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Affects of War: Sovereignty and Violence in
Wordsworth, Coleridge, Hazlitt,
And De Quincey

By

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Comparative Literature

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By

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M.A. University of Western Ontario, 2009
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An abstract of
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Abstract

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And De Quincey
By Catherene Ngoh

“Affects of War: Sovereignty and Violence in Wordsworth, Coleridge, Hazlitt, and De Quincey” intervenes in recent romantic scholarship that reads romantic writing as a wartime literature and an elaboration of Britain’s role in an already global world. Tracing war’s displacements through debates concerning national and individual sovereignty, I take up British Romanticism as a counter-history of the Napoleonic wars, and offer previously unexplored entries to this history through texts that address the death penalty, hospitality, race, and addiction. Beginning with Wordsworth’s claim in his treatise *The Convention of Cintra* that the significance of the ongoing Peninsular War is not so much expressed in events themselves as in the peculiar “intensity” of the war and “combinations of violence” deployed, my chapters take up different kinds of wartime violence as a nexus for the production of subjectivities and their political configurations in wartime Britain.

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Introduction

Orientations

My dissertation examines the representation of war in nautical poems, oriental romances, and political essays of Romanticism in order to call attention to the bodies, sensibilities, and structures of feeling associated with modern warfare. Raymond Williams describes structures of feeling as follows:

> There are cases where the structure of feeling…tangible in a particular set of works is undoubtedly an articulation of an area of experience which lies beyond them. This is especially evident at those specific and historically definable moments when very new work produces a sudden shock of recognition. What must be happening on these occasions is that an experience which is really very wide suddenly finds a semantic figure which articulates it…On the other hand, a dominant set of forms or conventions—and in that sense structures of feeling—can represent a profound blockage…There are historical experiences which never do find their semantic figures at all. (164-165)

What Williams calls "structure" may be helpfully rendered as a nexus or network that provides extension or physical dimension to intensive feelings. Such structures may encompass formalized entities: cultural productions, social experiences, political institutions, but they also include the less tangible "characteristic elements of impulse, restraint, and tone; specifically affective elements of consciousness and relationships: not feeling against thought, but thought as felt and feeling as thought" (132). While formalized experience provides us with a history of emotions as secure objects of knowledge, I am more interested in pursuing, like Williams, the formative *processes* that constitute the broad expanse of affective life, to discover the "particular

linkages and particular emphases and suppressions" that connect the individual to the world around her, and which in some cases, may even precede her (134).

I am compelled finally to ask if these affective structures necessarily imply a conscious subject, and to what extent anthropomorphism animates the poetics of works, such as Wordsworth's *Salisbury Plain*, where the landscape of war is the site of affective currency. Indeed, I ask with Rei Terada: What is the status of emotions after the death of the subject? Since William's coinage of the phrase "structures of feeling" in the mid-1950s, much has happened in the field of affect studies and the "affective turn" in literary studies to move the study and critique of "feeling" beyond William's Marxist critique. That said, much that has taken place allows us to preserve some of the central tenets of his work that ought to remain important us, insofar as Williams' "structures of feeling" set out to grasp a history of the present, to capture individual and social experiences as a living and interrelated continuity, that continue to be "in process" (132).

To this end, I read "structures of feelings" through Deleuze's concept of intensity to question, as Mary Beth Mader does, whether affects are sufficiently and ultimately best understood in thoroughly quantitative or even structural terms.[1] To understand the process of an affect's intensification or the qualitative shifts in intensive life, we may be better served by re-focalizing our study of affects around the magnitude of a feeling, its flow and direction, its intensification, amplification, diminution, and transitioning into different forms, to focalize on its speeds and intensities rather than its content. Romantic literature's reflection on the work of sense and sensibility is, I believe, an important resource for such a study.

[1] I am citing Mader's manuscript for "Whence Intensity? Deleuze and the Revival of a Concept," presented at the Mellon Sawyer Seminar on the Affects, Emory 2014.

In attending thus to the affects of war, my dissertation intervenes in recent romantic scholarship that reads romantic writing as a wartime literature and an elaboration of Britain's role in an already global world. Tracing war's displacements through debates concerning national and individual sovereignty, I take up British Romanticism as a counter-history of the Napoleonic wars, and offer previously unexplored entries to this history through texts that address the death penalty, hospitality, race, and addiction. Beginning with Wordsworth's claim in his treatise *The Convention of Cintra* that the significance of the ongoing Peninsular War is not so much expressed in events themselves as in the peculiar "intensity" of the war and "combinations of malevolence" deployed, my chapters take up different kinds of wartime violence as a nexus for the production of subjectivities and their political configurations in wartime Britain (114; 198).[2]

As early as 1814, with the publication of Hazlitt's "On the Late War," it seems that the language already exists to describe the program of "extermination," which, if it was not fully realized in the nineteenth century for lack of the technologies, certainly characterized the military policies of post-Napoleonic Europe (4.68). But the policies of "extirpation" were not Napoleon's alone: for Hazlitt, it is counter-revolutionary leaders in Britain who are the "systematic patrons of eternal war;" it is part of the Pitt government's policy to raise war to the level of a political principle, to make war the continuation of politics by other means (cf. Clausewitz, 68-9). Diverging from the old rivalry between France and England, the late war seems to take no prisoners. It is not motivated by victory or trade and political advantage of either side per se, but

[2] Let us hear no more of the little dependence to be had in war upon voluntary service. The things, with which we are primarily and mainly concerned, are inward passions; and not outward arrangements. These latter may be given at any time; when the parts, to be put together, are in readiness. Hatred and love, and each in its intensity, and pride (passions which, existing in the heart of a Nation, are inseparable from hope)—these elements being in constant preparation—enthusiasm will break out from them, or coalesce with them, upon the summons of a moment (198).

prepared in “the necessity of destroying France, or being ourselves destroyed in the attempt” (68):

> It was not a war of mercantile advantage, or a trial of strength between two countries, which must be decided by the turns of events, by the probable calculation of loss and profit, but *a war against opinion, which/[sic]could, therefore, never cease, but with the extirpation of that opinion. Hence there could be neither safety, nor honor, nor justice, in any terms of peace with the French government, because, by the supposition, it was not with its power or its conduct, but with its existence, that we were at war* (69 italics mine).

War, pursued by Pitt conservatives schooled in the principles of Burke, is being fought on behalf of continuity and tradition. Such confounding of war and conservativism, violence and preservation, meant that it was difficult to apply a rational calculus of loss and traditional conventions of war. It is not clear that death even enters the equation in a war against opinion, which seems to have lost its what the political theorist Carl Schmitt calls “existential meaning” (33). As Schmitt shows in his *The Concept of the Political* to make war the instrument of politics by fighting a war of opinions or ideology is, in the final sense, to fight a war in which the death of the enemy is no longer the limitation by which war would cease. Schmitt writes, “[s]uch a war is necessarily unusually intense and inhuman because, by transcending the limits of the political framework, it simultaneously degrades the enemy into moral and other categories and if forced to make of him a monster that must not only be defeated but also utterly destroyed. In other words, he is an enemy who no longer must be compelled to retreat into his borders only” (36). For Hazlitt, the Pitt government's war on Revolution, in the form of a war on Napoleon, amounts to the same politicization of war and carries the same logical consequences of "extermination" or

"extirpation," in which the existence of an idea (of freedom, of right, and even of peace) takes precedence over existence itself. Thus, Hazlitt claims:

> As the war with them was a war of extermination, so peace, not to fix a lasting stigma on their school and principles, must be a peace of extermination (68).

On this point, Hazlitt is quite close to Kant's insight in "Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch" (1795): For Kant, the condition of possibility of thinking perpetual peace is the outcome of a constellation of historical conditions that are only beginning to emerge at the end of the eighteenth century, particularly with the spread of republicanism as a political principle. This republicanism sought to decentralize power, by politicizing the people on the one hand, and by separating executive and legislative functions on the other. Only on the premise of decentralized power can the notion of federalism, Kant infers, flourish; only through republican institutions can the idea of federalism, or a hospitable relation among nations beyond territorial nationhood, arise. Moral progress, cosmopolitan ideals and commercial exchange would take the place of war. But inasmuch as peace is divided into "right" and "wrong" types, federalism, too, appears similarly divided for Kant (104). The "right" kind of federalism is not a political entity that acquires or exercises power (the way states do) and claims to preserve the sovereignty of each state even as it protects the rights and freedom of the whole. The "wrong" kind of federalism turns the question of right into the right to go to war or the production of criteria that justifies one's going to war; into the business of making just war or making war right, turning the venture of peace into one that "ends in the graveyard of freedom," as some commentators have pointed out.

Theoretical Considerations

This dissertation draws on the insights of work by Mary Favret, Lily Gurton-Wachter, and Jan Mieszkowski, whose study of wartime Romanticism, from the vantage of the everyday, the militarization of attention, and the spectatorial logic of modern warfare have all convinced me of the productiveness of an *affective* approach to understanding the wars that loomed over the aesthetic production of the Romantic period. Refocalizing the experience of war to include the perspectives of those at home, of those who experience war without having directly engaged in battle, the studies above demonstrate the totality of—if not war itself—then of the pervasiveness of the state of war extending into all the domains of civil life and peacetime. While past scholarship has had recourse to a notion of the trauma that appears rooted in an experience of the sublime, in the disjunct between representation and feeling, in which one is compelled to repeat an experience one does not know, recent studies on romantic wars have sought, instead, to move away from the analysis of the sublime by turning to the study of wartime affects outside of the purely representational problems that it poses.

By attending to other affective dimensions of war, recent scholarship has sought a fuller account of wartime experience filled with fear, anticipation, skepticism, sentimentalism and, above all, a different relation to time. Emotions such as fear materialize as a structure with a historical specificity, borne out partly by the proliferation of wartime broadsides and pamphlets fomenting fears of an imminent invasion of the British Isles by French troops throughout the 1790s; or the legal debates of the suspension of *habeas corpus* that occurred in the wake of such fears; or the increased fortification of the southern English coast. However, as Gurton-Wachter shows, the policies and institutions of fear were themselves part of a culture of alarmism exemplified in Coleridge's *Fear in Solitude, written in April 1798 during the Alarms of an*

Invasion and Cowper's *The Needless Alarm: A Tale* (1798), among other works reflecting the same motif (59-83). The alarm figures as a kind of "semantic figure" (to borrow again from Raymond Williams) that points to the "thickening" of a social experience; it is a specific structure of fear that emphatically responds to the erosion of the sovereignty and security of nations in an age of emerging print media and information transfer. Fear was not only an incidental part of wartime experience—a private or idiosyncratic feeling—but connected to the formation of institutions and social relations that arose to manage what is essentially a social experience.

Indeed, Coleridge's *Fear in Solitude, written in April 1798 during the Alarms of an Invasion* functions as something of a semantic figure appearing in nearly every study on the affective dimension of war. Not only does the poem foreground the primacy of the affective experience of war, but its dating of fear, turning fear into an event, appears to point to a profound link between affect and temporality. As Favret points out, citing Brian Massumi, the "correspondence" between affect and temporality is a strong one, and "increasingly charged in the modern apprehension of war" (Favret 58). Indeed, the approach to war through the affects has provided some with a means of telling the story of war through a kind of history of emotions that traces how war has shifted our very ability to perceive or attend to the "realities" of war, measured as they often are by the distance and proximity, and seemingly self-evident categories such as friend and foe. The history of battle is also, as Paul Virillio argues, the history of changing fields of perception" (5).[3] In Mieszkowski's *Watching War*, for example, sight—along with the questions of seeing and not seeing, of witnessing, spectatorship, passive or active participation—becomes embroiled in history of British militarism in the age of Napoleon and,

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[3] See Virilio, 1989.

long after that in the making of a society of surveillance; in Gurton-Wachter, hearing (and the metaphorics of hearing) become the sense through which the trauma of war—like a death knell—is transmitted.[4]

The sense of a "wartime" seems one of the most compelling features of affective analysis of war, giving rise to significant re-conceptions of temporality and especially wartime temporality. Here again, the figure of the alarm seems a galvanizing image for the attempts seeking to capture the temporal experience under wartime conditions, the sense of urgency and anticipation felt in each tick of the clock, the experience of the interval or the in-betweenness of time. Favret's *War at a Distance: Romanticism and the Making of Modern Wartime* explains "how time serves as a medium not just for understanding but also for unsettling understanding, for making war felt" (Favret 54).[5] Wartime breaks away from the homogenous flow of time, which Walter Benjamin calls "empty time"—upon which the everyday sinks into an uncomplicated historicism that affirms *only* the progress of history (XIII, XIV, 260-261). Filled with lapses, stillness, and affective charge wartime not only allows us to tell a different story about war, but about time itself as an intensive experience that exceeds the linear structure of historicism.[6] In his reconsideration of Freudian war neurosis in *Tense Future* (2015), Paul K. Saint-Amour suggests that the temporality of total wars consists in a kind of a *pre*-traumatic stress syndrome, a mode of anticipation that responds to a state of war that is always present and

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[4] In her exemplary reading of Cowper, "The sound of war…is dying by the time it reaches the poet on his secure summit, arriving in the weakened, fading form and no longer carrying the threat or alarm of the noisy world. And yet, given the wartime context, we ought to consider hearing in the 'dying sound' an echo of the sound *of* dying, the sound of war that grieves and pains, even if it does not immediately alarm" (70).

[5] See Favret's notion of the "meantime" of war (69).

[6] Benjamin "Theses on the Philosophy of History": "Historicism justifiably culminates in universal history. Nowhere does the materialist writing of history distance itself from it more clearly than in terms of method. The former has no theoretical armature. Its method is additive: it offers a mass of facts, in order to fill up a homogenous and empty time" (XVII, 262).

imminent, an affective relation to a potentially oncoming rather than an already realized catastrophe (8). As Saint-Amour eloquently puts it, time itself has materialized as a weapon of modern warfare and "a new medium for delivering injury" (Saint-Amour 7).

Locating sensibility and body as crucial battlegrounds in modern warfare, recent inquiries into the affects of war implicate our understanding of the thinkable, knowable, and representable in war, radically transforming our capacity to attend to the world in the first place. Thus, affects present us with emotional indices that mark significant shifts in our institutions and attitudes about war. Perhaps more significantly, however, they also allow us to trace the converse: what Mieszkowski calls the "'immaterial' dimensions of the perceptual fields" (8). Consequently, by transforming the temporal and representation logic of war, they also allow us to re-think the way we conceptualize war as an event: where is war if its effects are not to be read as signs upon body and as a function of sensibilities?

While concerns of temporality will certainly continue to inform my thinking in the chapters below, I want also to put forward different avenues of inquiry. In the first place, while they function as points of entry in my analysis of wartime affects, I am less interested in specific emotions or indexes of feelings, and by extension in a history of emotions, than affect in the Deleuzian sense, in which the "affect" is a new element in an unknown assemblage, an intensity whose augmentation or diminishment allows us to uproot emotion from its content and from the presence of a subject.[7] I am especially interested in the new of socio-, political, and economic

[7] See Deleuze (258-261). I am not providing an exhaustive outline of Deleuze's views on affect, but one that is pertinent for my analysis. For Massumi's translation, in which he associates affect with capacity to act, see his notes on "affect/affection": "Neither word denotes a personal feeling (*sentiment* in Deleuze and Guattari). *L'affect* (Spinoza's *affectus*) is an ability to affect and be affected. It is a personal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implying an augmentation or diminution in that body's capacity to act. *L'affection* (Spinza's *affectio*) is each such state considered as an encounter between the affected body and a second, affecting, body (with body taken in its broadest possible sense to include 'mental' or ideal bodies") (xvi).

assemblages fostered in wartime and the affects arising out of these, which may be more accurately termed a war-feeling, a feeling or a sensibility for war than any notion of fear, paranoia, or xenophobia which are only entry points. While I am attuned to the importance of affect as an area of study within romanticism, my broader aim is to outline possible dialogues between romantic and contemporary affect studies.

An important corollary of my investigation below is to consider how wars, and especially large-scale wars, contribute to the global imaginary: how do total wars change the way we think about relations of interdependency and the sustainability or efficacy of national borders? In some cases, such as we will see in Wordsworth's *Adventures on Salisbury Plain*, the trauma of war is itself depicted as a mode of transport and thus, a mode of "space/time compression" that, while not evidence of globalization in its advanced stages, is, however, an indication of a world that is brought smaller and made traversable by the experience of war (Bauman 2).[8] In Coleridge's *Fears in Solitude*, the sense of global interdependences is felt in anticipating the blowback from England's slave trade in the threat to the "internal integrity" of the nation, rendering it vulnerable to invasion, as Evan Gottlieb suggests (2).Then again, has war itself been a vehicle of global progress or the consolidation of a global order, perhaps even the condition of a perpetual and universal peace: a war to end all wars? Furthermore, how, and to what extent, did Romantic aesthetics contribute a notion of the globe as a vast, un- or delimited terrain that is both unknown and yet primed for colonial conquest? What did it imagine of this globality differently in the age of Revolution than in the age of British imperialism less than a century later?

[8] While the notion of globality or globalism may evoke the development of global capitalism associated with modern globalization, like Evan Gottlieb, I want to resist for a moment the teleological necessity of this conclusion, not in order to deny that historical narrative, which finds the nineteenth-century and its culmination in Empire as a precondition or a precursor to capitalism. Rather I want to allow the events or possibilities to emerge that have been obscured by this historical narrative: how were political economies and global relations articulated before the ascendency of capital and the organization of world and labor according to the profit-making.

To this end, the dissertation is bookended by the Napoleonic Wars on the Continent (in Portugal and Spain) and the two Opium Wars with China in the mid-nineteenth century, taking into account the rise of Britain as a military power and its transition into a maritime empire. The scholarship on England's ascendency as a maritime power is extensive.[9] But I refer readers to Carl Schmitt's account in *The Nomos of the Earth in the International Law of the Jus Publicum Europaeum* of England's transition into a new mode of colonial and maritime conquest propelled into a "world history," that puts behind the old European order for something quite new: a new "freedom" and a global order exerted over the seas, over the power of movement, of transporting populations and commodities over the vast body of waters owned by no one in particular, and of new economic, cultural, and political values produced through such conditions of movement, speed, and exchange. The question then is not only what the transition into a "maritime existence," as Schmitt calls it, did for Britain, what new form of political institution, economies, or labor it gave rise to, but also what structure of feelings and affective economy did it give rise to? The prevalence of the ocean, of the nautical, of seamen, mariners and the ship as a motif or trope in Romanticism may be read as a semantic figure for a sense, barely formalized, of Britain's relation to the rest of the world, expressed in the tales of hospitality, disorientation, and oriental fascination present in the works of Coleridge and De Quincey.

In Romanticism, the maritime conjures a decidedly different image of nature than those offered the romantic pastoral, signifying a yet more complex ramification of the natural cycles. In Wordsworth, for example, the pastoral and its association with the cycles of seasons, with the cycles of change and restoration, typically signify an immutability that seeks to guarantee the return to stable order of things that is at once originary and teleological. Even so, the aqueous

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[9] See for example Duffy's *Soldiers, Sugar, and Seapower.*

quality of some Wordsworth pastoral poems, including the Salisbury Plain poems, appears to register the progressive erosion of territoriality and of any life dependent on such territorial sovereignty.

