuit, that were anything but figurative; the other in a world purely aerial, where all the combats and the sufferings were absolute moonshine. And yet the simple truth is – that, for anxiety and distress of mind, the reality (which almost every morning's light brought around) was as nothing in comparison of that dream-kingdom which rose like vapour from my own brain, and which apparently by the *fiat* of my will could be for ever dissolved.
>
> (*WDQ*, ixx, 47)

Notably, he finds the 'aerial' battles far more disturbing than the actual altercations he engaged in with the factory boys, six days a week, for many months. The cause of this 'anxiety and distress of mind' resides within in his consciousness of the God-like power he wields over Gombroon and cannot control: the destructive energy that resides within.

Superficially, it is the 'alien other' that prompts his distress. His brother's imaginings, as well as his fictive armies, invade the dream-kingdom of Gombroon and its ruler can do nothing to stop them. William creates the diamond mines at the centre of its jungle and also gives its people tails, much to his brother's consternation. Though he attempts to 'parry' William's machinations, ultimately, De Quincey has to 'passively accept my brother's statements' (*WDQ*, IXX, 46-47). He admits that it was 'within [his] competence to deny or qualify as much as within [William's] to assert' (*WDQ*, IXX, 46), but his powers of qualification seem limited in relation to his brother's performative utterances. In effect, he relinquishes control of his internal world to a violent 'alien nature' that is also, significantly, his brother (another double). This relinquishment is complicated by the fact that De Quincey still has final say over his kingdom's existence. Victory only becomes possible through the end of play, or the imaginative dissolution of Gombroon. This might be achieved by 'the *fiat* of [De Quincey's] will'. His discomfort proceeds from his cognisance of the destructive power of the imagination. In becoming a creator, he also becomes a destroyer. De Quincey's, here passive, creative power is separated from the hostile power of his brother only by his troubled self-consciousness and his decision not to exercise his destructive will. This does not mean that he does not possess it: that there is no 'alien nature', more self than 'other', residing 'within some separate chamber of the brain' whose actions are not entirely manageable; a murderous self that exists in close proximity to its victim.

Himself a 'self-combating volume', De Quincey is bound, in dreams, imaginings, and philosophical musings, to identities that are at once recognisable and alien: passive and destructive; authoritative and confused. These ancillary selves confound the first, twisting its words and offering alternative self truths. In this way,

De Quincey's representation of the self as fractured and unmanageable can be connected to his anxieties over publication and the reception of his autobiographical works. Once that which 'else must be hidden for ever' has been brought in 'to the daylight' (the public domain) through the reflective power of the Interpreter's 'dark symbolic mirror' (or the press), it is open to any number of fresh interpretations. Words which initially fit the author's purpose suddenly 'alter' and 'do not always seem such as I have used, or could use', in the same manner that an inattentive critic might misquote, misrepresent, and decontextualise a writer's works (*WDQ*, XV, 185). The autobiographer's particular problem is that the text is not merely a book, but a book which stands in for the self. As much as De Quincey attempts to control his readers' understanding by performing the role of both subject and interpreter, he cannot escape the book's and text's propensity towards having a life of their own. Nor can he resolve the complexities of his selfhood: projected, printed, and essential. Any attempt to assert control over the hermeneutic framework in which his textual identity is read, and over the character he has 'painted' for himself, result in failure: as attested to by his preoccupation with the *Monsieur Monsieur* letter or the insults of the Bishop of Bangor. He cannot escape his antagonistic relationship with his readers or his anxiety over the stability of the identity he presents to them. Although the 'public into whose private ear [he] is whispering [his] confessions' at first seem the main source of his anxiety, an examination of the reduplicating versions of selfhood present in his works shows that this anxiety is also self-made. Ultimately *Monsieur²* and *Monsieur³* are '*self*-multiplied', 'self-combating' textual identities. De Quincey might substitute his books for his self, but those books only multiply, mirror, and distort that self even further. In material and immaterial terms, his books cannot be said to present the reader with a unified vision of self, rather they reveal

the infinite antagonisms that constitute Thomas De Quincey: English Opium-Eater and English Book-Eater.