As William Wimsatt observes of Wordsworth's "Immortality Ode," the return to an originary childhood is precisely complicated by its analogy to the sea: "Hence, in a season of calm weather,/Though inland far we be,/ Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea/Which brought us hither,/Can in a moment travel thither,/ And see Children sport upon the shore,/And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore" ('There was a Time' 164-170).[10] The ebb and flow of memory transports us back to a lost time that we can only access as a distant image. It is distance, not identity that carries our search for lost time and separates us finally from the Children sporting upon the shore. Elsewhere in *The Prelude*, the revolutions in nature are an analogue for the revolution in France: "'The horse is taught his manage, and the wind/Of heaven wheels round and treads in his own steps,/Year follows year, the tide returns again,/ Day follows day, all things have a second birth;/ The earthquake is not satisfied at once'" (X.70-74). The citation of Shakespeare's *As you Like It* implicates the poetic voice in the structure of repetition, in which the very act of restoration and repetition brings about redoubled violence and destruction. Thus, in *The Prelude*, "The Mariner who sails the roaring sea/Through storm and darkness," becomes the double embodiment of loss and navigation, and subsequently, the struggle between life and an inhospitable nature, a Coleridgean "Life-In-Death," as it were (XIII 154). He is one of the "Wanderers of the Earth," but also "like a guide into eternity,/At least to things unknown and without bound" (XII 150-156). As a modern response to the epic-genre of

[10] Wimsatt writes: "The question for the analyst of structure is: Why are the children found on the seashore? In what way do they add to the solemnity or mystery of the sea?...The answer is that they are not strictly parts of the traveler-space vehicle, but of the soul age-time tenor, attracted over, from tenor to vehicle. The travelers looking back both in space and time see themselves as children on the shore, as if just born like Venus from the foam" (35).

the ancient Odyssey, the romantic depiction of the sea clearly stages its difference by complicating the structure of return. The maritime represents the loss as an absolute risk of nature, an exposure to death and otherness.

Chapter Summaries

My first chapter attempts to situate Wordsworth as a poet of war whose writings present consistent evidence of the growing militarism of the age of Napoleon, culminating in a convergence between military and political functions, which in my analysis of Wordsworth's *The Convention of Cintra*, I have called "military exceptionalism." Of particular interest is the "universal military spirit" Wordsworth identities, not only with Napoleon but which, he argues, has imbued the British military up to its highest-ranking officers and led to the compromise of its war policies during the Peninsula War. Through the figures of the "discharged" soldier (from Wordsworth's manuscripts and *The Prelude*) as well as his early *Adventures on Salisbury Plain)* and the guerrilla in his poems on the Iberian War (from here to be referred to as "the Iberian poems"), I consider how his writings explore the *universality* of the military spirit and how it manifests differently for those inhabiting the periphery of the fiscal military state.

In the latter part of the chapter, I demonstrate how Wordsworth consistently undermines the notion of war as a conflict of nations in his writings on the Peninsular War. Deconstructing war in an age of burgeoning total warfare, Wordsworth's writings show how the Napoleonic wars were, in fact, co-extensive with local resistance, how dispersed or guerrilla fighting were produced as responses to the formalization and mass expansion of war. Thus, while it has been taken for granted that Napoleonic era serves as the origin of what would later be termed "total war," what the treatise on the Convention of Cintra foregrounds is the proliferation of local resistances, little wars, and irregular fighting that were very much a product of the expansion of

war in the nineteenth-century Europe. Thus, while romanticism has been pressed as a witness to modern war efforts, Cintra questions the continuity between the total wars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It invites us to re-examine the historical claims or grand narratives about the emergence of total war. Echoing and developing some of the central motifs of Cintra, the Iberian poems provide us a glimpse into the fracturing of total war, perhaps even at its height or most intensive point, when war itself becomes subterranean, borderless, without territory, invisible, and dispersed.

A crucial implication under consideration in the chapter is thus the experience of dislocation in war—not merely of peoples and culture, but also the dis-location of borders and spaces and finally the dislocation of war, which must be attended by the change in the experience of war and its meaning. Here, it may be useful to remember Steven Miller, who follows Etienne Balibar in suggesting that "the signal act of war would be an attack upon the parameters of war itself…" and further that, "The most warlike act is to unilaterally to change the definition of war," that is to say, to change how the convention of war is decided or how the game of war is played (27). War's violence for Wordsworth lies precisely in its negation of place by space, and its turning space itself into an uninhabitable no-place. In Wordsworth's Salisbury Plain poems this dislocation is significantly expressed as de-territorialization that re-codifies the pastoral and loco-descriptive poem, over-writing the Romantic landscape as a site of war. Wordsworth's naturalism may, in this sense, be read through the lens or as a product of nineteenth-century warfare and militarism. In this way, Salisbury Plain and its *warscape*s allow us to consider the intensive quality that does not merely apply to temporality or wartime, but also to space as a form of an affective landscape.

My second chapter steps away momentarily from the analysis war to consider, from another angle, the role of hospitality in some of what I call Coleridge's hospitality poems (*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, Christabel, This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison*). In doing so, I examine hospitality as a borderline concept, denoting the collapsible borders between self and other, out of which affects such as "fear," cruelty," and "panic" derive. Thus, the notion of hospitality offers insight into the conception of the figure of the stranger, and as James Mulvhill points out in the context of the invasion alarms, the figure of the stranger within. In *Christabel*, a poem about a breach of security, the hostess's hospitality to Geraldine, a stranger whom she meets outside the walls of her castle, opens up the experience of security to something quite beyond fear and articulable only as fantasy of complicity, of lesbian seduction that serves as a threat to overthrow the law of the father.

Beginning with *Rime*, I note that Coleridge's vision of the high seas presents a somewhat different vision of the oceanic than that the commercial maritime, with which it intersects and overlaps. As Debbie Lee points Coleridge's poem has frequently been interpreted, "as a poem about the slave trade by writers who, in the tradition of John Livingstone Lowes, contextualize the poem's major tropes using Coleridge's material concern with travel literature, colonialism, and the slave trade" (677).[11] The corruption from elsewhere, and even *of* elsewhere, had been carried on land by the Mariner on his return from his sea voyage. And yet, the ocean remains an *inhospitable nature* antithetical to the laws and industry of man, suggesting that we are *neither* included in *nor* excluded from its laws of hospitality. It is the structure of the *neither…nor,* that is, the structure of suspension and exception, as well as the experience of borders that concern me in this chapter. Specifically, I am interested in Coleridge's use of the oceanic metaphor as a

[11] For a similar reading, see also Patrick Keane's *Coleridge's Submerged Politics.*

way of illustrating the suspensive realm in which the laws of nation and nature are inoperative; in which the difference between life and death hangs in the balance, and the purposes of nature and man are crossed. Its story about an imaginary ship that becomes an account of an ecological-economical poetic system in which life is managed, sustained, preserved, negotiated, and wagered by the allegorical character of "Life-in-Death."

While the concept of hospitality has proven useful in underscoring and highlighting the instabilities of the borders that sperate Britain from the rest of the world, its peculiar gendering in *Christabel* and *This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison* seems to put limitations on what is after all a concept of limits. I devote the final section of the chapter to the consideration the role of femininity in the hospitality poems, to examine their erasure from or their exclusion to the margin of the text on the one hand, and the stifling scenes of domesticity that they occupy, that Coleridge seems to associate with them. I maintain that the text's inscription of femininity puts additional pressures on the suspended conventions of hospitality in these texts.

My third chapter considers the phenomenon of war through a number of poetic figures of sovereignty and war in Hazlitt's writings, particularly Coriolanus and Napoleon. It argues that for Hazlitt war and violence are the inevitable conclusions of sovereignty, defined as the principle of individuation by which states constitute themselves as autonomous in relation to other autonomous states. The first part of my chapter returns to Hazlitt's critique of self-interest in his *Essay on the Principles of Human Action* and "Self-Love and Benevolence," where he argues that the "interest" that we "project" outwards (into the world of action, pleasure, and even politics) is routed through the imagination—a faculty which in Hazlitt's writings reveals the divided nature of our interest and, indeed, our selves. By next considering the figures of sovereignty that appear in Hazlitt's writings on poetry and the imagination, my chapter examines

his criticism of the connection between poetry and sovereignty. I show that sovereignty—typically understood as a theological, political, and later, juridical concept—is, for Hazlitt, an aesthetic problem that is rooted in the imagination. Functioning doubly as a source of power and a vehicle of critique, Hazlitt's concept of the imagination allows us to see how Romantic poetry is implicated in the production of power and a broad range of issues concerning British sovereignty, including the death penalty, the English monarchy, and the ascendency of the Napoleonic Empire.

In addition, I develop Hazlitt's conception of poetic sovereignty and its implications alongside other theories and criticisms of sovereignty, particularly those of Carl Schmitt, Eric Santner, and Roberto Esposito. My interest in bringing these thinkers together with Hazlitt is to highlight Hazlitt's own recourse to a notion of the exception in his writings, which is similarly interested in the moments of crisis within politics that constitute political rule. In particular, Hazlitt insists on the privileged role of the imagination not only in the sphere of poetry, but also in the creation of political hierarchy and, above all, the political exception that justifies the political rule. And yet, Hazlitt's reservations about poetry and its exceptionalism appear at odds with his valorization of Napoleon as *the* preeminent figure of exception. By reading Hazlitt against himself, I argue that Hazlitt's critique of the poetics of exception allows us to understand the exception as an event whose telos is not prescribed in politics, that is, an event of poetry as well as politics, or an event occurring in poetry in such a way that brings politics to its limit, engendering the possibility of an exception to sovereignty itself. Hazlitt sees Napoleon as an exception to the crown, a repetition of monarchy that would end and foreclose the possibility of all other monarchies, and ultimately, foreclose the possibility of an auto-telic monarch.

My final chapter, “De Quincey and the Global Nineteenth Century,” examines the notion of globality adumbrated in his *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* and De Quincey’s essays on the Opium Wars and the British colonizing of Ceylon. By reading *Confessions* alongside “The Opium Question with China in 1840,” “The Chinese Question in 1857,” it seeks to consolidate of a vision of globality that emerged out of the fraught relations between Britain and China, to understand the anxieties around England’s dominance of the seas, outstripping its rivals in its rise as a world-historical power.

While I am interested the role that the Opium Wars play in advancing British Empire, this consideration is secondly to illustrating the sense of globality emerging out of the fraught relations between Britain and China, which is expressed in De Quincey’s incontrovertible xenophobia, but also reflected more ambiguously in the metaphors of liquidity, water and oceanic motifs in his *Confessions* and the sequel to it *Suspiria de Profundis.* Moreover, De Quincey’s writings show how the affects of a rootlessness and borderlessness are routed through an imperial will to map, conquer, and divide—that is associated with the ocean as the privileged site of intense commercial and military activity. The figure of the ocean offer a directive for the way we think about affect as a flow that exceeds the borders of the nation state, presenting us continually with the occasion for our ethical relation with an Other. What these motifs and metaphors allow us to consider is not feelings in their nameable or established form, but affective relations that allow us to see xenophobia as a structure of feeling that is rooted, among many things, in the geopolitics of imperialism as well as a rather long literary and philosophical tradition of the eighteenth century in which the "Mandarin" figures, as Eric Hayot has shown, as the limit case of the human.

Of special interest, in this chapter is the notion of debt or indebtedness which seems to hold together many of the thematic strands of De Quincey's autobiographic writings at the same time that it relates them to the role of Britain's debt economy in the contraband trade of opium as well as Chinese tea. In other words, debt appears as something of a semantic figure within *Confessions* and *Suspiria* that allows it to operate as an economic concept within an inherently affective economy. To take or give credit, to be in debt or to discharge it: these are the *modus operandi* of the text, the terms by which De Quincey articulates his authorship, his role as a poet of modernity, his mastery over writing and language that he does not possess. The prevalence of language of economy suggests a parallel effort to conceptualize literary and affective production in terms of an economy or commodity form, raising finally the question of how we are to read De Quincey's textual production in the first place: how effective are his digressive passages, postulations, encyclopedism, multilingualism in shoring up his Britishness and securing up his ambition as a poet of the empire, or are they responses—albeit defensive—to the sense of Britain's entanglement with the rest of the world as something that it cannot entirely master.

Reflections

Beginning graduate studies with an interest in the relationship between the French Revolution and European Romanticism, I became struck by the polemical distinction between war and revolution in Hannah Arendt's "On Revolution," which argues that "in contrast to revolution, the aim of war was only in rare cases bound up with the notion of freedom" (2). This defining attribute of revolutions, as being bound to ideas seemed to have emerged out of the characterization of the French Revolution as a philosophical revolution, as a revolution inspired by the ideas of the philosophes and, especially, the ideas of Rousseau.[12]

[12] See for example Rousseau's *Social Contract.*

I became interested, however, in wars that at least appeared unbounded by the ideas of freedom and progress, which paradoxically gave me the freedom to pursue their affective history, to read 'war' as an event that allows itself to be narrated through the affects it produces, through the gendering, objectification, racialization, and bestialization of bodies affected. Wars demand an affective reading or historiography in a way that revolutions, at least insofar as they are understood as ideational events, do not. They seem to demand a way of accounting for the nexus of sensibility and feelings produced by war technologies and, ultimately, the expansion of the theatre of war to include peace time and civilian life.

The focalization of my dissertation around Romantic wartime literature led me to deepen my understanding the active political role that Britain played, not merely in the French counter-revolutionary wars, but also in establishing itself as a global power in a world order beyond Europe that it had helped shaped. In the following, I discuss the wars in Spanish peninsula, the Far East, and to some extent Ceylon helped shape ideas about hospitality, sovereignty, security, class, and citizenship at home. But given time, I would have liked to give greater attention to the role of colonial West Indies (which does operate in the background to the Wordsworth chapter) and the place it occupied more generally in the Romantic imaginary. Furthermore, the slave trade constitutes one the earliest example of mass oceanic and global migration, and would have provided another avenue of inquiry. But the scope of such an inquiry on the transatlantic slave trade, not to mention the existent scholarship and the rich fields that it draws on, would have been beyond the ken of the dissertation as it stands. In a future work, I would like to return to Hazlitt's mediation on the death penalty, in which a reference to the Middle-Passage, reminiscent of the *Zong* massacre, appears as if to suggest a link between the practice of slavery and the death penalty, which I look forward to reading in light of his "On Reason and Imagination,"

Coleridge's statements on the slave trade, and *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African*.

In my revision of the dissertation into a book manuscript, I would also like to include Mary Shelley's post-apocalyptic novel *The Last Man*. Here, I am interested in the ways in which war, hospitality, and sovereignty are re-imagined by the novel's metaphor of an airborne plague, in which infection, immunity, and ecological catastrophe function as determining factors in the political relations among peoples and nations, displacing large groups of people, changing the rules of war and enmity in the novel. The "empoisoned air," in which the characters read the signs of their own deaths, not only makes visible the interconnectedness and fissures of a world brought together forcibly by war as well as colonial expansion; it also makes visible the interest in bodies and their race, gender, subsistence and environment as political objects of the nineteenth-century imaginary. Mary Shelley's novel enables an articulation of vulnerability in Shelley's depiction of a planetary or global view of the world conceived from the ruins of cosmopolitan ideals.

CHAPTER ONE

Mapping War: From the *Salisbury Plain* Poems To *The Convention of Cintra*

The Poem as Map

Despite the recent turn in Romantic studies to find in the Napoleonic wars a broader context for understanding the central political preoccupations of nineteenth- century Britain, the significance of Wordsworth's writings on war outside of *The Prelude* remain obscure. The neglect is regrettable, not merely because it deprives us of significant insights into England's broad military expansion and colonial adventures on both sides of the Atlantic at the end of the eighteenth century, but also for the problems it raises for the interpretations of Wordsworth's writings, invested as they frequently are in explicating his poems according to the terms set out by his revolutionary politics.[13] One feels this neglect keenly in the way Wordsworth's war poems and writings have been marshaled, all too readily, as secondary evidence of his shifting political commitments to revolutionary politics. Wordsworth's writings on war would be, in this case, nothing more than an incidental footnote to his views on the French Revolution—illuminating merely as measures of Wordsworth's, and perhaps also Britain's, shifting attitudes towards the Revolution.[14]

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[13] At the end of the eighteenth century, having suffered a major defeat in the American War, England was simultaneously preparing to go to war with France, defending and in some cases attempting to expand its overseas territory in Spain, Egypt, and the West Indies, and subduing the Irish Rebellion.

[14] This line of inquiry may be found in Deidre Coleman's "Re-Living Jacobinism: Wordsworth and the *Convention of Cintra*" (1989) and continues to inform, more recently, Bainbridge and Bromwich's introduction to the bi-centennial critical edition of *Cintra* (2009). But as Mary Favret writes: "The Revolution—along with British counterrevolution—has…provided the primary axis for a long and familiar tradition of scholarship interpreting romantic texts. Focusing on the French Revolution in these ways has contributed to an emphasis on political discourse, ideological struggle, utopian possibilities, and the modern orientation toward an open future. But such a focus has not encouraged us to attend to the response—felt and unfelt—to fallen bodies" (37).

Read on their own terms, Wordsworth's writings on war present a remarkably coherent critique of modern warfare in the early part of the nineteenth century. They attest to the convergence between military and political functions in the Napoleonic era contributing to the politicization of the military or to what may be called "military exceptionalism." By "military exceptionalism" I refer to the rise of the military as an explicitly political institution, appropriating to itself the prerogative of political decision, and even deciding on war and peace. As Wordsworth astutely points out in his political treatise *The Convention of Cintra*, Napoleon's military dictatorship exemplified this mixing of military and political functions, which signaled (according to him) the rise of the military as an independent institution of the state, not only in France but in Britain as well.

The era's expansion of military power corresponds to a period of intense warfare that involved the major powers of Europe and continued for twenty-three years, until France was finally defeated in 1815 (Bell 3). It also saw a shift in the practices and objectives of warfare, of which the most significant is the mobilization of entire populations during the revolutionary war's *levée en masse* and the Peninsular War. Five million deaths were reported across Europe during the Napoleonic wars, exponentially exceeding the highest death toll of previous wars (7).[15] In the Peninsular War (1807-1814), where guerrilla tactics were first employed against an imperial army, civilians, too, became the target of war. The military strategist Carl von Clausewitz observes of modern warfare that "it is not [now] the king who wages war on the king, not an army against army, but a people against another people."[16] Clausewitz shows the

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[15] According to Bell, "More than a fifth of all the major battles fought in Europe between 1490 and 1815 took place just in the twenty-five years after 1790. Before 1790, only a handful of battles had involved more than 100,000 combatants; in 1809, the battle of Wagram, the largest yet seen in the gunpowder age, involved 300,000. Four years later, the battle of Leipzig drew 500,000, with fully 150,000 of them killed or wounded" (7).
[16] Cited in Bell (10).

expansion of war into an ever-decreasing sphere of civilian life, in which there is little to distinguish the *civitas* from the warzone, or lives that are to be protected from those that are to be put at risk.

This chapter returns to Wordsworth's writings to develop his insights on the expansion of war and the military apparatus and to examine the figure of war as an organizing principle within his poetry. It brings together a number of Wordsworth's writings on war, including the *Salisbury Plain* poems as well as the neglected treatise on the Peninsular War, *The Convention of Cintra*, in order to identify the continuities between what appears to be fundamentally opposing views on war in his early protest poems and the later works endorsing all-out war against Napoleonic France. More specifically, it is interested in the rhetorical implications of war on Wordsworth's lyrical poems, of writing war into lyrical poetry and effectively turning lyrical poetry into a form of wartime literature.

Thus, I am interested in examining war as a "rhetorical topoi," or its figuration in Wordsworth's poetic language as a literary or representational strategy.[17] Not simply an event bounded by time, national borders or territory in Wordsworth's writings, I suggest that war is integral to his aesthetic project of re-imagining a political context for the sublime and of re-mapping the Romantic pastoral. In what follows, I consider the ways in which nature and war are co-implicated in the topography of war, in the ambiguity produced by mapping nature onto war, landscape onto warscape: in war, a hilltop may signify a fortress, a site of entrapment, a place of refuge depending on the demands of the moment. War seems to demand a particular practice of reading in which bushes, swamps, and boulders are not so much coordinates in a fixed topographical order, but signs that may be plugged into another order of signification, each one

[17] For an elaboration of war as a "rhetorical topoi," see Jan Mieszkowki (1648).

an entry-way into another chain of signification, another set of possible outcomes in a shifting constellation of meaning. Wordsworth's mapping of war onto the Romantic pastoral also suggests a different relationship to nature that regards it (nature) as one of the many open and unstable co-ordinates on a map, rather than a metaphysical subtlety called upon to anchor the meaning of a poem.

The warscape of *Salisbury Plain* is characterized by a kind of borderlessness. Here, war is less a demarcation than an erasure of borders: it is a breach or a "leak" that makes it difficult to contain war or to keep it from leaking into other frames—like the vagrant characters of the poem who, in their traversals, consistently break these frames by bringing the war home to "Salisbury Plain."[18] In this way, one might think of "war" in Wordsworth's poems through the metaphor of "disease," "discharge," "leakage" and even "vagrancy." "Salisbury Plain" is not so much a fixed place or co-ordinate, but a *map* that connects what is happening over here to what is happening over there, what is past to what is future. Wordsworth's war writings are less concerned with the exact events (of war) than the creation of a virtual space—a map, as it were, that shows the extent of war, its reach into the different spheres of social, domestic, and economic life.

According to Deleuze and Guattari, a map is that which "fosters connections between fields, the removal of blockages on bodies without organs, the maximum opening of bodies without organs onto a plane of consistency. The map is open and connectable in all its

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[18] I have adapted the language of framing from Judith's Butler's *Frames of War*, which is interested both in the framing and containment of war as a means of de-limiting war and rendering it visible and intelligible as an object of knowledge. In turn, such a framing of war (according to Butler) also helps to frame the ontological question of "life" or "the living." In addition, she argues in the context of war photography, these frames ought not to be regarded as stable or self-enclosed. Their ability to communicate or convey meaning to us relies, in fact, on the very reproducibility and circulation of these frames: "The frame that seeks to contain, convey, and determine what is seen…depends upon the conditions of reproducibility in order to succeed. And yet, this very reproducibility entails a constant breaking from context, a constant delimitation of new context, which means that the 'frame' does not quite contain what it conveys, but breaks apart every time it seeks to give definitive organization to its content. In other words, the frame does not hold anything together, but itself becomes a kind of perpetual breakage, subject to a temporal logic by which it moves from place to place" (10).

dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted to any kind of mounting, reworked by an individual, group, or social formation" (Deleuze 12). A map in the Deleuzian sense is not simply a plotting of co-ordinates, but a description of the relations and multiple pathways that connect them. Mapping war, then, entails a different reading of the event that fosters connections between spheres that have no apparent relation to one another, in order to trace the continuity, however obscure, between the violence of war and the violence of law, to break down the ideological division between the war abroad and the war at home, and to build pathways between past and present wars that can be redrawn or adapted to address the wars of the future.[19]

The Warscape of Salisbury Plain

In the famous 1842 advertisement to *Guilt and Sorrow,* Wordsworth explains the "melancholy foreboding" that led to the writing of his anti-war poem *Salisbury Plain* (1793-1794):

> During the latter part of the summer of 1793, having passed a month in the Isle of Wight, in view of the fleet which was then preparing for sea off Portsmouth at the commencement of the war, I left the place with melancholy forebodings. The American

[19] It is noteworthy that Wordsworth's early and later poems consistently manifest the desire to map, to adopt the structure of a map, or to function as a map or form of mapping. For example, one could read "Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey: On Revisiting The Banks of the Wye During a Tour, July 13, 1798" similarly as a map relating spatial to temporal coordinates. This penchant for mapping is perhaps clearest in his late poems "Written on a Slate Pencil on a Stone, on the Side of the Mountain on Black Comb" and "View from the Top of Black Comb," written in 1813 (a year before Napoleon's abdication and when he was losing ground in the Peninsular War), which describe a poetic vision that is conceived precisely by imagining what the surveyors of the Ordnance Trigometric Survey, headed by a retired artillery officer Captain William Mudge, would have seen on their excursion to Black Comb mountain. In these poems, the poetic vision of the unimpeded view of Black Comb coincides with the cartographic vision of a unified Britain. But this "prospect view" (which a "ministering Angel might select" [1]) is presented alongside relations whose connections appear to be less immediately evident and grandiose: one could read the title of the first poem itself as a kind of map of another relation beginning with the slate pencil; to stone; to the side of the mountain; to Black Comb. On Wordsworth's "prospect view," see James Garrett who compares it to an "abstract imperial gaze" (70).

> war was still fresh in memory. The struggle which was beginning, and which many thought would be brought to a speedy close by the irresistible arms of Great Britain being added to those of the allies, I was assured in my own mind would be of long continuance, and productive of distress and misery beyond all possible calculation.

By this melancholy foreboding, Wordsworth refers specifically to the prospect of endless violence as Britain emerged from its defeat in the recent American War (1765-1783) only to enter into interminable war with France. During this time, *Salisbury Plain (SP)* would undergo numerous alterations: in 1795, extensive revision began on what was then called *Adventures on Salisbury Plain (ASP)*, which was completed in 1799. In 1841, the poem was renamed *Incidents upon Salisbury Plain* before finally acquiring, in 1842, the explicitly psychological title of "Guilt and Sorrow." The advertisement taken from "Guilt and Sorrow"—a retrospective account of the poem's inception that looks on to a future bound to historic violence—mirrors the circular structure of the poem. This convoluted structure of time is echoed in the poem's equally complicated sense of place. As an affective landscape, Salisbury Plain is not a territory that is geographically or spatially bound, but a virtual space in which the actions ascribed to other times and other places are folded into one another: the wars in America and the West Indies, as well as those of the distant past are unfolded and re-lived as if they were occurring in the present adventures upon Salisbury Plain.

As a stage for the poem's actions and the working out of the protagonists' inner drama, Salisbury Plain seems a rather odd choice. The poems collectively describe it as "a far-extended waste," where no tree, no sanctuary from the elements, nor even the color of the meadow's pleasant green is to be found. The cornfields grow there abundantly but "without bound."

Geoffrey Hartman describes it as a "no-place" that "undermines by its horizontality the very idea of place" (*Wordsworth's Poetry* 120).

> But all was cheerless to the horizon's bound
>
> His weary eye whereso'er it strays
>
> Marks nothing but the red sun setting round,
>
> Or on the earth strange lines, in former days
>
> Left by gigantic arms (137-8).[20]

Confronted with this vacancy, the "weary eye" of the reader of signs strays and marks nothing. The text of nature offers inscrutable clues: color, shape, and lines do the work of signifying without, however, culminating in a signification. Thus, behind the red setting sun, the reader does not discover a symbol, in the de Manian sense, which would function as "an expression of the unity between the representative and the semantic function of language" (175). Rejecting such a unity between language and representation, the Salisbury Plain poems likewise suggest that meaning is not in any significant sense determined by its mimetic capacity to reproduce an object. Instead, the complexity of the poem is achieved through the network of connections it makes among apparently random events, people, and places. The red of the sun does not direct us to a hidden meaning but to a semiotic chain, beginning with the military Redcoat worn by the Sailor, and through to the Vagrant Woman's recollection of the red-breasted bird of her childhood.

It is striking how persistently the poem repudiates the hermeneutics of reading and signification. "No board inscribed" at the inn "for the needy to allure;" "no swinging sign

[20] The following texts refer to *Salisbury Plain* (hereafter *SP*) (1793-1794), *Adventures of Salisbury Plain* (*ASP*) (1799), *The Discharged Soldier* (1798) and *The Prelude* (1805). *The Convention of Cintra* is taken from the Bicentennial Critical Edition edited by Richard Gravail and W.J.B. Owen.

creak'd from its cottage elm;" no hospitable sign or sign of hospitality to break up the landscape convulsed by memories of war and ancient violence (50, 31; 172). In one of the many tales of the undead that the Vagrant Woman tells her interlocutor, by way of introduction, she recalls how she had been beleaguered by an old man who "[c]ame tottering sidelong down to ask the hour;/ [though] There never clock was heard from the steeple tower" (*SP* 166-167). Time and place have disappeared in this austere landscape that is reduced to pure space. Likewise, the characters who find themselves on the Plain are not marked in any special way (they are simply identified as "the Sailor's widow" (or "the Vagrant Woman"), "the Sailor", and "the Soldier" in the revised *ASP*—their humanity barely distinguishable from the horses, dogs, and crows that appear in the poem.

By Romantic standards, *Salisbury Plain* appears deliberately un-natural and denuded of the lushness of many of Wordsworth's other poems.[21] The poem is much closer to presenting us with a natural history of destruction (to borrow Sebald's title) or a catastrophic history of violence that appears both historical and inevitable like 'human nature.' Chief among the scenes of violence that take place on the Plain is the violence of war, which sets the tone for all the other episodes of violence in the poem—themselves variations on the theme of war. The night adventures of the Sailor and the Vagrant Woman upon the plain yield hallucinatory encounters: "warrior spectres of gigantic bones/Forth-issuing from a thousand rifted tombs,/Wheel on their fiery steeds amid the infernal glooms" and visions of "sacrificial altars fed by living men" (*SP*

[21] Swann observes that words like "blanks," "trace," "lines," "mark," "measure," "resist full submergence in naturalistic description because they collectively refer to the formal or material conditions of writing, and more specifically of poetic writing. Arguably the scene thus discovered is a phantasm of the postmodern imagination. But Wordsworth's contemporaries would also have recognized Salisbury Plain as a textual site: literally marked by a partially effaced ancient writing… (815).

96-99; 184-185; 424). Before dawn, their journey together takes them through endless scenes of murder, terror, and violent deaths.

In *Salisbury Plain*, affects such as fear and terror do not belong to a psychological subject in any exhaustive way, since they are also qualities belonging in the poem to place or space. Susan Sontag's remarks on the architecture of war come to mind: "To be sure, a cityscape is not made of flesh. Still, sheared off buildings are almost as eloquent as bodies in the street" (Sontag 7). Here, spaces ravaged by war are described not merely as repositories, but as flesh and body that are the expressive surface of war. Thus, what is portrayed as extension, objective space, or an abstract plane signifying space is here endowed with an intensive quality: it is possible for a house to be dead or alive, to be animated and transmit terror to its occupants. Space is empty but it is also fraught, and affectively charged, like the hollow from which voices emerge whispering terrible tales of war and murder (81).

More than consciousness or even unconsciousness, it is the senses that the text calls upon to make sense of war. Sounds, for example, serve as a reference for war in the poem. At the start of the poem, in the darkness, amidst the sounds of beasts and storm, the only clue that humanity exists is the peal of a war-song—a sound of alarm that suggests the presence of an oncoming battle one hears but does not see, and which calls together, like an anthem a "wild assembly" of those who fear and suffer because of this fear. We are tempted to think that the aural device signals something like distant war, but senses and affects also frequently transport us to the scene of war in the poem, so that sounds also tell us that *on some level* we are close to the war that is happening somewhere else. As a medium, sound in *Salisbury Plain* is a negation of place, a way of canceling the difference between far and near, a traversal that fills up space while also revealing its emptiness.

According to the conceit of the poem, it would appear that the only way to get from place to place on the Plain is to be transported by affects.[22] The reader moves from one adventure to another in quick succession as if these events were continuous with one another—the inconsistency between each adventure is sutured over by having the characters fall into a trance or a faint in the most intense moments in the poem and awakening to find themselves in another time and another place. In one sequence, the Vagrant Woman recalls how, after witnessing the death of the crew travelling to the West Indies; after a "dog-like" and "curst" existence of "wading at the heels of war"; after losing her husband and family to pains, plagues, disease famine, agony and fear; despairing and desolate "on board/A British ship I waked, as from a trance recovered" (385-396). Here the British ship is a synecdoche that turns "Britain" into a floating signifier, a harbor or sanctuary set adrift on the wide sea, a metaphor of disorientation and unmooring that defines the experience of no-place place which is Salisbury Plain.

A Map of the Fiscal Military State

In *Salisbury Plain,* the relationship between money and war forms the basis of many of the social inequities represented in the poem. But the significance of this relationship lies in its conception of war as playing an integral part in the economic production of the state. War is not an event that takes place outside of the state, but a constitutive element of the state that allows it to produce or reproduce itself *qua* state, embedded as such within the logic of sovereignty. In her analysis of the relationship between liberalism and the military, Celeste Langan shows that the figure of "the vagrant" and "vagrancy" are themselves the surplus or produced excess of what

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[22] See also Karen Swann on the role of "transport" in the Salisbury Plain poems.

she calls the "fiscal-military state" (*Romantic Vagrancy* 17).[23] Similarly interested in "the insidious complicity between poverty and war," Gary Harrison's reading of the *Salisbury Plain* poems reveals how poverty itself produces, if not the subject of war, the subjects who supply the war machine with ready victims (99). The same argument is found in William Godwin who writes: [24]

> Because individuals were liable to error, and suffered their apprehensions of justice to be perverted by a bias in favor of themselves, government was instituted. Because nations were susceptible of a similar weakness and could find no sufficient umpire to whom to appeal, war was introduced. Men were induced deliberately to seek each other's lives, and to adjudge the controversies between them, not according to the dictates of reason and justice, but as either should prove most successful in devastation and murder. This was no doubt in the first instance the extremity of exasperation and rage. But it has been converted into a trade. One part of the nation pays another part to murder and be murdered in their stead (Godwin 274).[25]

Here, Godwin presents us with a kind of genealogy of war in which war is perpetually bound up with the question of justice (in the first place as a rather arbitrary solution to the absence of justice and later as an event that demands justification), and which finally gave way, according to Godwin, to an economic understanding of war (in which money provides the rationale and perhaps even the semblance of 'a fair trade' for sending bodies to war). But in

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[23] On the fiscal-military state, see also John Brewer who describes it as a central government organized to extract and distribute resources needed for war and the defense of its colonies all over the world: "As an organization, the fiscal-military state dwarfed any civilian enterprise. The capital investment it demanded, the running costs it incurred, its labor requirements and logistical problems that it posed were all of a different order of magnitude from even the largest eighteenth-century private business" (34). At the end of the eighteenth century, military spending accounted for 61% of total spending, whereas it accounted for 12.5% of total national income (Brewer 40, 41).
[24] For Godwin's influence on Wordsworth, see Nicolas Roe, Mary Jacobus, and Gary Harrison.
[25] Cited in Harrison (96).

circumventing the divine, this economic view allows us to explain war as an immanent condition of statehood.

The *Salisbury Plain* poems appear to build on Godwin's insight by showing further that the military function produces subjects who go to war and return as subjects who will be fed into the revolving door of the penal system, through which one enters a member of the state and exits condemned by its laws. *ASP*, too, turns to the penal system to develop the thread between war and poverty. In the much-cited letter to Francis Wrangham, Wordsworth explains that the motivation behind the revised *ASP* is "partly to expose the vices of the penal law *and* the calamities of war as they affect individuals" (*EY* 159 my emphasis). As the coupling of the Sailor (who killed a stranger) and the Vagrant Woman (who experienced war) suggests, the calamities of war are not entirely separate from the vices of penal law.

The revision to *SP* consists in making the discharged sailor, rather than the Vagrant Woman (who was the central character in the original poem) the new focus of *ASP*. By giving an account of the Sailor's sufferings abroad and entanglement with the law at home, the poem expands the theatre of war by walking its reader through his misadventures upon returning from war. We are told of "the sailor's evil" that he endured: shuttling from "hard labor" to "the battle fire" far away where the "work of carnage did not cease" (76-82). Upon his return, he is deprived of his wage by "the slaves of Office" and without the means of supporting his family, he resorts to an act of desperate violence, robbing, and killing a traveler within eyeshot of his home.[26] Though he is finally hanged on the gibbet for his crime at the end of the poem, the text appears to indict the savagery of the law and the death penalty rather than the crime or its offender

[26] Swann hears echoes of this scene of violence in the encounter in the battered child of stanza seventy-two discussed below (822).

exclusively. It attempts to situate the individual act of violence within a larger structure of violence that is driven by economic and social relations, thus de-personalizing, if not de-psychologizing, the crime.

But money is not the only through line connecting war to government, law, and capital punishment. These fields are also tied together by the violence in which they all, in different ways and to different degrees, partake. The motif of violence is explored in the vivid if oddly-placed episode in the poem involving a battered child. The scene of domestic violence initially appears at odds with the poem's preceding inquiry into the use of state violence. But it is placed in the text possibly as a *mise-en-scène* in which the principal characters of the poems now bear witness to the violence that has so far only existed in memory (in the characters' recollection of past wars, unsolved murders, buried corpses, running from the law etc.) for the poem. In this sequence, the Vagrant Woman and the Discharged Sailor come upon a battered child. Close by, the father is foaming with "anger vehement," while the mother explains that the child had been being punished for taking the father's place at a table. The punishment—the near fatal blows to the head of the child—appears disproportionately severe. As the Sailor approaches the boy,

> …and as the boy turn'd round
>
> His batter'd head, a groan the Sailor fetch'd.
>
> The head streaming with blood had dy'd the ground,
>
> Flow'd from the spot where he [the Sailor] that deadly wound
>
> Had fix'd on him he murder'd. (642-645).

By mapping the domestic violence onto the original murder, the poem invites us to reflect, as the Sailor himself does, on the relationship between criminal and domestic violence, if not on the permeability of the spheres that they inhabit. His reflection here that: "'Tis a bad

world, and hard is the world's law;/ Each prowls to strip his brother of his fleece;/" echoes his sentiments at the foot of the gibbet of "All he had feared from man" (657-661; 120). His musings are recapitulated in the Vagrant Woman's description of *war* in which the motif of vampirism or cannibalism in "the brood/That lap (their very nourishment!) their brother's blood" reveal the ubiquitous corruption of the bonds between men and their brothers and fathers and sons (386-7). Indeed, such bonds appear to break down under the very institutions of family, law, and state that are themselves producers of violence *and* defenders of peace and security. Like the "noysome" hospitals that the poem conjures up as part of its warscape, these institutions, too, form part of the fabric of war and violence (363). Within the imaginary space of the poem, no inner sanctum or sacred space exists that is not part of war or constituted through an original relationship to its violence: no outside to violence nor an elsewhere that is not at war.