De Quincey's scholarly, authoritative, and yet conflicted and anxious autobiographical persona suggests that it was not only the authorial self that was characterised by its bookishness and indeterminacy in the period. As Michael Robinson argues of 'the "curious" side of the bibliomaniac's culture', there may be a connection between 'evolving conceptions of authorship' and 'evolving conceptions of modern personhood'.[33] Conceptions of the self, in general, were inflected by theories of reading and writing. The bookish selves examined in this thesis are all 'self-combating volumes', to a greater or lesser extent. Their projected identities are a tissue of texts that both signal and defy their own origins, origins that may be found in the library or in the writer's own past. According to Kerry Sinanan and Tim Milnes, autobiography developed into 'an exemplary mode of writing that purport[ed] to allow a correspondence with the self and, through sincerity, to forge a privileged connection with other human beings' during the Romantic period.[34] Within this formulation, an authentic, material (in the sense that it existed outside of the text) self became available to readers in printed form for the first time. Of course, the correspondence between textual and actual identity is never direct, meaning that any concept of authentic selfhood is inherently unstable. From this point on, though, the book-as-object and the expression of selfhood were linked in a new and more intimate manner.

Paul De Man argues that the autobiographical 'moment' (he dislikes the term genre) constitutes a 'mutual reflexive substitution' between 'two subjects': the author and his or her autobiographical persona, the autobiographical persona and the

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[33] Robinson, p. 702.

[34] Kerry Sinanan and Tim Milnes, 'Introduction', in *Romanticism, Sincerity, and Authenticity*, ed. Tim Milnes and Kerry Sinanan (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 1-28 (pp. 13-14).

reader of the autobiography. Another substitution, I would suggest, takes place between the author and the autobiographical medium: the text and, in many cases, the book. De Man gestures towards such a substitution when he discusses the way in which 'self-portraiture' must be determined by 'the resources of [its] medium' and by arguing 'that any book with a readable title-page is, to some extent, autobiographical'.[35] Although, his focus is on language as a medium, his point also stands for the book-as-object. Books were key determinants in the expression and realisation of the Romantic period self. The title page bearing the author's name, the title page bearing the author's pseudonym, the dedication in the margins of a lent book, the *ex libris* stamp in the collector's copy of a rare blackletter volume: in each case the self, or at least a version of it, was being mapped on to books.

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[35] Paul De Man, 'Autobiography as De-facement', *MLN*, 94 (1979), 919-930 (pp. 921, 920, 922).

Afterword

Much of the autobiographical writing discussed in my final chapter appears at the close of the period covered by this study. *Suspiria de Profundis* is published in 1845, 'The English Mail Coach' in 1849, and the revised *Confessions* in 1856. These texts can justifiably be termed early Victorian Literature. Even so, I describe De Quincey as this thesis's archetype: an avid book collector; a lender; a scholar and critic; a purveyor of an anxious textual persona; a Romantic bibliomaniac. In spanning the boundary between the Romantic and Victorian periods, De Quincey's output challenges traditional notions of periodisation. But De Quincey is not the only author positioned at a boundary in this study. Central to my argument, throughout, has been a conception of the author in the early nineteenth century as interstitial and 'intermediate': negotiating a burgeoning and transitional literary marketplace. Indeed, a large portion of the material that this thesis examines is published between 1810 and 1840. Many of my key texts (Hunt's and Lamb's essays; Dibdin's *Reminiscences*; Hogg's novels and a number of Scott's, too) are published after 1820: within the period covered by Richard Cronin in *Romantic Victorians: English Literature, 1824-1840*.[1] One of the few characteristics that Cronin is tentatively willing to assign to this 'literary era' is 'vagueness': a 'vagueness' that he hopes will 'impose' itself on the 'big powers' of Victorianism and Romanticism 'at its borders'.[2] 'Vague' certainly seems an appropriate adjective with which to describe the competing definitions of authorship and authorial identity that appear in this study.

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[1] Richard Cronin, *Romantic Victorians: English Literature, 1824-1840* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002).
[2] Cronin, p. 260.