Yet, one is often struck by the disconnect that characterizes the images of violence in Wordsworth's writings. In *ASP*, the sense of disconnection is clearest in the poem's treatment of the penalty of death. Allusions to human sacrifice abound in the poem as the characters, on their perambulatory adventures, stumble upon the relics of a violent past (in the form of the gibbet, the wicker man, Stonehenge etc.), in which the characters struggle to recognize the history of their own violent past. Both scenes of hanging at the start of the poem and at the end are punctuated by syncope, states of trance or lacunae in the text that are repeated as a motif in book eleven of *The Prelude*, where the gibbet significantly recurs as a *spot* of time. Here, too, the disconnect between crime and punishment is manifest in the story of some "unknown hand," which each year continues the superstition by "carving" out the Murderer's name at the foot of the mouldered down gibbet where he was hanged.

In *ASP*, this disconnect raises the question of what it means to be an author of crime. The final sections of *ASP* are pertinent for raising the incongruities of the death penalty. At the end of the poem, the Sailor is discovered by a mob of citizens and hanged for his crime of murder. The law finally prevails, but as an impersonal force or instrument of justice, which the mob carries out through duty or superstition: "Though we deplore it much as any can, /…The law…must weigh him in her scale" (808-810). The disconnect with the law is repeated to great effect in the final sequence, where, despite his "confirm'd purpose" and "fearless" march to the gallows, the Sailor's punishment is ultimately treated as an amusing spectacle to the "dissolute men, unthinking and untaught, [who] Planted their festive booths beneath his face"—men who are unable to read or recognize themselves in the scene of violence in front of them (821-2).

Images of War

Written in 1798 as a companion poem to *A Night Piece, The Discharged Soldier* introduces a map of a different kind, which sets out to chart the silent and pathless roads that lead the wandering poet to a "happy state" where "beauteous pictures" and "harmonious imagery" arise in the mind, where visions are *not seen*, but "heard and felt" (27) But, as readers of the poem know, this paean to poetic vision (heard and felt) is immediately followed by a rather self-conscious reflection on spectatorship. The scene that appears to disrupt the poetic vision takes place in the initial encounter between the poet and the stranger clad in military garb:

> While thus I wandered, step by step led on,
>
> It chanced a sudden turning of the road
>
> Presented to my view an uncouth shape
>
> So near, that, stepping back into the shade
>
> Of a thick hawthorn, I could mark him well,

Myself unseen (36-43).

Upon seeing the uncouth shape, the poet retreats behind the hawthorn, and for what seems like a long time, observes the stranger from his unseen vantage. The "odd reaction" of the poet to the encounter has drawn much critical attention. Philip Shaw compares the spectator-poet to a kind of "spy" whose raison *d'être* is to "observe, listen report." Others, such as James McGraven, highlight the incompatibility between the poet's voyeurism and his message of Christian charity at the end of the poem. For my part, I share David Collings's interest in reading the scene as "a figure for figuration," that is, as a reflection on the conditions that determine poetic figuration or representation (105). Specifically, I am interested in the way seeing and not-seeing participate in this poem in the interplay of blindness and insight, presence and absence.

After all, the work of seeing or not-seeing in the famous passage above effectively organizes the space of encounter into a kind of combat zone that turns the spectator-poet into a kind of marksman and the soldier into a kind of marked man. But to "mark" is to "see," to discern the contours of the uncouth shape, or what is the same, to mark out the figure in what is otherwise a rude and formless shape. To "mark," then, brings together the sense of seeing, representing, and shooting to describe what appears to be a prescient metaphor for the photographic gaze, in which the man who is unseen (behind the camera) is the one who ostensibly produces the image, representation, and representability. Like a photographic image, the marked soldier brings us the distant people, events, places that cannot be seen, witnessed, or represented except as an image returning to us in a form that is sometimes barely recognizable, filled with "ghostly figures" and "strange half-absences" (124, 141).

As if he were a man with no qualities, the soldier is presented to us through features that are purely formal. The details of his history and participation in the war give us nothing more

than bare sketches of the man. He is defined, not by what he says but by his "meagre stiffness," "wasted visage," "sunken cheeks," "murmuring" groan and "tone of weakness and indifference" (44, 49, 50, 78, 141-142). He appears to us through the signs of disease, the tone of his voice, the pain that fixes him on a milestone. He is not merely the poet's double or alter ego, as critics have argued.[27] In so far as he is described as half a man (he is seen to be "half-sitting" and half-standing, and quite emphatically, "more than *half* detached/From his nature [57-59 my emphasis]), one imagines that he is fleshed out by the darkness of the night, like a negative image that renders the dark background visible.

Among the many examples of silence in the text, the soldier's reticence about war seems especially suggestive since it effectively relegates the war to the margins of the poem and quite literally to the realm of the unspeakable and unpresentable. It also reproduces the affective disconnection of *Salisbury Plain*. When asked for his account of the "war, and battle, and the pestilence" that he endured, he was "[c]oncise in answer" and responded "…as of one/Remembering the importance of his theme/But feeling it no longer" (142-143). His description of landing on 'tropic isle" during Britain's campaign in the West Indies is similarly sketchy:[28]

> …that he had been
>
> A Soldier, to the tropic isles had gone,
>
> Whence he had landed now some ten days past,
>
> That on his landing he had been dismissed (98-101)

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[27] See, for example, Matthew Brennan (19) and Paul Magnuson (91).

[28] During the five-year campaign (1793-1798), British troops were sent to the West Indies to wrest control of the Sugar Islands from the French and to put down the rebellion in St. Domingue (now Haiti). On military disease in the West Indies, see Bewell (76).

The soldier's role in the war is omitted and the war remains a blank. We do not know if he had been engaged in fighting. In his *Romanticism and Colonial Disease*, Alan Bewell suggests that it is not unusual that many of the men who were sent to the islands did not, in fact, serve in the war. A great number, he contends, were struck down by the diseases of the new world (such as yellow fever) or those that were produced by crowded living conditions and poor hygiene in the ships and camps (typhus, scurvy, venereal disease, and dysentery) (71).[29] Thus, the discharged soldiers consisted of those who narrowly escaped heroic death on the battlefield or decimation by disease. *The Discharged Soldier* portrays them as an invisible and anonymous subsection of servicemen who were precisely the ejecta or by-product of war, material and biological bodies that were regurgitated by the machinery of war.

The diseased or discharged body functions in this poem as a way of representing the errancies and the excesses of war. Against the moral discourses of war, such as those found in Scott's *Waverley* that claim to turn men into heroes or to transform its working class of young, unemployed males into disciplined armies, the testimony of the Discharged Soldier suggests that war is not a heroic sacrifice that gives life its value, but a waste that renders life as a material facticity that may be diseased, disabled, and broken.[30] *The Discharged Soldier* is a snapshot of a poetic encounter out of which "the contact zone" (to borrow Mary Louise Pratt's phrase) between East and West also emerges. In the context of the poem, the map of the diseased body is also a map that allows us to represent war as a contagion that undoes the ideology of discrete boundaries, of inside and outside, the illusion of distance, safety, home. It charts a new path for war, one in which war is not merely a departure, but also an impossible return. In the following

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[29] Out of 89,000 British soldiers who served in the West Indies, more than half died of yellow fever, while 15,503 others were discharged from service.
[30] For more on the function of the military and impressment as a disciplinary and a means of disburdening the nation of its vagrant and criminal population, see Bewell (77-83).

section, we will see how Wordsworth approaches the emerging the autonomy of the army on a larger scale and considers the ramification of the detachment of the military from the *polis*.

The Machinery of War

In his account of militarism in the age of Napoleon, Wordsworth's essay on the treaty known as the Convention of Cintra" examines the conditions that gave rise to what I call 'military exceptionalism.'[31] For Wordsworth, this 'military exceptionalism' is exemplified in the figure of Napoleon Bonaparte:

> But the victories of the French have been attended everywhere by the subversion of Governments; and their generals have accordingly *united political and military functions*… (134)

Wordsworth is particularly concerned with the separation of the military apparatus from the state, with its developing capacity to form its own political organ, to make political decisions, and appropriate sovereign power for itself. Inspired by the events surrounding the signing of the treaty, Wordsworth's essay, the *Convention of Cintra*, sets out to explain the rise of the military as an institution independent of the state and the unprecedented political autonomy it enjoyed in the nineteenth century.

Ratified at the end of August 1808, the treaty temporarily halted Napoleon's invasion of Portugal and anticipated his later defeats in Russia (1812) and at Waterloo (1815). The Peninsular War began as an invasion of Portugal, led by the French General Junot, with the intention of dividing Portugal between French and Spanish forces and bringing it in line within the Continental System. But the conflict grew when en route to Portugal via Spanish territories,

[31] Hereafter *Cintra* and to be distinguished from the 1808 treaty hereafter "the Convention."

the French army reneged on its original intention, and instead occupied all the fortresses on the Spanish side of the Pyrenees and marched on Madrid.[32] Popular revolt broke out in both Portugal and Spain following the flight of its King, Ferdinand VII, to Sicily to escape French occupation, which led to Napoleon's appointment of his brother, Joseph Bonaparte, as King of Spain. The combined use of professional and guerrilla fighters found modest success against the invaders, but it was not until British troops entered the fray that the French forces faced decisive defeat.

In August, Arthur Wellesley (later the Duke of Wellington) landed in Portugal and successfully defeated Junot's forces. On the verge of decisively cutting off Junot's retreat, he was prevented from further pursuit by Generals Burrard and Dalrymple, both of whom had seen little action and had little experience in command. Thus, the military victory in Portugal by Wellesley (at the time a Lieutenant-General) was quickly eclipsed by the political blunder of Generals Burrard and Dalrymple who negotiated for 25,747 French men to be transported to La Rochelle, about three hundred miles from Saragossa (the site of one of the most historic guerrilla victories), along with their mistresses, plunder, and ammunition—all at the expense of the British crown. By the end of 1808, the French army was back in Spain, fighting to regain Saragossa.

Back at home, the Convention of Cintra was regarded as a source of political embarrassment.[33] For Wordsworth, in particular, the treaty exemplified the political overreach of the Generals who had profoundly confused their role in the war. By treating for peace out of political convenience (rather than military advantage), the generals had, according to Wordsworth, played the part of "Statesmen" who act out of self-interest or ambition that are independent, and indeed, insensible not only to the interests of the nation at large, but also "the

[32] See Gravail and Owen's introductions to *Cintra.*
[33]Byron sums up the sentiment in *Childe Harolde's Pilgrimage*, in which he describes the Convention as the thing "dwarfish demon styled" (25.297), "A little fiend that scoffs incessantly" (24.291).

instincts of natural and social man" (181-2). Wordsworth characterizes the signing of the treaty as a kind of "*lusus naturae*" in the "moral world," that is, "a solitary straggler out of the circumference of nature's law—a monster which could not propagate, and has no birthright in futurity" (156). The exceptionalism of the military or its formal power is depicted here as an aberrancy from the organization of the state. The problem for Wordsworth remains one of the "assimilation of powers" or the appropriation of political power by military functionaries: it is not merely a matter of the Generals intervening in political affairs, but Generals making political decisions that in fact undermine the political realm and national interests. In other words, the Convention of Cintra represents a significant instance of military exceptionalism that seeks to supplant political process—a usurpation, which, as we shall see, is not without danger:

> French example had so far dazzled and blinded [Burrard and Dalrymple], that the French army is suffered to denominate itself "*the French government*;" and, from the whole tenor of these instruments…it should seem that our Generals fancied themselves and their army to be the *British government*. For these regulations, emanating from a mere military authority, are purely civil; but of such a kind, that no power on earth could confer a right to establish them. And this trampling upon the most sacred rights…is not made by our generals in relation to subjects of their own sovereign, but to an independent nation [Spain], our ally, into whose territories we could not have entered but from its confidence in our friendship and good faith. (149).

Read in this light, Wordsworth's *Cintra* serves as an important document of an increasingly militarized Europe in an age of revolution. What is more, his account approaches the Convention as a problem of sensibility or its symptomatic lack, which he ascribes to the formalization of war, that is, the development of war into a "formal machine" and the military

into a "formal profession" (182). Among the long list of follies, it is their "insensibility" or "deadness" to the moral cause of the war that earn the Generals the harshest criticism in *Cintra*. Wordsworth repeatedly points to their "want of "sympathy" or "fellow-feeling" for the suffering of the occupied people of Spain and Portugal (125, 155). They reduced the war, in which Wordsworth saw revolutionary potential, to "[t]he laws and customs of war, and the maxims of policy," to a formal and perfunctory contractual agreement of peace (178). The result, according Wordsworth was a "mind narrowed by exclusive and overweening attention to the military character, led astray by vanity, or hardened by general habits of contemptuousness" (125).

Wordsworth also warns of the "specious sensibility" that regards for peace as a ubiquitous solution to war, and hence, an abstract notion of peace that actually dismisses the realities of war. Thus, Wordsworth argues that "peace" according to the terms set out by the Convention cannot prevent more warfare or bloodshed. The Convention of Cintra marks a signal moment in the sublimation of war—not its disappearance entirely, but its retreat into the prospect of perpetual peace. Like Immanuel Kant's "Perpetual Peace," which appeared at the end of the eighteenth century, the prospect of peace in Cintra is similarly ambivalent, auguring peace even as it describes the growing intensification and spread of war, thus conceiving a vision of peace (or an ambiguous "end of war") that, in fact, coincides with the image of the world as a mass graveyard:[34]

> The only difference would be, that, instead of wars like those which prevail at this moment, presenting a spectacle of such character that, upon one side at least, a superior Being might look down with favor and blessing, there would follow endless commotions

[34] Thus, *Cintra* may be read as a contributor to the debate at the end of the eighteenth century on perpetual peace inaugurated by the Abbey de Saint-Pierre and Kant.

> and quarrels without the presence of justice any where,—in which the alternations of success would not excite a wish or regret; in which a prayer could not be uttered for a decision either this way or that;—wars from no impulse in either of the combatants, but rival instigations of demoniacal passion. *If, therefore, by the faculty of reason we can prophesy concerning the shapes which the future may put on,—if we are under any bond of duty to succeeding generations, there is high cause to guard against a specious sensibility, which may encourage the hoarding up of life for its own sake, seducing us from these considerations by which we might learn when it ought to be resigned* (my emphasis 133).

Wordsworth cautions that the hoarding of life for its own sake (or the belief in the sacredness of life) will not result in saving lives, that the "tender feelings" for peace will, in the long run, cost more lives than actually save them. What this state of perpetual war implies is not only that the absence of a supreme being that would deliver justice and end wars, but also the denigration of "peace" as a pure idea, or what is the same, the production of "peace" as complementary to war, as of a piece with war and its conventions, and the continuation of war by other means. What we call war *is* nothing but the securing, maintaining, and administering peace at all cost, through legal or extra-legal means, through killing as much as through preserving life.

According to Wordsworth, the Napoleonic wars seemed to have ushered in a new paradigm of war or "combinations of malevolence" than have been previously unexplored by historians (114). The aim of these massive wars is not the extinction of life, but, Wordsworth argues, the destruction of everything that "gives life its value—of virtue, of reason, of repose in God, or in truth" (ibid.). The wars do not stop at the destruction of bodies. By pursuing a course of destruction that goes beyond death and profanes the limits endured by living bodies, they aim

at total and absolute destruction: they attempt to reach behind life (as it were) in order that they might eradicate the very conditions that make life possible in the first place. Thus, their very abstraction of the limits of life and the limits of war serve to expand the theatre of war, to turn war into the unlimited affair it is today. Nor did this notion "total war" refer the practices of the Napoleonic army alone (despite Wordsworth's claims), but must include the "little war" (i.e., guerrilla strategy or the people's war), which is produced by total warfare as its symptom.

On Insurgency

Against the exceptionalism of the French and British armies, the Spanish guerrillas serve Wordsworth as a kind of poetic and conceptual counterpoint. If the formalization of professional armies implies the consolidation of political and military functions, the example of the guerilla represents a "civic and military spirit united in one people" (107). Despite the irregularity of their methods and their preference for hit-and-run tactics over the "dense column" attacks of their French invaders, the guerillas represent for Wordsworth an indivisibility that ought not to be characterized simply as nationalism, but a more profound unity between (general) will and political action and one that surpasses the regional or factional differences out of which each guerilla outfit operates. Thus, despite what Bromwich identities as the motivation of *Cintra*, namely, "an ideology of republican nationalism," Wordsworth himself is actually cautious to insist that this consolidation of power transcends its provincial or even nationalist interest (34):[35]

[35]This seems an important clarification since the overthrowing of French tyranny was not the exclusive aim of the Spanish people. Their uprising sought to reinstate the conservatism of the monarchy and the old Spanish church. Arguing from a different perspective, Hobsbawn writes: "[T]he spontaneous movements of popular resistance against French conquest cannot be denied their social-revolutionary component, even if the peasants who waged them expressed it in terms of militant church-and-king conservatism" (*Age of Revolution* 107). Then again, one might compare Wordsworth's and Hobsbawn's positions to Southey's claim that the uprisings were spurred by nothing more than revenge: "The people had no desire to break loose from the laws and habits of subordination; the only desire which possessed them was to take vengeance" (I.266).

> A military spirit should be there, and a military action, not confined like an ordinary river in one channel, but spreading like the Nile over the course of the whole face of the land (106-107).

Here, what Wordsworth calls "military spirit" is associated with the breaking down of ideological divisions: a deluge that spills over the bounds of the nation, re-codifying and re-drawing the entire surface of the land, by eroding discrete channels, turning direct channels into multiple pathways, waterlogging the land and carrying away its fixtures, turning fixed land into mutable water, in effect, dissolving the organicity of the nation and its centers of power.[36] In this sense, "military spirit" may be read less as the root of nationalism or the foundation of nation-building, than a spur towards insurgency, dispersed irruptions of violence, the decentralization or destratification of a nation by turning it into a body without organs, into a political field unhampered by centers of power or specific sites of insurgency.

Despite the enthusiasm of its author, the text's account of the military spirit and the guerrilla seems to suggest Wordsworth's constancy to the Republican ideals of his youth. In *Cintra*, he appeals to the idea of a governing body that is identical to its people, a government without hierarchy and the means of arrogating supreme authority, and a conceptual model of the body politic that is capable of adapting to the realities of modern war and dispersed power. Thus, Wordsworth's opinion on the Juntas that governed Spain in the absence of its king readily overlooks the repressive role of the Juntas as an organ of power.[37] Conceiving the Juntas as

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[36] And yet, one might question the stability of the opposition that Wordsworth establishes between the Spanish nation-in-arms and (apparent) similar gestures of militarizing the French and British armies. The essential distinction seemed to him to be a guerrilla movement that is capable of overcoming its own nationalism (a war of the people, by the people and one that consolidates nationalism or the building of a political-military complex.

[37] Wordsworth describes the Juntas as allies to the guerrilla in the fight for Spanish Independence. Local juntas were formed in provinces such as Murcia, Valencia, Castille, Léon ostensibly to coordinate the resistance against the French, win back the Spanish monarchy, recruit armies, supply weapons, procure aide (from England), and maintain

"truly living members of their body," he seems to want to think of such wartime exigencies not in terms organs of repression or closure, but as the possibility of producing new political forms—even new political parts—without appealing to the notion of the whole or the organicity of the nation (176). For Wordsworth, it appears that the "Junta" is not at all an organ that centralizes power, but a speculative idea of a *relation* that fosters new parts or produces the nation as a multitude.

The success of guerrilla warfare depends on tactics that may appear counter-intuitive to classical strategists. Each guerilla unit was composed of anywhere between two and four thousand men, with larger outfits boasting of as many as twelve thousand fighters (Esdaile 4, 6). By harassing, abducting, ambushing, and baffling their invaders at every turn, the guerrilla kept the French army in a state of constant turmoil, depleted their morale and wasted their numbers. Frequently outnumbered by the invaders, they never won open battles, but made up for these losses by winning the covert ones by hit-and-run tactics, facilitated by their extensive knowledge of the terrain, the mountains and rugged country, and by their ability to disappear into the civilian population from whom they were indistinguishable. The guerrilla presence restricted the advance of the French army to a few hard-won territories in enclosed or well-fortified cities, where a sizeable portion of the French army were pinned down (Esdaile 12). In the open country, however, the French lost its advantage. Wearing down the army and draining their resources, the

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law and order within the provinces. Out of a legitimate need to coordinate the resistance among the provinces as well as to advance its own political ambition, the Junta of Seville had sought to bring the provincial juntas under its central command by limiting their military and political authority, and diverting resources away from the provinces. After years of embroilment in local struggles of power and resisting popular charges of corruption, "The Supreme Junta of Spain and the Indies" dissolved itself at the end of January 1810. These "organs" of "discontent" and "popular repression" illustrated the failure of the Juntas to galvanize popular support, to form a co-ordinated whole (Esdaile 6).

"war of fleas" diverted crucial manpower and resources away from the Russian campaign, which decisively turned popular support against Napoleon.[38]

It is perhaps easy to see the appeal of the figure of the guerrilla to the Romantic imagination of the "untameable individual" and "natural anarchist" amidst a "mythologized landscape of soaring peaks and shady groves" (Esdaile 2, 6). The Spanish guerrilla is the subject of Goya's *Disaster of War* and his paintings on the May uprisings, and it appears in Robert Southey's *History of the Peninsular War*. In *Cintra*, the guerilla is an expression of a radically non-hierarchical structure of power, an expression of the general will, called into being by the people (and for the people), in a critical moment of war. It was believed that they were aided in their daring and noble exploits by the local peasantry who, out of sympathy or simple fear, provided them with food, intelligence, and an ideal cover from the pursuing enemy. In turn, this populism seemed to give their cause the character of a popular crusade or revolution. Later historians have arrived at a rather different picture: they remind us of the conservative politics behind these freedom fighters who fought to preserve the order of the Catholic church and reinstate Ferdinand VII as the Bourbon King. For example, Charles Esdaile shows in his important revisions to this history that this Romantic image of the people-in-arms has in fact contributed to the obfuscation of contrary evidence that the guerrilla were actually composed of *regular* or professional soldiers who had been either detailed to carry out irregular operations or forced by circumstances to join up with civilian armies (Esdaile 90).[39] In short, there is an abundance of historical evidence to suggest, alternatively, that the guerrilla fighters were neither the crusaders of the people nor the popular power Wordsworth supposed.

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[38] According to one calculation, at least 700,000 men from the French side are said to have lost their lives to guerrilla fighting alone (Brindle 6, 8).
[39] See Esdaile, *The Peninsular War: A New History* and *Fighting Napoleon.*

This section of the chapter is, however, concerned with a different implication, indeed, a different mapping of Wordsworth's poems or a different inscription of Romantic loco-descriptive or landscape poem that is typically deployed to illustrate the sublimity of nature. Here, Wordsworth's warscape conform less to aesthetic categories than to the exigencies of war. Wordsworth's Iberian poem consistently present a Romantic landscape that is re-mapped or re-territorialized to foster new relations among places and things: gothic monasteries, rugged mountains, towering crags, and dense scrub become "geo-strategic" sites of war, turning "terrifying nature" into the locus of "terrifying war" (Esdaile 28). In *Salisbury Plain*, for example, the loco-descriptive or "description of local scenery" gives rise to a topographical vision of the relations among places, words, and things that turns places into non-referential signs. Similarly in the Iberian poems, the meaning of the monastery may lie in its use as a store for ammunition, its proximity to forest that provides cover for ambushing soldiers, or its distance from the rugged mountains into which they escape—unfixed coordinates that are emptied and re-constituted with meaning over and over again depending on the plan of attack or escape, or any number of ways the map is deployed.

Written around the same time as *Cintra*, the Iberian poems (1808-1810), too, set out to explore the irregularities of *guerrilla* war, particularly by juxtaposing them against the organized armies of the French (which Wordsworth describes as a "visible thing,/Formal, and circumscribed in time and space").[40] In contrast to the French and their ineluctable forces (their

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[40] "Now, Napoleon's forces would be able to show all their tactical virtuosity. Particularly noteworthy in this respect was their striking power. Mass corps and army-level reserves heavy twelve-pounder guns would be first used to batter the target. Once the defenders had been suitably softened up, the infantry would then be sent in to open a breach in their line. In traditional British accounts, great emphasis has been placed on the idea that dense columns of French troops preceded by a few skirmishes simply hurled themselves on the enemy in a attempt to break through by impetus alone…The ability to concentrate overwhelming resources against a single sector of the enemy line and deliver blows of massive power and effect was likely to be particularly effective against an opponent as unwieldy and ill-trained as the Spaniards, and had played an important role in earlier campaigns" (Esdaile, 2002, 129)

mass and capacity to engage in dense attacks, virtuous display of power), the strategy of guerrilla warfare lies in flight and evasion tactics, in creating escapes and flight rather than face-to-face engagement. In Wordsworth's descriptions, they are in a perpetual state of scatter like sea foam or quails, dispersing only to pick up the war again at another time, another place. Brought together (and dispersed) by the sign of danger and the exigency of the moment, without unity among the rank and file, the partisans waged battle without any prospect of actually winning it.[41] More than achieving decisive victory, they appear motivated to draw out the war, to fatigue the enemy with the perpetual threat of attack, to extend the fighting into areas of civilian life, to achieve victory, not by fighting alone, but by petty combat, through raiding or cutting off food supplies, abducting the enemy, mobilizing the civilian population and vital resources.

Like the winds that appear to announce their presence in Wordsworth's poems, these guerrilla fighters appear nowhere and everywhere. In the Iberian poems, they are depicted as a spiritual power, which "no foot may chase" and "no eye can follow", to "the fatal place," where they carry out their sublime mission ("The Power of Armies is a Visible Thing"). For Wordsworth, the fighters embody the will of the People and his spiritual metaphors for them do more than suggest the marriage of the people's ideals and the materialism of their struggle, they demonstrate the contradictions and heterogeneity behind the concept of the People. For example, the metaphors of the wind are diversely employed in the Iberian poems: in "The Power of Armies," the metaphor comparing the guerillas to a "strong wind, or sleeping like the wind/ Within its awful caves" calls to mind the "mild creative breeze" of *The Prelude*, which, *travelling gently over the things which it had made*, and "is become/ A tempest, a redundant

[41] Carl Schmitt, who had also been interested in how partisanship in the Peninsular War transformed our understanding of war, explains: "In Spain, the *guerrillero* was a poor devil who waged battle without any prospect" (*Theory of The Partisan* 4).

energy,/Vexing its own creation" ("The Power of Armies" 11-14; *The Prelude* 1.43-47). This animating power, in turn, reappears in *Cintra*, in the rare poetic imagery of the political treatise, describing the role of religion as "a cheap and ready substitute," which, like a stimulant, rouses "extreme passion" and produces the genuine conditions for "moral justice," even if religion is originally itself a kind of second-order justice ("an infirm faith") (170). Staged as a kind of correspondence, the generative relationship between religion and the moral power of the people shows how affect is auto-affection, that is, the power to produce something out of itself (as, in the above, the war machine reproduces new political organs): "a power added to a power; a breeze which springs up unthought-of to assist the strenuous oarsman…" (170).[42]

In the poem "Composed at the Same Time and On the Same Occasion [as the writing of *Cintra*]," the scene of writing itself is announced by the wind:

> I dropped my pen; and listened to the Wind
>
> That sang of trees uptorn and vessels tost; (1-2)

The opening of the poem conjures up imageries of the sublime: the dramatic drop of the pen; the wind suspended in the second line; the invisible storm that is heard by the ear as a song, now supplying the unseeing eye with the sounds of the trees uptorn and vessels tossed. The guerrillas have all but disappeared in this poem. Alluded to by " the Wind," they are present here, though only as an invisible force or absence. From the start of the poem, their present-absence is bound to the scene or gesture of writing, perhaps reminding us of the labor of representation and presentation, of making present that which is absent, of the precarity of the thing that language presents, which seems always on the verge of retreating from representation.

[42] See also in *The Prelude*'s the figure of the *oarsman* (1.387).

Later in the poem, the Wind is said to represent an "attendant promise" of "a midnight harmony" that has been "wholly lost/To the general sense of men by chains confined/Of business, care, or pleasure"; an "attendant promise," which is nevertheless available to those who know how to listen and who, in listening freely (which is to say aesthetically), may find within themselves the vague form of freedom discerned in the midnight harmony. (3, 5-7). Thus, the wind and the war that it evokes function as a "sign," in the same manner that Kant interpreted the French Revolution as a sign that human progress continued to be possible (especially for the onlookers of the Revolution) despite having no proof of such a progress.[43] Wordsworth's poem is likewise preoccupied with the writing of prophecy, specifically of reading in the winds the "bright calm" after the storm, in other words, of reading the meaning of the sign as something other to itself, or in spite of itself.

While "The Power of Armies is a Visible Thing" construes power as a visible thing, the poem "Composed at the Same Time and On the Same Occasion" suggests the opposite, namely, that the power of the guerillas and their ubiquity relies on their ability to withdraw from sight. According to the latter poem, an invincible army is one that silently and invisibly spreads itself over its enemy, like a net from whose meshes there was no escape.[44]

Charged, and dispersed like foam:—but as a flight

Of scattered quails by signs do reunite

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[43] "Therefore, an event must be sought which points to the existence of such a cause and to its effectiveness in the human race, undetermined with regard to time, and which would allow progress toward the better to be concluded as an inevitable consequence. This conclusion then could also be extended to the history of the past (that it has always been in progress) in such a way that that event would have to be considered not itself as the cause of history, but only as an intimation, a historical sign (*signum rememorativum, demonstrativum, prognostikon*) demonstrating the tendency of the human race viewed in its entirety, that is, seen not as [a sum of] individuals (for that would yield an interminable enumeration and computation), but rather as divided into nations and states (as it is encountered on earth)" (Kant *Conflict* 151).

[44] Miot de Melito "An Invisible Army" cited in Bell (557).

…

Where now?—Their sword is at the Foeman's heart;

And thus from year to year his walk they thwart,

And hang like dreams around his guilty bed (6-14)

Wordsworth's decision to portray these fighters as dispersed forces seems a deliberate departure from standard narratives that exploited the celebrity around certain leaders of the guerrillas and their heroic exploits. In 1809, the city of Valladolid, the identities of these fighters and their operations were public knowledge (*Historia de la Revolución Espanola*). By 1812, El Empecinado was already a household name in Paris and London, and the English ladies wore his image around their bosom (Salmón 226-227). In a different vein, even Robert Southey's *History of the Peninsular War*, written a decade after *Cintra*, acknowledges the role of Epos y Mina and El Empecinado. But for Wordsworth, these famous outlaws seem to exist purely as a multiplicity, as dispersed forces that have no subject behind them as their pivot or animating principle—like swords without swordsmen. This subject does not exist even when Wordsworth ascribes passion to them, because such passions only gives them a charge, a surge of affect, rather than a perception or even a feeling belonging to a unified and coherent experience of self. In *Cintra*, it is not the private interest of a subject but sentiments that are exalted or raised to the level of a "universal," feelings that carry us away from ourselves, which are said to be the fulcrum of action (121).

Elsewhere in *Cintra*, an impassioned Wordsworth refers to this military spirit as an inextinguishable "fire," which "rouses" the "human creature" from the torpor of religious or civil slavery, "lets him rise and act," precisely by allowing him to see in others like him the "signs and testimonies of his own power, incorporated with those of a growing multitude and not to be

distinguished from them" (170). Like Kant's *enthusiasmus*, Wordsworth's notion of enthusiasm combines the moral ideas with affect: "intense passion, consecrated by sudden revelation of justice" (*CF* 86; 171). But the notion further claims to contain a moment of self-recognition, in which one finds oneself in the multitude, an incorporation which is not so much a fusion, as it is a movement from interest to disinterest, from the passion of the individual to a universal structure of feeling that belongs to no one in particular, making affect the pivotal point that turns the individual into a multitude. And yet *Cintra* acknowledges that sensibility is nothing more than a tool, which in the wrong hands, Wordsworth concedes, may "seduce" and "agitate," working sensibility into zealotry or fanaticism (183-4). Thus, Wordsworth insists the "general" nature of such sensations, or indeed, affect that exists *between* people, a relationality between self and other that, for Bromwich, undermines the text's nationalism, a *com*-passion and rather than an expression of individual will over and against another (181).

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to understand the experience of war as intrinsically bound up with dislocation—not merely of peoples and culture, but also the *dis-location* of borders and spaces, and finally the dislocation of war itself. War's violence for Wordsworth lies precisely in its negation of place by space, and then its turning space itself into an uninhabitable no-place. In Wordsworth's *Salisbury Plain* poems this dislocation is significantly expressed as de-territorialization that re-codifies the pastoral and loco-descriptive poem, over-writing the Romantic landscape as a site of war. Wordsworth's naturalism may, in this sense, be read through the lens or as a product of nineteenth-century warfare and militarism.

War is not simply a theme within poetry for Wordsworth, but an occasion for poetic or conceptual experimentation, challenging the way we think and represent war as a discrete event

occurring as a point in time or space. Thus, Wordsworth's writings are not so much concerned with the historical account of war, but with mapping its transmission, echoes, and dissemination. These reverberations do not, however, afford us the privilege in Wordsworth's texts of being a distant observer of war. Indeed, Wordsworth's war writings reveal a world in which the national borders and ontological definitions are increasingly disappearing, collapsing into one another. The most central among these is the notion of war as a conflict of nations, which Wordsworth consistently undermines in his writings on the Peninsular War. Deconstructing war in an age of burgeoning total warfare, Wordsworth's writings show how the Napoleonic wars were, in fact, co-extensive with local resistance, how dispersed or guerrilla fighting were produced as responses to the formalization and mass expansion of war.

Thus, while it has been taken for granted that Napoleonic era serves as the origin of what would later be termed "total war," what the treatise on the Convention of Cintra foregrounds the proliferation of local resistance, little wars, and irregular fighting as a symptom or a product of the expansion of in the nineteenth-century Europe, even if Wordsworth himself shows them as (fundamentally) opposed to total war. Thus, while romanticism has been pressed as a witness to modern war efforts, *Cintra* questions the continuity between the total wars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It invites us to re-examine the historical claims or grand narratives about the emergence of total war. Echoing and developing some of the central motifs of *Cintra*, the Iberian poems provide us a glimpse into the fracturing of total war, perhaps even at its height or most intensive point, when war itself becomes subterranean, borderless, without territory, invisible, and dispersed.

CHAPTER TWO

Inhospitable Natures

The Laws of Hospitality

Among the revisions made to *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, two were crucial in directing the poem's bewildered readers to the meaning of the poem. They consisted of a revised "Argument" in 1800 and two marginal glosses in 1817 that framed the infamous shooting of the Albatross as an offence against "hospitality."[45] The original "Argument" that accompanied the second 1800 edition poem was couched as a rather neutral description of how "*the Ship*" made its way across the Pacific Ocean, and of the "strange things" that befell the ship and crew as they headed towards the South Pole—mentioning the poem's protagonist, the Ancient Mariner, only at the end. If the original argument is purely descriptive, the revised argument is emphatically moral:

> How a Ship, having first sailed to the Equator, was driven by Storms to the cold Country towards the South Pole; *how the Ancient Mariner cruelly and in contempt of the laws of hospitality* killed a Seabird and how he was followed by many and strange Judgments: and in what manner he came back to his own Country (*L.B. 1800* my emphasis*)*

Specifically, the revised argument puts forward hospitality as the key to navigating the poem's moral meaning. The theme of hospitality purports to explain to the nature of the crime (i.e., cruelty) and provide the strange and disconnected misfortunes that befell the Mariner with a narrative arc of crime, judgment, and redemption. And yet, if hospitality is supposed to introduce thematic unity into the poem, it is symptomatic that this concept of borders, invoked in the marginalia and parataxis of the poem, actually produces more disruption in the text than unity.

[45] I refer to 1798, 1800, 1817 versions of the *Rime*.

As for the marginal glosses, the judiciousness of their additions has been the subject of a long debate. Some readers, such as Charles Lamb, preferred the purity of the original version, free from the editiorializing and rationalizing hand that was later imposed on the text. Others, justifiably, found the moral solution offered by the argument to be somewhat arbitrary, ironic, unsatisfactory and even ungrounded in the text.[46] The theme of hospitality seems only further obscured when Coleridge replaced the "Argument" in later editions of the poem with an epigraph by Burnet that re-directs the focus of the poem's interpretations to the role of superstition and the effect of its "invisible creatures" on our "sense of proportion" and "certainty." Few readers have sought to examine the gloss in connection with the theme of hospitality, other than as an interpretative device framing the rather uneventful description of the shooting of the Albatross as follows: "The ancient Mariner inhospitably killeth the pious bird of good omen." Even fewer have attended to the other gloss on hospitality in the poem, whose picture of harmony, coming after the death of the crew, begs the question of what these laws of hospitality are and why they occupy the places in the poem that they do, outside to or side-by-side with the poem?[47]

> and every where the blue sky belongs to them [the Moon and the stars], and is their appointed rest, and their native country and their own natural home, which they enter unannounced, as lords that are *certainly expected and yet there is a silent joy at their arrival*" (263 my emphasis).

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[46] See Jerome McGann for a range of critical positions on the gloss: "Let me begin with the gloss, which to this day most readers take to represent at least one level of Coleridge's own interpretation of his poem" (38).
[47] For a recent interpretation of hospitality in Coleridge's *Rime* and *Christabel*, see Heffernan.