What binds these authors together, though, is their shared concern with how readers and writers possess the books that they own and those that they produce. They write about the book-as-object in a way that expresses tensions extant in the literary field of the Romantic period. 'Civic yet commercial, exclusive yet claiming the universal, the literary republic,' states John Klancher, 'formed an increasingly unstable referent' at this time.[3] These were authors witnessing a decline in patronage and manuscript culture, and questioning the Enlightenment values that had characterised the previous century. They were also moving toward the institutionalisation of academia which saw the man of letters, the author, the journalist, and the scholar becoming increasingly specialist and distinct roles.[4] The more consistent symbolism of the book provided a mooring for the changing symbolism of the author; it offered a means of coming to terms with the period's 'vagueness'. These authors' bibliographic obsessions emerged from a perceived loss of control over their self-representation, their creativity, their masculinity, and ultimately, their identities. They sought to regain control through that most obvious, and seemingly permanent, symbol of authorship: the book. While the rise of periodical culture meant that the book-object was not the only marker of authorship at this time, perhaps because of its historical prestige, it continued to offer a myth of control, stability, and authority that many writers found attractive.

Yet, as my chapters show, the book was not as stable or authoritative an object as it at first appeared. Simultaneously modern and antique, material and ideational, feminised in some instances and masculinised in others, it suffered from

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[3] Jon Klancher, 'The Vocation of Criticism and the Crisis of the Republic of Letters', in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, ed.. Marshal Brown, 9 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), v, 296-320 (p. 312).

[4] Klancher, pp. 316-17; see also T. W. Heyck, *The Transformation of Intellectual Life in Victorian England* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), p. 121; Marianne Egeland, 'The Man of Letters as Hero', *The International Journal of the Book*, 4 (2007), 41-47 (p. 45).

the same definitional instability as the period's republic of letters. Many authors found their authorial identity fragmented within the texts they wrote and overshadowed by the books they owned. The model of unity, completion, and control that the book offered was revealed as a maddening myth. In terms of the way in which we think about books today, perhaps little has changed. They still sit at the boundary between the material and the ideational, and now, also, between the digital and the physical. Contemporary criticism on the book – typified by studies such as *Bookish Histories* and, indeed, this thesis – remains preoccupied with this dualism and the book's refusal to be neatly catagorised.[5] As Thomas Carlyle characteristically put it, in his 1840 lectures *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*:

> perhaps if we look at this of Books and the Writers of Books, we shall find here, as it were, the summary of all other disorganization;—a sort of *heart*, from which and to which all other confusion circulates in the world![6]

For this reason, like Cronin, I am wary of offering a 'period-defining theory' 'at the cost of radical over-simplification'.[7] However, by considering how this bookish 'disorganization' variously manifested itself in the early nineteenth century, this thesis has argued for the Romantic bibliomaniac as a character distinct from the bookmen that came before and after him.

I will conclude by briefly exploring some of the ways in which later Victorian ideals of professional authorship were rooted in the bookish author of the previous generation. Carlyle is an appropriate figure with which to begin making this

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[5] Ina Ferris and Paul Keen (eds), *Bookish Histories: Books, Literature, and Commercial Modernity 1700-1900* (New York: Palgrave, 2009).
[6] Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History: Six Lectures* (London: J. Fraser, 1841), pp. 256-57.
[7] Cronin, pp. 251, 259.

argument. Like De Quincey, he is an author whose work straddles the traditional

boundary between the Romantic and Victorian periods. In contrast to De Quincey,

though, he is more readily (though not exclusively) termed a Victorian author. This

may be because of the profound influence he had on Victorian models of authorship.

As Richard Salmon writes: 'Carlyle [was] a writer who did more than most to form

and to figure the modern man of letters' and 'has often been viewed as a pivotal

figure in the "general shift" from Romantic to Victorian understandings of "literary

authority"'.[8] Despite publishing some of his most important writing on this subject –

most significantly *Heroes and Hero-Worship* – around the same time as De Quincey

was publishing many of his autobiographical reminiscences, Carlyle's version of the

author and, more specifically, the man of letters, differs in a number of respects from

the bookish figure that De Quincey represents and that is described in this thesis.

As various scholars have pointed out, Carlyle's contemporaries considered

him to be particularly manly.[9] 'Books,' according to him, 'are the chosen possession

of *men*' ('Hero as Man of Letters', p. 259, my emphasis). Contrary to Hunt's fear

that his readers might find his eclectic, bookish persona in 'My Books' 'too

luxurious and effeminate', Carlyle is unapologetic in his representation of the

republic of letters as a male sphere of action.[10] Carlyle was disappointed by the

effeminacy of the literary world that he found in London in the 1820s, but the

emphasis of Romantic period writers on the maleness of the bookman may have

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[8] Richard Salmon, *The Formation of the Victorian Literary Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 38-40.

[9] Cronin, p. 66; Norma Clarke, 'Strenuous Idleness: Thomas Carlyle and the Man of Letters as Hero', in *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800*, ed.. Michael Roper and John Tosh (London: Routlege, 1991), pp. 25-43; Carol T. Christ, '"The Hero as Man of Letters": Masculinity and Victorian Non-Fiction Prose', in *Victorian Sages and Cultural Discourse: Regenerating Gender and Power*, ed.. Thaïs E. Morgan (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990), pp. 19-31; Egeland, 'The Man of Letters as Hero'.

[10] 'My Books' (1823), in *The Selected Writings of Leigh Hunt*, ed.. Robert Morrison and Michael Eberle-Sinatra, 6 vols (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2003), III, 23-37 (p. 25);

influenced him more than he was aware.[11] The over-determined masculinisation of

Dibdin's 'book-knights', the 'guards' of Coleridge's clerisy, or De Quincey's

'garrison on permanent duty for the service of the highest purposes which grace and

dignify our nature', find their apex in the 'Hero as Man of Letters'.[12] By the

Victorian period proper, the genre most frequently associated with bibliophilic

writing – non-fiction prose, specifically the critical essay and literary autobiography

– had also, according to Carol T. Christ and Marianne Egeland, become 'the one

literary genre that the Victorians did not represent as subject to feminization'.[13] The

Romantic bibliomaniac appears to have secured his masculine status. The scholarly

authority he achieved by focussing his personal anecdotes and cultural commentary

through the lens of his bookishness was further translated into masculine authority.

Whether or not Carlyle's extreme manliness was the result of 'one man's' response

to his 'personal circumstances', as Norma Clarke suggests, by the 1840s he was

writing for a readership that 'rapidly seized on […] a construction of the literary

world that explicitly excluded women from the definition'.[14] The male reader had

been accepted as the most authoritative source of political, cultural, and scientific

knowledge.

    This, in turn, impacted on the degree to which authorship was considered a

respectable profession. If, as Salmon argues, the distinction between the literary

'spirit' of Dickens' and Scott's periods is difficult to pinpoint, 'by the 1850s,' at

least, 'the professional author could no longer easily be dismissed as a vulgar

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[11] See Clarke, p. 35.
[12] T. F. Dibdin, *Reminiscences of a Literary Life*, 2 vols (London: John Major, 1836), II, 357, 361;
Thomas De Quincey, *The Works of Thomas De Quincey*, gen. ed. Grevel Lindop, 21 vols (London:
Pickering and Chatto, 2000-2003), III, 48; S. T. Coleridge, *On the Constitution of Church and State*,
ed. John Colmer, in *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, gen. ed. Kathleen Coburn, in
16 parts (London: Routledge, 1969-2002), X, 43.
[13] Egeland, p. 44; Christ, pp. 21, 23, 28.
[14] Clarke, pp. 42, 41.

tradesman'.[15] The tensions that, in Barton Swaim's words, saw reviewers in the 1820s advocating a 'professional *disposition*' at the same time that they 'ridicul[ed] Romantic writers by recourse to the language of professionalism', were, to some extent, resolved, allowing for a professional body of authors to emerge.[16] As mentioned in my Introduction, the number of self-identifying professional authors increased rapidly after 1830, while 'the 1861 census was the first to recognise authorship as a distinct professional grouping'.[17] The 'mere author' – to use Hazlitt's oft repeated term for an 'author by profession' – is, by the mid-century, less the 'dull, illiterate, poor creature[]' of 1826 and might instead be 'our most important modern person' ('Hero as Man of Letters', p. 251).[18] The spread of and improvements to mechanised forms of printing and paper production forced a more open acknowledgment of the relationship between authorship and commercialism, or market forces.[19] This, in turn, made it easier to argue for the man of letters' right to 'find place and subsistence by what the world would please to give him' for 'speaking forth the inspiration that was in him by Printed Books' ('Hero as Man of Letters', pp. 249-50). His heroism was no longer mutually exclusive with his professional and commercial aims.