Furthermore, what do the concepts of hospitality and the guest have to do with the poem's discourse about the sanctity of life or the Mariner "valedictory piety" praising all of God's creature great and small?[48] In the *Rime,* the notion of the guest seems to extend to the consideration of who lives or dies, to what lives may be permitted sanctuary, to the designation of those other *others* who may be killed or sacrificed with impunity. The famous exchange with Anne Laetitia Barbauld, one of the earliest critics of the *Rime*, elaborating on its moral or lack thereof, insists again on hospitality as a double injunction that denounces killing as a crime, while at the same sanctioning the law of retaliation. The anecdote raises the question of how to think of the relation between these coextensive yet profoundly discordant injunctions of hospitality and sacrifice:

> Mrs. Barbauld once told me that she admired the Ancient Mariner very much, but that there were two faults in it,—it was improbable, and had no moral. As for the probability, I owned that that might admit some question; but as to the want of a moral, I told her that in my own judgment the poem had too much; and that the only, or chief fault, if I might say so, was *the obtrusion of the moral sentiment so openly on the reader as a principle or cause of action in a work of such pure imagination. It ought to have had no more moral than the Arabian Nights' tale of the merchant's sitting down to eat dates by the side of a well, and throwing the shells aside, and lo! a genie starts up, and says he must kill the aforesaid merchant, because one of the date shells had, it seems, put out the eye of the genie's son.*" (*Specimens of the Table Talk of the Late Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 111 my emphasis).

[48] John Livingstone Lowes (277).

As a work of pure imagination, the *Rime* was not deficient in having too little but, as Coleridge insists, *too much* moral.[49] And while it remains a matter of conjecture which lines of the Rime Coleridge is referring to that exemplify "the obtrusion of moral sentiment," his desire to keep the aesthetic work apart from the moral text is explicit. In works of pure imagination such as the *Rime*, there ought to be *no more moral than* the story in *The Arabian Nights*: the re-telling of the *Nights* functions, on one level, as Coleridge's own interpretation of the *Rime* and identifies the trope that we will, following the example of the *Rime*, broadly designate as hospitality for the purpose of exploring the ban against killing.

As it is originally told in *The Arabian Nights*, however, the story of the merchant and the genie in fact relates how a merchant (as a figure of commerce and transactor of values) had inadvertently *killed* the genie's son with the date pits and is made to repay the genie by giving his life for the life that he took: "blood for blood" (*The Arabian Nights* 17).[50] By mistaking the pit for a non-fatal missile, and by confusing the taking of a life for the taking of an eye, Coleridge's distortion of *The Arabian Nights* makes the crime more arbitrary while the punishment seems decidedly unjust. Here, the substitution—of the pit that kills for the one that blinds, death for life—do more than establish equivalence and identity: instead for restoring an eye for an eye or a life for a life, it generates a new kind of correspondence, urging us to explore the imbrication of life and death in new ways; to take seriously the double postulation to protect life on the one hand and to sacrifice it on the other; and to analyze the indiscernibility between hospitality and

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[49] See also Barbauld on *This Lime Tree Bower* in Gurion Taussig's *Coleridge and the Idea of Friendship 1789-1804*, 105-106.

[50] In *Contra Faustum*, Augustine writes, "This difficulty that cruelty offers to reading is dramatized in interpretations of the *lex talionis*, especially in arguments which, taking this cue from Augustine, locate the law (*lex*) as a seat of reason and compassion: "Hence, *an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth* was not intended to arouse fury but to set a limit to it; it was not imposed to kindle a dormant fire but to set bounds beyond which an already blazing fire should not go" (XIX. Para. 25, 255)

cruelty that is thematized in the text. In the above, the structural parallel between the *Rime* and *Nights* intimates a possible dialogue between the laws of hospitality and the law of retaliation.

In Leviticus, the book where God speaks to Moses about housekeeping and stipulates the codes of conduct that are to be observed in his *sanctuary,* this connection (between hospitality and vengeance) appears as one of the Mosaic laws permitting the penalty of death: “Anyone who kills a human being shall be put to death. *Anyone who kills an animal shall make restitution for it, life for life.* Anyone who maims another shall suffer the same injury in return: fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; the injury inflicted is the injury to be suffered. *One who kills an animal shall make restitution for it; but one who kills a human being shall be put to death. You shall have one law for the alien and for the citizen*: for I am the LORD your God” (Leviticus 24:17-23 my emphasis). Under the Mosaic code, the *lex talionis* functions as a maxim or guiding principle of the law of punishment specifically in cases of homicide. As a rule, then, the principle of retaliation does not apply punishment to mirror the crime in the cases of theft or defamation, where reparation cannot surely take the form of more theft or defamation. In these cases, the *lex talionis* exacts compensation for an injury through monetary or other equivalent means, under the assumption of a system of *substitution* that is able to give something *other* to the injured party in the same value of that which was lost or injured. Only in the case of homicide, where there can be no equivalent substitution, the *lex talionis* reverts back to the more direct sense of retaliation found in Deuteronomy: life for life.[51]

But here the figure of the alien shows the code of justice addressing the question of who the law protects, a question that ultimately concerns hospitality, insofar as such a thinking of

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[51] See Geoffrey Bennington’s “Ex Lex”. See also Morris Fish “An Eye for An Eye.”

otherness, of the guest and of welcome makes itself available to the law. Here, the law protects and punishes citizen and alien alike. If the *Rime* is indeed concerned with hospitality, it is not the hospitality of citizens nor the hospitality practiced to my fellow man, not even the hospitality to my neighbor or my brother, but a hospitality to what one calls an animal—those who belong to no one or no home, and are protected by no law—as the limit case of hospitality (*Acts* 363).

Spaces of Exception

In the *Rime,*" the maritime settings the backdrop to the world of the supernatural imagination.[8] Here, nature is inhospitable. The ice that is all around beckons with danger, the water is undrinkable, the deck of the Mariner's ship is said to be "rotting," and comparable to a charnel-dungeon (69, 121-122, 242-243, 435). Indeed, in the imaginary world of the poem "the very deep did rot" (123). Like a contagion, this rot of the damp sea spreads inland, and we encounter it again upon the Mariner's arrival home: "It is the moss that wholly hides/The rotted oak stump" of the hermitage (521-522). The Mariner's inhospitable crime takes place against the backdrop of this inhospitable nature. In no uncertain term, it exemplifies the antagonism between man and nature. And yet, the moral of the poem would, in Coleridge's revisions, turn around a notion of hospitality—a concept of borders that is itself a borderline concept—turning hospitality into cruelty and later, into spiritual conversion. In the span of a few lines describing the inhospitable crime, the poem moves seamlessly between the actions of hailing and feeding the bird, to the horror of the crew, before finally realizing the crime, almost as an after-thought in which the instant of death is entirely missed: "With my cross-bow/I shot the Albatross" (81-82). It is as if the flight of the cross-bow collapsed all barriers between cause and effect, sky and sea, man and beast, and kindness and cruelty.

The question of space pertains to the concept of hospitality, which makes a certain notion of separateness or space untenable, turning space into a question of how to spatially represent the entanglement of man, spirit and nature in the poem—an entanglement that we shall explore in greater detail when encountering the allegorical character of Life-in-Death who will save the Mariner from certain death only to subject him to a life in death, that is, a life for which the instant of death is suspended. In the first place, then, the poem takes place over the high seas, where neither the laws of nation or nature hold dominion, or they are subordinated to the supernatural elements of the poem that controls its action. The poem's *super*naturalism exceeds both man and nature. Supernaturalism exceeds the Mariner even if it is merely a product of his imagination, and it exceeds nature even if it finds its manifestation only in nature. By bringing together the laws of man and nature, supernaturalism suspends what is natural in nature and what is human in man. In the *Rime*, supernaturalism is a sign that we are no longer in nature even if, like the Mariner's ship, we are encompassed by it.

Much remains to be said about the centrality of the motif of suspension in the poem. It is implied in the 1834 epigraph by the theologian Thomas Burnet that functions as an invitation to the reader to suspend her disbelief upon entering the poem without forgoing her sense of proportion or her ability to discern between day and night: a suspension of disbelief within the limits of reason, as it were. This invitation to suspend one's disbelief quickly turns into a menacing imperative that compels the Wedding-Guest to leave the wedding party in progress, in order to make him a captive audience of the Mariner's strange odyssey:

> He [the Mariner] holds him with his skinny hand,
>
> 'There was a ship,' quoth he.
>
> 'Hold off! Unhand me, grey-beard loon!'

Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

He holds him with his glittering eye—

The Wedding-Guest stood still,

And listens like a three years' child:

The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone:

He cannot choose but hear;

And thus spake on that ancient man,

The bright-eyed Mariner (9-20).

These stanzas continue to develop the motif of suspension by suggesting the different ways that the Mariner may be said to have a "hold" over his Guest. Beginning with the physical detention of the guest, held against his will, the stanzas show his complete enthrallment in the line that provocatively describes the Mariner holding his Guest with his glittering eye. Spellbound and petrified like the stone that he is sitting on, the Guest is held hostage until he hears the end of the Mariner's story: he—like one possessed—cannot choose but hear the "rime" of the Mariner.[52]

But to read the hostage situation exhaustively as an expression of power or the tyranny of the Mariner, is to miss the more unsettling hospitality in these exchanges between the Guest and the Mariner, in which it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish who the host or the guest

[52] Peter Melville argues the same: "More specifically, his will imposed upon him by the Mariner's mesmeric 'glittering eye,' the Wedding Guest is held hostage, as it were, in his host-age of the Mariner's tale—a predicament that only reinforces the notion that hospitality and hostility are often two sides of the same coin" (111).

really is. The important lines nine and thirteen play up the confusion in their use of pronouns in what seems to be a deliberate choice of conflating the subjects of the poem, to substitute the name for a pronoun that one might easily be forgiven for mistaking as both Guest and Mariner. [53]

In his reading of this exchange in *Romantic Hospitality and the Resistance to Accomodation*, Peter Melville argues that the roles are, in fact, reversed, and that the Guest is really obligated to the play the host, and hospitably give his time to the Mariner's sermon. But Melville's argument here seems to underplay the extent to which the Guest is also hostage and that his command, in referring to the Mariner as a "gray-beard *loon*!" equates the Mariner with the Albatross.[54] It follows that, as Melville argues, "Were [the Guest] to join his fellow celebrants he would in effect be slaying a great bird of his own, thus confirming the tragedy of the Mariner's tale" (111). As Melville puts it, the Guest's double-bind consists in the impossibility of doing hospitality without simultaneously "failing to realize one's obligation to another other" (113). Melville's formulation introduces an important third-person to the discourse of host and guest, the *other's other* whose sacrifice makes it possible for the roles of host and guest to be reversed, for the guest to enjoy the privileges of the host, and for the host to experience of hospitality of being a guest in his own home. But here, the Guest's equivocation takes the logic of substitution even further by suggesting, in the equivalence between the Mariner and the Albatross, another equivalence between the killer and the thing killed. Thus, the experience of hospitality, premised upon giving away that which is proper to the self, subjects the poetical character to a dizzying array of subject positions or an experiencing subjectivity as

[53] See also Arden Reed's reading of the stanza: "Adding to the effect of the compacted 'he' are the repeated possessive pronouns and the alliterating 'h' sounds. It is not difficult to sort out the pronouns' references, but as one reads straight through the stanza, the diction tends to confuse the interlocutor's separate identities in one's mind, an effect redoubled thematically over the course of the poem (158).

[54] I thank Elissa Marder for pointing out the connection.

being a hostage, a gesture of substitution and sacrifice that is symbolically expressed in the *Rime*'s imagery of the cross. [55]

This imagery of the cross appears alongside the Albatross at crucial junctures in the poem. The first of these appearances sets up the framework of Christian hospitality in order, it seems, to portray later events analogously as Christian sacrifice:

At length did cross an Albatross,
Thorough the fog it came;
As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God's name (1834, 63-66)

The work of hailing the Albatross in this passage turns the unfamiliar into the familiar (into that which can be welcomed), but not without lingering over the sense of anticipation that attends the *greeting* of the Albatross which also *names* it as a creature of God. With the greeting of the stranger who appears through a veil of fog hospitality is figured as an exercise in reading and sign-making. It stages the encounter with nature as a something entirely foreign, whose meaning is concealed from the interpreter of signs, at the same time that it holds, at cross-purposes, the meaning of absolute hospitality, in which the traveler finds familiar signs, the sign of a Christian soul no less, even under conditions that are inhospitable to man and his purpose. Thus, the Albatross is not so a much a "familiar sight," as Paul Magnuson claims, as that it is made into one, namely, into the sign of the cross (59). The question remains of whether to interpret this sign (of the cross) as a negating power that sacrifices nature for representation, an act of hostility that kills things as soon as they are named; or to take the poem's logic of contradictions to its

[55] Perhaps the radical passivity of the hostage presents us with another way of reading Wordsworth's declaration that "the principal person" of the poem "has no distinct character" (*Collected Letters of Samuel Coleridge* 1.544-5).

logical conclusion by precisely holding on to the possibility that greeting and killing, hospitality and hostility, the spheres of the living and those of the dead, may yet inhabit the same space (a sign of welcoming which is open to the risk of suspending its own meaning)?

The rhyming structure of the *Rime* repeatedly insists on the correspondence between the cross and the Albatross.[56]Appearing in the *cross*-bow that killed the Albatross, in the shriving Hermit who "crossed his *brow*," and in the poem's allusion to Christ on the cross, these correspondences clearly allow for the shooting of the bird to be read as a sacrifice, and hence, to establish an analogy between Christ and the Albatross (575). In some cases, these correspondences imply substitution.

The shipmates,
In their sore
Distress, would
Fain throw the   Instead of the cross, the Albatross
whole guilt on   About my neck was hung
the ancient Mariner: in sigh whereof they hang the dead sea-bird round his neck

Here, the Albatross takes the place of the cross, but elsewhere the substitutions generate unexpected parallels and intersections among events and characters. The shriving of the Mariner, for example, recalls the cross-bow that killed the Albatross and signals, on one level, the poem coming full circle with the promise of restitution, of restoring order precisely through substitution: the crossing of the brow for the crossing of the bow.[57] And yet, the substitution that claims to expiate the crime also repeats it on a metaphorical level. In this case, the shriving

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[56] On the work of puns and rhyming structure in *Rime*, see Reed's chapter "The Riming Mariner and the Mariner Rimed."
[57] For a reading of the poem's use of Christian symbolism see Robert Penn Warren (229).

implies a reversal in which the Mariner takes the place of the Albatross at the cross. In the above, the poem's substitution between the bird shot down by the cross-bow and the man who died on the cross calls to mind Christ as the highest form of substitution: the capacity to die for someone other than oneself or carrying someone else's cross; a substitution that is also a sacrifice in the sense of an act that does not ask for recompense—a substitution, then, that implies the end of retributive justice, or tit for tat.[58] But the detail in the gloss suggests a slightly different meaning. It significantly interprets the substitution as a production of signs, particularly, the sign of guilt made by hanging the dead bird around the neck of its slayer. The gloss explains that rather unlike Christ's selfless sacrifice which absolves sins and discharges debt, this sign is a *displacement* of guilt making it a sign that is read by avenging spirits who do the work of determining guilt and exacting vengeance in the text.[59]

The question remains of how to interpret the sign of hanging, which appears in both gloss and poem, and dramatically figured in the intrusion of the gloss into the poem. Why is this sign of guilt worked out in the poem's formal and rhetorical experimentation, if not to suggest a certain hanging or suspension at the level of reading and interpreting? But then again, what can such a suspension of reading imply?

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[58] Peter 3:18-19, "For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit…" See also Hebrews 10:10-15, "And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest stands day after day at his service, offering again and again the same sacrifices that can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, "he sat down at the right hand of God," and since then has been waiting "until his enemies would be made a footstool for his feet." For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

[59] Thus, we are invited to consider the substitutability the proximity between Christ and the Mariner. This filiation between Christ and Mariner is alluded to by the text as a piece of irony: "'Is it he?' quoth one, 'Is this the man [the Mariner]? By him who died on the cross,/With his cruel bow he laid full low/The harmless Albatross" (398-40). Is this the man who repays Christ, who died *for* him, with violence? The adverb "by" conveys proximity, but the accusatory question implies a juxtaposition: is the Mariner like Christ, and under what condition—the sacrifice of the Albatross? These questions of substitution complicate the poem's piety by suggesting something repetitive, which is also to say suspensive, in the logic of sacrifice and substitution.

Charles Lamb's fictional epistle "On the Inconveniences Resulting From Being Hanged" (1811) provides some clues.[60] Lamb's essay is presented as an epistle written by one Pensilis, also known as "Mr. Correspondent," who has survived the gallows The letter is addressed to the editor of the Reflector, who is referred to in the essay alternatively as "Mr. Editor" and "Mr. Reflector." Allow me to quote in full the imaginary exchange taking place between Pensilis and Mr. Reflector, since the argument depends in large part on its delivery: the ironic and, in spite of the narrator's attestation, metaphorical style of the essay:

> O Mr. Reflector! Guess at the wretch's misery who now writes this to you, when, with tears and burning blushes, he is obliged to confess, that he has been—hanged—
> Methinks I hear an involuntary exclamation burst from you, as your imagination presents to you fearful images of your correspondent unknown,—*hanged!*
> Fear not, Mr. Editor. No disembodied spirit has the honor of addressing you. I am flesh and blood, an unfortunate system of bones, muscles, sinews, arteries, like yourself.
> *Then, I presume, you mean to be pleasant—That expression of yours, Mr. Correspondent, must be taken somehow in a metaphorical sense—*
> In the plainest sense, without trope or figure—Yes, Mr. Editor! this neck of mine has felt the fatal noose,—these hands have tremblingly held up the corroborative prayer-book,—these lips have sucked the moisture of the last consolatory orange,—this tongue has chanted the doleful cantata which no performer was ever called upon to repeat,—these face has had the veiling nightcap drawn over it—(334).[61]

[60] Mark Canuel's *Shadow of Death* brought my attention to Lamb's piece.
[61] Compare Pensilis' "Fear not, Mr Editor!" to the Mariner's "Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest!/This body dropt not down" and the sense in both

The letter recounts how Pensilis was sentenced to die for a crime that he had not committed, how he was saved from execution by the discovery of his innocence, and finally, how, in spite of the reprieve, his surviving days (described in terms of a remainder: “the refuse of the rope, the leavings of the cord” [336]) are all recurring occasions for fresh hanging, in the figurative sense. His name, whose meaning in the Latin *pensilis*, as a derivative from pendēre, means to hang down in a pendulous manner. But it is also used an ornithological term to describe a species of bird that build hanging nests. The joke at his expense suffocate him; the cravats, purchased to hide the scar where the noose was tied, strangle him anew. Through irony and metaphorical displacements, the text says what it is not, or it says one thing while meaning another. It appears that the text’s most ironic statement, or the one that it returns over and over again to articulate, as if profoundly unconvinced by its own avowal, is that it speaker is not dead. The speaker now even resorts to assure someone, to address Mr. Reflector, as if the imaginary dialogue and the convention of address is supposed to convince us of the flesh and blood of Pensilis and his Reflector. But, in fact, how can such a statement be meaningfully represented, while affirming in all seriousness both “I have died” (for all of four minutes”) and “I am still writing” (to you, and not as a Spirit)?