Also missing from Carlyle's representation is the connection between the man of letters and bibliomania, the cultural prominence of which had been on the wane since the late 1820s. While for writers such as Hazlitt and Hunt, the advent of printing had always been associated with social and political reform – civilisation's

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[15] Salmon, pp. 210-213.

[16] Barton Swaim, *Scottish Men of Letters and the New Public Sphere, 1802-1834* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2009), pp. 110-111.

[17] Salmon, p. 6; see also, Clifford Siskin, *The Work of Writing* (Baltimore: John Hopkins, 1998), p. 108.

[18] William Hazlitt, 'On the Conversation of Lords', in *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed.. P. P. Howe, 21 vols (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1932), XVII, 162-175 (pp. 169, 168).

[19] See William R. McKelvy, '"This Enormous Contagion of Paper and Print": Making Literary History in the Age of Steam', in *Bookish Histories*, pp. 61-84; Cronin, p. 259.

future – the bookman of the Romantic period was often also interested in the past of the 'Printed Book'. Carlyle's modern hero departs from the antiquarian men of letters described by D'Israeli, or embodied by Scott, Dibdin, and Lamb (particularly in his Elian aspect). 'A generation later,' James Raven writes, 'Victorian bookmen penned nostalgic memoirs of the golden age of the Georgian bookseller and of the ancient haunts of book collectors and antiquarians'.[20] Bibliophilia, as Leah Price's work on Victorian bookishness suggests, was becoming a less common characteristic of the writing-reading subject.[21] Yet, if Carlyle's man of letters had shed his bibliomaniacal aspect, he had not entirely shed his bookishness.

> The Hero as *Man of Letters*, again, of which class we are to speak today, is altogether a product of these new ages; and so long as the wondrous art of *Writing*, or of Ready-writing which we call *Printing*, subsists, he may be expected to continue […] He is new, I say; he has hardly lasted above a century in the world yet. Never, till about a hundred years ago, was there seen any figure of a Great Soul living apart in that anomalous manner; endeavouring to speak forth the inspiration that was in him by Printed Books.
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> ('Hero as Man of Letters', pp. 249-50)

The miraculous 'Ready-writing' technologies available in 1840 were significantly in advance of those available even a decade before. Despite being associated with these 'altogether new' modes of textual production, Carlyle's man of letters cannot escape the historicity of his chosen medium: 'In Books lies the soul of the whole Past Time; the articulate audible voice of the Past, when the body and material substance of it

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[20] James Raven, *The Business of Books: Booksellers and the English Book Trade 1450-1850* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 321.

[21] Leah Price, *How to Do Things with Books in Victorian Britain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).

has altogether vanished like a dream' (p. 258). The man of letters continues to transcend time. Like De Quincey's Dark Interpreter, who reveals the future in the voice of the past (*WDQ*, XV, 186), he 'speak[s] forth the inspiration that was in him by Printed Books' and is, in this way, able to preach 'to all men in all times and places?' (p. 258), 'ruling (for this is what he does), from his grave, after death,' (p. 250). In 1840 then, the man of letters still 'occupies an intermediate station': between readers and writers; between the material and the immaterial; between commercial and artistic forms of production; between the living and the dead.[22] Like 'the ghosts of Homer's heroes' in Hazlitt's 'On the Literary Character' (1817), Scott's and Hogg's author-corpses, Coleridge's bibliographical 'Relics', or the 'master-spirits' of Dibdin's deceased bibliomaniacs, he exists in 'a refined, spiritual, disembodied state' (*CWWH*, XII, 135).[23] The mass of bibliophilic writing that appeared in the early nineteenth century brought this indeterminacy to the fore of discussions of authorship. For the next generation of writers, it cemented and made essential the connection between the figure of the author and 'Books. The chosen possession of men'.

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[22] D'Israeli, *The Literary Character*, II, 204.

[23] S. T. Coleridge, *Marginalia*, ed.. George Whalley and H. J. Jackson, 6 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980-2001), I, 13, p. 372: in *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, gen. ed. Kathleen Coburn, in 16 parts (London: Routledge, 1969-2002), part 12; T. F. Dibdin, *Reminiscences of a Literary Life*, 2 vols (London: John Major, 1836), I, 440.

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