Not without some humor, irony and metaphorical displacement, to be sure. The narrator explains: “Really I am ashamed of deforming your pages with these technical phrases—if I knew how to express my meaning shorter—” (335). By these deformities, Pensilis is referring to the technicalities of the law. But the literary conceits dis-figure the text even further. Pensilis is hanged, but not dead; metaphorically strangulated over and over again, even though the text continues to show that he is alive, in a certain sense. In a certain sense: it is not a matter of the text representing the presence of an author (a living author, who did not commit the crime, who

died but is alive etc.), but the text itself as a zone in which in which living and dying become indistinct from one another, enveloping the presence of the author in what is essentially an absent text that persistently troubles its authorship—a text written and read by no-one. In this zone of indistinction, where his death has always already been anticipated, the narrator Pensilis is both more present and absent than ever, like a "Lazarus" figure who announces the impossibility and even interminability of dying or a life-in-death. Pensilis continues, a few pages later, to show Shakespeare himself resorted to such disfiguration in *Measure for Measure*. In order to achieve the greatest comedic effect, Shakespeare is said to have hanged the character of Master Barnardine rather than have him beheaded as would have been historically accurate.[62] It is a question of disfiguring the text while preserving the corporal integrity of the narrative. The issue of humor is not an incidental component of Lamb's essay:

> One reason why the ludicrous never fails to intrude itself into our contemplations upon this mode of death, I suppose to be, the *absurd* posture into which a man is thrown who is *condemned to dance, as the vulgar delight to express it, upon nothing*.[63] To see him whisking and wavering in the air, to behold the *vacant carcass*, from which the life is newly dislodged, shifting between earth and heaven, the sport of every gust…these are uses to which we cannot without mixture of spleen and contempt behold the human carcass reduced. We string up dogs, foxes, bats, moles, weasels. Man surely deserves a steadier death (338-339)

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[62] "But Shakespeare knew that the axe and block were pregnant with no ludicrous images, and therefore falsified the historic truth of his own drama (if I may so speak) rather than he would leave out such excellent matter for a jest as the suspending of a fellow-creature in mid air has ever esteemed to be by Englishmen" (338)

[63] Compare to Victor Hugo's *The Last Day of A Condemned Man: XVI*: "such strange and bloody language, such hideous slang, sung by a young girl, in a voice that was a graceful combination of a child's and a womans!": "But the king in wrath did swear: 'By my crown! I will make him dance a dance/O'er a floorless broad expanse, Dangling down!" (36-37).

The ludicrous constitutes the essential experience of hanging. The hanged body is an absurdity that is emptied of meaning. Hanging turns tragedy into levity. The carcass is suspended, dances in mid-air, devoid of the dignity and gravitas of being human. Hanging suspends what it means to live or die as a human, by making the body indistinguishable from the common weasel that is hunted down and strung up.

For a long time, hanging had been the most common form of punishment in Britain applied to crimes as petty as theft and as serious as murder or treason.[64] The Elizabethan era introduced the use of a "triangular gallows" that became a fixture at Tyburn for nearly two hundred years. The invention was built to accommodate the hanging of up to twenty-four people, possibly more, at any given execution. While beheading remained the prerogative of the high-born, hanging was for common folk and thus maintained, even in death, the hierarchy that the guillotine dissolved at the height of the Terror. According to Pensilis:

> It has always appeared to me that, in the mode of inflicting capital punishment with us, there is too much of the ministry of the human hand. The guillotine, as performing its functions more of itself and sparing human agency, though a cruel and disgusting exhibition, in my mind has many ways the advantage over *our way*. In beheading, indeed, as it was formerly practiced in England, and in whipping to death, as is sometimes practised now, the hand of man is no doubt sufficiently busy; but there is something less repugnant in these downright blows than in the officious barber-like ministerings of *the other.* To have a fellow with his hangman's hands fumbling about your collar, adjusting the thing as your valet would regulate your cravat, valuing himself on his menial dexterity (201).

[64] See Vic Gatrell and Douglas Hay.

By comparing the machinery of the guillotine to the fumbling barbarism of the English gallows, Pensilis calls attention to the diminishing role of the hangman. In Germany, as Pensilis humorously points out, the families of the "hereditary hangman" were permitted to intermarry in order to keep the profession alive. In France, hanging was replaced by the guillotine—the machine that was built to help standardize the administration of capital punishment, with a simple and efficient decapitating machine, that would implement the same punishment to "whatever the rank or estate of the criminal."[65] Though intended to rid capital punishment of barbaric (because inefficient, clumsy, unscientific, and worst of all, crowd-agitating) practices of the past, indeed the specter of the hangman and torturer, the guillotine also appeared to remove whatever human element that remained in the punishment of death. As Joseph de Maistre writes, "All grandeur, all power, all subordination rests on the executioner: he is the horror and *the bond of human association*. Remove this incomprehensible agent from the world, and at that very moment order gives way to chaos, thrones topple, and society disappears" (cited in Linebaugh 67). De Maistre seemed to think that the vestige of our humanity is to found in the figure of the executioner, who, far from being the harbinger of chaos, was the bulwark against meaninglessness, the human face of death as it were.

In Coleridge's *Rime*, too, hanging seems not to be one motif among others, but a significant explication on the theme of interruption, and even a reflection on its own disruption. This theme of hanging includes all the moments of suspension that are embedded in the text, from the formal incursion of the gloss into the text; to the ekphrasis that seems to refer to the poem itself when it compares the petrified crew to its own image: "As idle as a painted ship/Upon a painted ocean"; through to the narrator's loss of consciousness at the moment when

[65] First article of Guillotin's proposed bill to the Constituent Assembly (Arasse 11).

judgment is passed over him (117-118; 391-392). These variations on the theme of hanging, which are so deliberate and abundant in the poem, would have us believe in an image of death that is decisive, total, and ubiquitous. But this is actually only half the story. The originality of the Rime consists precisely in disrupting the ubiquity of death that is to be found everywhere in "the rotting sea" on, "the rotting deck," in the "rotted oak-stump" inland (240;242;522). But the poem is not exactly interested in life either, defined in opposition to death, but rather in a peculiar involution of the two spheres, a sphere of life-in-death that is inhabited by poetic characters such as the ghostly Mariner and his resurrected crew—all figures of the undead.

> Are those her [the skeleton ship] ribs through which the Sun
> Did peer, as through a grate?
> And is that Woman all her crew?
> Is that a DEATH? And are there two?
> Is DEATH that woman's mate?
>
> *Her* lips were red, her looks were free,
> *Her* locks were yellow as gold:
> Her skin was as white as leprosy,
> The Night-mare LIFE-IN-DEATH was she,
> Who thicks man's blood with cold (1834, 185-194).[66]

The appearance of Death and his mate Life-in-Death on board the skeleton ship raises a string of questions. This is not least because death itself is frequently posed as uncertain in the poem, when, for example, the Guest implores his interlocutor for assurance that the Mariner is

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[66] Compare *L.B. 1798.*

not spirit raised from the dead, but indeed alive. Here, the questions demonstrate the obscurity attending reading and interpretation in the text, of the appearance of a pattern of meaning that is illuminated by interposing, overlapping and superimposed spheres of meanings. The pairing of Death and Life-in-Death appears to echo the imbricated sense of life and death throughout the poem. Their overlap of life-in-death points to a textual structure that is convoluted and carries within itself the possibility of its own interruption. Thus, she is not only a figure of exception who not only embodies contrary relations to life and death, but also a figure of hospitality who opens up a space within the text that is sacred or excepted from death—a space of immunity that is possibly articulated by the poem in its schoolroom didacticism concerning the respect of life owed to all of God's creatures great and small (611-617). The encounter seems calculated to illustrate the relationship between language and death, particularly in the capacity for language to contain death, in the sense of preserving death, to keep death alive, but also in a manner that is peculiar to the poem's understanding of death as viral, to communicate or reproduce this death in its listener or reader.

To be sure, the lines that follow depict Life-in-Death more ambivalently as a figure of spiritual and bodily corruption. Neither a simple alternative to Death, nor merely life, the poem describes her as a canvas of skin and colors (or flashes of gold, red, and white); at other times she seems the product of delirium, nightmare, and disease. In every case she seems to exceed simple categories, especially those of life and death, which she is called upon to personify. Thus, while she associated with life, she is also figured as a disease, leprosy, which turns the flesh into a surface marked by infection. The biblical allusion to Christ's healing of the leper makes the diseased body the site of the sacred by designating it as an expression of Christ's miraculous power on the one hand, while marking it out as a defilement or pollution that is to be cordoned

off or set apart in the profane meaning of the sacred on the other. This double foci in the meaning of the sacred, which makes the high and holy dependent on the low and unclean (and vice versa, what is unclean the occasion for divine power) extends to the poem's meditation on sacred life, on its prohibition against killing (reminiscent of the commandment "Thou shalt not kill"), which, in the *Rime* at least, nevertheless involves some manner of sacrifice.

The sudden death and mysterious resurrection of the Mariner's crew seem to straddle the poem's ambivalent postulations of the sacred:

> The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
> Nor rot nor reek did they:
> The look with which they looked on me
> Had never passed away.
>
> An orphan's curse would drag to hell
> A spirit from on high;
> But oh! More horrible than that
> Is the curse in a dead man's eye!
> Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
> And yet I could not die (1834, 252-262) [67]

The death of the crew recalls the shooting of the Albatross: the flight of their souls reminding the Mariner of "the whizz of [his] cross-bow." And yet it is not quite clear that the sacrifice of the

[67] The detail about the Mariner's crew is bookended by reflections on the harmony of the cosmos. The first of these reflections is given by the chiasmus reiterating the motif of the cross through the crisscrossing relations of sky and sea: "For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky/ Lay like a load on my weary eye,/And the dead were at my feet" (252-254). The end of the scene is bracketed by the gloss which significantly frames the lyrical scene as one of hospitality (see page 2).

Albatross is the same as the sacrifice of the crew, in spite of the text's suggestion. The former is billed as a crime and requires penance. The latter seems more like a collateral damage, which is at any rate difficult to account for in the terms of crime and punishment given by the text. *And yet*, as such an incidental component of the Mariner's rime, the death of the crew raises the question of "one's obligation to another other," as Melville aptly puts it (113). Melville is interested in reading the figure of "another other" as symptomatic of a certain "failure" to offer hospitality to another without depriving it from another's other, dramatized for Melville in the Guest's dilemma: to listen to the *Rime* at the cost of missing the wedding party where he is precisely *next-of-kin*. But in its continual displacement of the host, in making the host other to himself, the poem seems very conscious of its formulation of an other's other, in adjacent relations, in the party happening next door etc. These formulations implicate the minor characters of the poem as well as the sacrifices occurring parallel to the sacrifice of the Albatross. These sacrifices are not contingent to the poem's moral to respect the sacredness of life or the ban against killing. By figuring the crewmen as sacred beings—as the dead who are remarkably untouched by the death and corruption that dominate the poem—the text seems to be demonstrating the proximity of the two postulations, of sacrifice and sacredness, of the call for sacrifice in the name of the sanctity of life.

Gendering Coleridge's Hospitality Poems

This portion of my chapter takes up the figure of the feminine in what might be called Coleridge's other hospitality poems *Christabel* and *This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison*. Thus, it seeks to understand the role of the feminine, who we first encountered in the *Rime* as the allegorical character "Life-in-Death", in other variations and in other configurations of hospitality. To begin, then, with a few contextual remarks on *Christabel*, whose writing takes

place over the course of writing the *Lime-Tree* and *Rime* poems, and provides something of a thematic bridge between the two poems: the first part of Christabel is written around the same time as *This Lime-Tree* in 1797 while the second part was written between 1800-1801, two years after Coleridge published his first version of *Rime*. Like *Kubla Khan*, to which it is frequently compared, *Christabel* remains unfinished, and would only appear in publication in 1816. At the close of the eighteenth-century, England is taken over, possessed, by the fear of French invasions that will persist through the following year, and the fear of revolution sparked by mutinies close to home. This alarm over domestic security would precipitate in the suspension of *Habeas Corpus* in the spring of 1798, and climate of repression that would find its way to Nether-Stowey, where Wordsworth and Coleridge were, according to the *Biographia Literaria* at least, suspected for a brief time of being French spies.[68]

The themes of hospitality and the stranger in *Christabel* draw attention to the disturbances at home that seemed to have been laid to rest long ago. The poem specifically conceives hospitality as a gesture of welcome that turns the home into the un-homely. But it also embeds the theme of hospitality within its exploration of feminine sexuality and its transgression. Thus, while the notion of hospitality will appear in this poem in the *name* of fathers, as the hospitality that is shown by "Sir Leoline" to "Sir Roland," a hospitality among the sires and patriarchs of noble lines, it is nonetheless a hospitality that is transacted between the women and associated with the figure of femininity in the text. As the poem progresses, the revelation that Geraldine happens to be the daughter of Sir Roland not only presents an opportunity for the estranged friends to bury hatchet: Leoline's infatuation with the daughter of his heart's best

[68] By 1798, England was fighting a phantom menace on different fronts included the French abroad, the Irish Rebels and the English Jacobins who could be recruited to the French cause. The widespread fear led the Pitt government to demand for the suspension of *habeas corpus* in March 1798 (Keane 289).

brother, with his daughter's seductress vying for his affection, intimate a complex family romance.

At the start of the poem, there is already a breach of protocol. Acted on by dreams of the past, Christabel breaches the walls of her father's castle to pray—not for *his* ailing health—but for the "weal of her lover who is *far away*" (30 my emphasis). Her prayers are somewhat answered by a moan coming from the old oak tree. There, she finds the "damsel," Geraldine, who had been taken hostage by a band of mysterious assailants and left under the tree. In a gesture of hospitality, Christabel offers the stranger her home and promises the service of father in helping to restore the distressed Geraldine back to her father. Without missing a beat she offers to share her couch with the stranger. The poem goes on to offer the exchange between Christabel and Geraldine, an encounter that is framed as seduction, as the centerpiece of the poem. The decisive moment occurs near the conclusion of part one, which finds Christabel and Geraldine in a state of undress and in close embrace: "as a mother with her child" (301). But the narration of the poem suggests an earlier rendezvous. The meeting of the lovers under the old oak tree is itself a literary convention that portrays their encounter as secret and illicit. Christabel's offer of hospitality contains a solicitation: "But we will move as if in stealth,/*And I beseech your courtesy*,/This night, to share your couch with me": my hospitality solicits your courtesy (120-122). As Christabel's prayers for the far-away lover is answered by a moaning Geraldine, so Geraldine's performance as the distressed damsel, the victim of malevolent men, involves Christabel in the part of a certain heroine. From here on, they will act as accomplices and mirror identities of one another: with the help of Christabel's "key that fitted well" and

"opened straight," past "the gate that was ironed within and without," they will make their way through the castle together without resistance (124, 125, 128).[69]

The motif of the cross reappears in *Christabel*, particularly in its reference to Christ: "That He, who on the cross did groan" (389). The evocation of Christ in her namesake intimates a parallel between Christabel and Christ who after all preached a message of hospitality that one should love one's neighbor as oneself. But the poem also frequently deploys the symbolism to convey a traversal, as for example, when Christabel and Geraldine "crossed the moat" and later "crossed the court" (123; 133;144). Thus, this sense of the word "cross" suggest the crossing of a threshold as when the mysterious assailants, along with Geraldine as their hostage, are also said to have "crossed the shade of the night" (88). All these instances articulate the sense of transgression that informs the poem's portrayal of sexuality. But the motif of the cross is also linked to the narrative of conversion, to the poem's fantasy of metamorphoses dramatized in Christabel's transformation into an image of Geraldine, an image of "dull and treacherous hate" in the form of a serpent. This association of femininity and animality is repeated in the "toothless mastiff bitch" that is rumored to see "my lady's shroud" i.e. the ghost of the lady of the house (7). Beyond the suggestion of the analogy that represents women alternatively as objects of temptation and revulsion, pejorative to be sure, these examples of metamorphoses and heterogeneity also offer an image of femininity composed of an assemblage of shifting signifiers, or (a) femininity that is disseminated in animals as well objects that are associated with the feminine: the lover's chamber room, the beloved's silken robe, or stately neck, her "blue-veined feet unsandaled" and the gems that are entangled in her hair, and even the shroud of the dead

[69] The Maid [Christabel], alas! her thoughts are gone!/She nothing sees—no sight but one!/The Maid, devoid of Guile and Sin,/I know not how, in fearful wise/So deeply had she drunken in/That Look, those shrunken serpent Eyes [Geraldine's],/That all her Features were resign'd/To this sole Image in her Mind:/And passively did imitate/That Look of dull and treacherous Hate" (596-607).

mother (59-65). This feminine assemblage finds its expression in the poem's image of the "wandering mother," that is, in a figure of the nomadic mother who has no body and no home (205).[70]

In his "'Like a Lady of a Far Countrée': Coleridge's 'Christabel' and Fear of Invasion," James Mulvihill contextualizes the poem and its account of seduction within the climate of panic produced by the fear of an imminent French invasion. According to Mulvihill, the panic seems to have precipitated from a short-lived invasion that saw the French landing in Wales between 22 and 24 February 1797 as well as a rash of mutinies that sparked fears of revolution.[71] Despite the unconditional surrender of the French, the fear continued to circulate in England and intensified in the Spring of 1798 through rumors and unfounded reports of a French fleet headed for Ireland (252). The fear of an enemy abroad quickly escalated into by a fear of *the enemy within*: *sympathizers* of the French who had been *seduced* by the Jacobin ideology originated from a far away country. The figure of seduction in Mulvihill's reading of *Christabel* has to do with the sense of gaining entry and of giving up borders. But it is not the fear of the other that is so much at stake in the figure of seduction but the fantasy of a complicity that turns one into an accomplice or an accessory.

Nonetheless, Christabel and Geraldine's transgression seems to provoke something more than the fear of the enemy within or without. The complex alternation of fear, fascination, repulsion, and sorrow in the chamber room scenes seems to exceed the picture of paranoia that Mulvihill presents, however compelling. Moreover, the exchange between Geraldine and

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[70] See Karen Swann's "Lovely Ladies and Literary Gentlemen", when she recalls how the wandering signifier of "woman" is adopted by Coleridge himself who plays the part of a "mother" giving birth to Christabel—a "dead-born" creation (402). See also Rzepka for discussion of the figure of the wandering mother.

[71] Mulvihll mentions the *Hermione* mutiny in the West Indies 1797, but there were also mutinies at home Spithead and Nore.

Christabel, difficult to name, seems to flaunt the very terms of hospitality set out by the poem by turning the conventions of hospitality and the home inside out. In the absence of the father, their intimacy presents a version of hospitality that is, at least for a time, free of the baggage of patriarchal law and even the presupposition of a home: a hospitality then without sovereignty or of those who do not have sovereignty" (620).

> 'In the touch of this Bosom there worketh *a Spell,*
>
> *Which is Lord of thy Utterance*, Christabel!
>
> Thou knowest to-night, and wilt know to-morrow;
>
> *This Mark of my shame, this Seal of my Sorrow*;
>
> But vainly thou warrest,
>
> For this is alone in
>
> Thy Power to declare,
>
> That in the dim Forest
>
> Thou heard'st a low Moaning,
>
> And found'st a bright Lady, surpassingly pair;
>
> And didst bring her home with thee in Love and in Charity,
>
> To shield her and shelter her from the damp Air.' (my emphasis 267-278)

More than a portrait of licentiousness, the exchange between the women is not only shrouded in secrecy, but involves hospitality in the sharing of a secret such that the sharing of home, boudoir and body, become extensions of the kind of sharing that is stipulated by secrecy, that is, the sharing of a secret that, by definition, defies sharing; and the sharing of a mark of shame and sorrow, which would have been inhospitable for the hostess to communicate or betray. Rather than the content of secrecy, hospitality is concerned with the experience of sharing

as the communication of a certain experience of shame and sorrow while not disclosing, and thus, protecting or sheltering, its structure of secrecy or unnameability. In turn, this structure of secrecy, construed as a spell, possesses its listener, "lords" over her utterance, overturning the relationship between guest and master. Indeed, the poem seems to be interested in interrogating the slippage between the kind of possession that describes ownership (Leoline's authority over the Bard or his daughter; as well as the issue of ownership in the figure of the wandering mother without a body), and the supernatural possession that imagines the self that is not at home, dispossessed and inhabited by the other.[72]

In "'Christabel' and The Enigma of Form," Karen Swann has correctly read Leoline as an expression of the patriarchal law, which she associates with "a legislative, symbolic order structured according to a divisive logic" (547).[73] The clocks, the bells, the devices that count or tell time in the poem obey this logic "Each matin bell,/the Baron saith,/ knells us back to the world of death" (332). These are the words that Leoline first said on the morning he woke up to find his wife dead; and these are the words that he will repeat to his dying day. As if something remained unsaid by these decisive words, Leoline institutes "the custom and law" of sounding the death knell each morning "[w]hich not a soul can choose but hear/From Bratha Head to Wyndamere" (and perhaps even as far as the *Rime*).[74]

And yet, these bells, along the laws and conventions that they announce, are themselves the compulsion of a widower who has submitted to his grief, rather than the law-giver of the

[72] In a longer piece, it may be productive to take up this theme of the possession of the body in light of the suspension of *Habeas Corpus.* Swann argues, "The 'mother,' however, is neither spirit nor body. Dying the hour Christabel was born, she inhabits her daughter as an already dislodged form, or in psychoanalytic terms, as an alien internal entity or fantasy" ("The Enigma of Form" 549).
[73] Leonline authority's over Bard Bracy also turns him into a mouthpiece for his law on the one hand, and an interpreter of dreams on the other.
[74] The Mariner's words which the Wedding Guest cannot choose but hear.

household and the righter of wrongs that the poem leads us to believe (or as Geraldine leads him to believe himself capable of). The poem finds him in a debilitated condition, much like his old castle, and hardly the protector of the oppressed. His outburst at the end of the poem, the only time we hear the Baron in his own words, seems calculated to question rather than affirm his authority.

> Dishonored thus in his old age;
>
> Dishonored by his only child,
>
> And all his hospitality
>
> To the wronged daughter of his friend
>
> By more than woman's jealousy
>
> Brought thus to a disgraceful end— (644).

The end of the poem leaves him dishonored and disgraced, robbed of his prestige and all his hospitality stolen from him. The hospitality that was his to offer had already been offered by his daughter; his reward diverted from him the night before; and after his opportunity to rule as master of the house is stolen from him, he is doubly dishonored when, the following morning, by nothing more than woman's jealousy (as he sees it), he is deprived of his attempt to make up for the hospitality that he never given had in the first place. Christabel's withdrawal of her hospitality, her entreaty ("by my mother's soul) to send Geraldine away, bars Leoline's reconciliation with "his heart's best brother," and (one might add) precludes him from the ranks of the biblical patriarchs Lot and Abraham whose gesture of absolute hospitality demanded the sacrifice of their children. Here, hospitality marks a founding moment in which the negativity that is associated with the name of the father is turned into repressive law (417).

By conceiving hospitality as a symbolic order, Leoline shows how custom and law, especially those that have to with hospitality, are the product of conventions that are themselves rooted in language and the imaginary, in the interpretation of signs and the processes of condensation and substitution operative in the language of dream as well as those of poetry. In other words, his failure shows how the case of hospitality cannot be understood as a category of right or fulfilled as a prescription, but something more troubling or troubled which is figured by the spectre of the mother who is invoked throughout the poem as a figure of Christian sacrifice. The poem describes how she died in giving birth: "She prayed the moment ere she died:/ Prayed that the babe for whom she died/Might prove her dear lord's joy and pride!" (629-631). Sacrificed once at childbirth, she is repeatedly sacrificed in the text. The Baron, love-struck by his brother's daughter and choosing to protect the guest at the expense of his own daughter, doubly wrongs his daughter and her dead mother: "That prayer her deadly pangs beguiled,/Sir Leoline!/ And wouldst thou wrong thy only child of her and thine (633-635). But it is the lesbian pairing of Geraldine and Christabel, which the text compares to "…a mother with her child," which seems to definitively supplant the figure of mother by precisely making her an expression of their sterility.

"This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison" and The Writing of Hospitality

"This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison" is typically read as an exemplary poem about the aesthetic experience of the sublime.[75] But the context in which the experience of the sublime is set is decidedly one of hospitality. The prefatory note explains the poem's provenance: the visit from friends in the June of 1797 is interrupted by an accident that debilitates the poet during their

[75] See John Simons, Reeve Parker, and William Ulmer on the poem's form as a "consolation based in essentially Christian tradition"; on how Coleridge both adopted and resisted the aesthetic categories of the eighteenth century, see Anne K. Mellor.

stay. One evening, separated from his friends and detained in the lime-tree bower, the poet composes a poem that extravagantly imagines their walk and allows him to share in the joy of their contemplation of nature. The conversational poem begins as a lament and concludes as a hymn to the sympathetic power of masculine friendship. Like Coleridge's other poems, the para- and extra- textual materials make it challenging to determine what is properly inside or outside the poem—in addition to what the poem claims to confine. In this case, the marginal heading singles out Charles Lamb as the text's proper addressee and interlocutor. But early versions of the poem are also sent in the mail, along with more explanatory matter, to Robert Southey and Charles Lloyd. Not one to be imprisoned by its genre, the poem seems to want to address itself *as* a letter or conversation. The letter to Southey famously elaborates the details of the preface. It names the circle of friends and their family that have come to visit. The set includes Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy, as well as Charles Lamb, though not his sister, Mary Lamb, though the poem alludes to her. The letter also gives further detail of the accident. It seems that "dear Sara," Coleridge's wife, had accidentally emptied a skillet of boiling milk on his foot.

This marginal detail has been indispensable for readers who want to complicate the poem's jubilant praise of the sublime. In an overwrought visionary landscape, the accident with boiling milk provides a compelling materiality. Richard Peterson, for example, reads in the debilitating accident and the substance of milk, a metaphorical significance that is mirrored in the use of birdlime i.e., "the sticky white substance that produced by lime trees and used to catch birds" ("An Unnoticed Motif" 79). Rachel Crawford underscores the psychoanalytic register of the accident, in which spilled milk is understood as "abjectal," a *non-part part* that is ejected from the maternal body. The spillage shows the body its dis-abled, or really, dismembered form: it detaches the boiled milk from mother, and annexes it to another detached member, the foot.

Thus the "sacrificial logic" of the poem (as Crawford calls it) claims the accident as its precondition to poetry—a moment of blindness and compensatory insight, if you like—that significantly puts the poet in a heritage of seers and heroes with wounded feet like Achilles, Oedipus, and Jesus (Crawford 190-191). But the image of the mother as an assemblage of body parts and spilled milk seems recalls the function of the host who gives a part of himself. Among the gathering of friends, the accident appears as the intrusion of domestic discontent onto the social order. On another level, the accident recalls the text's allusion to Charles' "strange calamity" that literalizes the disembodiment of the maternal body. Coleridge is referring to the calamity in which Mary Lamb stabbed and killed her mother with a table knife. By linking, at the level of suggestion, the domestic space to the scene of crime, Mary Lamb's calamity points to an order of signification within the poem that is profoundly anti-relational or anti-social. Hence, while it is true that, as Crawford argues, "Sara's and Mary's narrative provide the negative pole of the sublime experience…," it should not be assumed that Sara and Mary present a shared experience that offers an alternative to the poem's family of men in the poem, whose filiations here are as numerous as they are exalted.

The text's inscription of femininity seems to put pressure on the conventions of hospitality, such that the representation of the feminine in the text also becomes a problem of representing hospitality. The question remains: what is proper place of the domestic and the feminine within the text? To what margin or recesses are they consigned? The erasure of Sara Fricker Coleridge, in later versions of the poem from 1800 onwards is case in point. In the place of the community invoked in her name, the dedication in the 1797 version to Southey "My Sara and my Friends," is replaced by "My gentle-hearted Charles" at the conclusion of the poem (65). While it is true that she is not the only character to be cut from the final versions of the poem, her

omission in crucial places in the text leaves Charles as the poem's privileged interlocutor. The effect of Sara's suppression removes her from the experience of the poem, its account of the jaunt and its reward of the deep joys of friendship. The convoluted spaces of the text, with its recesses and para-tactical folds, seem as much to entrap the women in its play of presence and absence, inclusion and exclusion.

To the extent that they are associated with domesticity and its discontents, the women are symbolically linked to the bower of the lime-tree. But the word "bower" alone is complicated, deploying multifold meanings and conceits. In the first place, its usage seems exclusively archaic or poetic. Its most basic meaning is "home." It is used in the idealized sense in Milton's "The bowr of earthly bliss" (referring to the "Bower of Bliss" in Spenser's *The Faerie Queen*) where it designates the bower as that place where earthly bliss, or domesticity, is most at home or proper (288). It may be used to refer an abode, but again, not without preciosity and the suggestion of an especially picturesque or quaint sense of the domicile. It also refers to a lady's boudoir or private apartment, where it becomes coded as a feminine space, not to be crossed by men without some sense of intrusion. In a related sense, it refers to the inner chamber of a home, and connotes interiority, and such sense of space that folds into itself insides and outsides. Finally, at the most literal level of meaning in the poem, perhaps in which all the other meanings are enfolded, it refers to the leafy recess of the lime-tree that makes the shady arbor, where we find the poet.

But "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison" conceptually ties the "bower" to the figure of "my prison." The first couple lines of the poem demonstrate the oddity of the connection which is neither evident nor grammatical sanctioned, and perhaps—like the unnamed women in the poem and their unspeakable crimes—inarticulable:

> Well, they are gone, and here I must remain,
>
> This lime-tree bower my prison! I have lost
>
> Beauties and feelings, such as would have been
>
> Most sweet to my remembrance even when age
>
> Has dimm'd mine eyes to blindness! (1-5)

In a poem that is about poetic license, this departure from grammatical convention seems suggestive. In the absence of prepositions, the meaning of the eponymous line is suspended: "and here I must remain, [in/at] This lime-tree bower"; without the comma, the predicate my prison is only assumed, not qualified. The disconnected sense and extraneousness of "my prison," should alert us to its irregular or discordant meaning in the text that concludes by insisting "No sound is dissonant which tells of Life" (76). The sense of imprisonment is merely the condition for describing the imagination's invention: the poem begins with a kind of thought experiment in which the senses are set aside. Like most (philosophical) accounts of pain, Coleridge's disability, the scalding of his foot by a skillet of boiling milk—an image of pain—provides the occasion for the poem's investigation of how sense is evoked *in* the imagination. The function of the imagination in *This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison* is closer to sense than, as critics claim, vision.[76] Therefore, the poem consistently seeks the shortest distance between image and perception. The narrator begins the poem doubly-blind, having lost "Beauties and feelings" that would be a consolation (to remembrance) when age "Had dimm'd mine eyes to blindness." The image that follows is neither visionary (in the sense of a pure inner experience) nor entirely memory (in the sense of a past that was experienced), but virtual in the manner in which the image is indissociable from reality. As I will show *This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison*

[76] C.f. Raiger.

bears an affinity to the invention and inscription of the "real world" in the preface to *Kubla Khan*, where the narrator is interrupted by a visitor from Porlock, or inscribes writing under the influence of opium—in which the precarious "pleasure dome" of the narrative is under attack from a "reality."

Coleridge's description of the walk is not merely a description of nature, but a description of the *perception* of nature.[77]The conceit of the poem is that while the poet is absent in the experience of nature, he is nonetheless capable of perceiving nature, indeed through something like memory, but reorganized by imagination: "'Tis well to be bereft of promised good,/That we may lift the Soul,/ and contemplate/With lively joy the joy we cannot share." The connection between the imagination and perception is worked out in Coleridge's *Biograhia Literaria*, where again, the imagination occupies an ambiguous position: it is "essentially vital," a "living power" that communicates vital power to fixed and dead things.

> The Imagination then I consider either as primary, or secondary. The primary Imagination I hold to be the living power and prime agent of all human perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM. The secondary Imagination I consider as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the kind of its agency, and differing only in degree, and in the mode of its operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate: or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify. It is essentially vital, even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead.

[77] Whereas Bergson says "In fact, there is no perception, which is not full of memories," Coleridge would argue that there is no perception that is not found in imagination (*MM* 24).

And yet, imagination's vital power makes "lively the joy that is absent.[78] The trees and setting suns of the imagination are more vivid than those found in reality. The heath-flowers "richlier burn" and the clouds kindle in yellow light. They impress the senses powerfully, being an extension of perception itself. The poem's use of color burns with a particular intensity, that is accompanied by the interplay of light in the sun-dappled description of the lime-tree as it is gradually transformed by the imagination. Despite Coleridge's fondness for twilight, there are rarely shadows in his portrait of the setting sun: "Ah! Slowly sink/Behind the western ridge, thou glorious sun!/Shine in the slant beams of the sinking orb,/Ye purple heath-flowers! Richlier burn, ye clouds!/Live in yellow light, ye distant groves! And kindle, thou blue ocean…" (32-34). The setting of the sun does not engulf the world of the imagination in shadows, but diffuses light like an impressionist painting, or indeed, prism (with its aural affinity to prison). The refraction of light furthers the motif of differentiation and variegation, which is reflected in the marking of time in the setting sun. Light is cast onto objects to give them definition, and even depth by diversifying their aspects, as in a kaleidoscope, rather than produce the effect of shadow. Under the diverse light of the imagination, the bower itself is transformed:

A delight

Comes sudden on my heart, and I am glad

As I myself were there! Nor in this bower,

This little lime-tree bower, have I not marked

Much that has soothed me. Pale beneath the blaze

[78] In *The Statesman's Manual*, Coleridge describes the symbolic power of the Imagination: "…that reconciling and mediatory power, which incorporating the Reason in Images of sense, and organizing it (as it were) the flux of the Senses by the permanence and self-circling energies of the Reason, gives birth to a system of symbols, harmonious in themselves, and consubstantial with the truths, of which they are conductors…On the other hand, a Symbol is characterized by a translucence of the Special in the Individual or of the General in the Especial or of the Universal in the General" (28-29).

> Hung the transparent foliage; and I watched
>
> Some broad and sunny leaf and stem above
>
> Dappling its sunshine! And that walnut-tree
>
> Was richly ting'd, and a deep radiance lay
>
> Full on the ancient ivy, which usurps
>
> Those fronting elms, and now, with blackest mass
>
> Makes their dark branches gleam a lighter hue
>
> Through the late twilight (44-56).

Coleridge repeats the motif of captivity in his imagery of the usurping ivy, coiled around the elm tree like a snake holding it in its grip. The symbolism of the elm, as the tree of justice, on which the felons were hung in the old and forgotten days, does not appear accidental. It functions as the *mise-en-abyme* of the poem, dredging out of the forgotten past, a gallows motif that is superimposed and locked up by the ancient vines. It alludes to the narrative structure of the poem, a poem about the recompense of poetry, in which that recompense is superimposed on the motif of the penitentiary, guilt and deprivation.

Even the description of the "wide wide Heaven" is bounded by the sea, upon which sails the "fair bark" that suggests another elsewhere, beyond the poem's nature scene. We are never very long in an unimpeded view of the sun ("Thou glorious Sun!" [33]) before it is setting, its beams of light broken, and casting its sun-dappled shadows upon the world of the imagination. The heavenly vault at the end of the poem seems to depict the sense of infinite space, or freedom, but the expansiveness of the dusky air is marked by the inclusion of the black crow, an ominous bird, which like a perspective drawn *into* a Renaissance painting, gives a

limited or finite view of the boundless sky. Coleridge's footnote compares the rook with Bartram's account of the mechanistic quality the savanna crane: "When these Birds move their wings in flight, their strokes are slow, moderate and regular; and even when at a considerable distance or high above us, we plainly hear the quill-feathers: their shafts and webs upon one another creek as the joints or working of a vessel in a tempestuous sea" (181 n.1). The expansive heaven turns out to be only a bounded perspective; and just as the prison bower is transformed into a play of light and colors, the arrival of "a something in the sky," a bird of bad omen perhaps, turns this sublime vantage into a mechanical trope harkening us back to the Rime, where the image of the sun peers through the naked ribs of Life-in-death as through a dungeon grate (185-6).

Finally, "Gentle-hearted Charles" exemplifies the poem's tension between dissonance and harmony. As the privileged address of the conversational poem, his function in the poem is to guarantee its meaning, such that every letter of the poem arrives, every allusion from the "strange calamity" to the "accident" is vouched by a witness, every meaning delivered. In the second stanza, he appears as a substitute for the narrator: "So my Friend/Struck with deep joy may stand, as I have stood,/ Silent with swimming sense" (37-39). In spite of the poet's absence from the scene, the experience of the sunset and its surrounding landscape remains palpable by being attributed to Charles, who effectively substitutes the virtual addressee for the absent poet. At the end of the poem, Charles's role is clearer, as he is one for whom "No sound is dissonant which tells of Life." But of course it is difficult to distinguish between "Life" and the poem that tells of life, especially in the present context where it is precisely the "Life" alluded to in the poem, Coleridge's accident with boiling milk and Mary Lamb's matricide, which are precisely the disruptive elements of the poem, which it claims to have overcome.

Conclusion

My examination of Coleridge's hospitality poems explores the double and contradictory tendencies in hospitality in order to suggest how Coleridge's concept of hospitality has a bearing on contemporary concepts of hospitality and sacrifice. Coleridge's thematization of the guest raises broader questions of inclusion and exclusion, as well as questions about the relationship between hospitality and the law—can hospitality be made into a law that includes every other, including the other's other? In my analysis of the paradoxes of hospitality, of its entanglement in sovereignty, in its recourse to sacrifice, and even the laws of the patriarch, I have found in Coleridge's figuration of the feminine a particularly useful resource in understanding the figure of hospitality in Coleridge's thinking. The exclusion of women in *Christabel* and *Lime-Tree* remains problematic and symptomatically figured as the limit of *what* may be shared among men. In Coleridge's hospitality poems, femininity becomes a question of borders—if not exactly the borders that are transgressed in the circulation of women in a gift economy—then, a question of how the domains of the public, masculinity, and poetry are able to maintain their proper place when they are defined out of the borders that they create. Thus, the gendering of "Life-in-Death" in the *Rime*, as the feminine counterpart of "Death," offers an allegory about borders and their permeability. She represents the withdrawal of death as an exterior limit and the inclusion of this limit within life. Under her dispensation, life is *not-killed*, but is itself the penalty and source of corruption that were peculiar to death.

CHAPTER THREE

William Hazlitt and the Critique of Sovereignty

Towards a Critique of Sovereignty

Better known for his writings on art and British culture, William Hazlitt, the critic of Romanticism, also wrote many insightful essays on English politics in the wake of the French Revolution. A cursory glance of Hazlitt's *Political Essays* compiled by Duncan Wu reveals Hazlitt's diverse political interests in critical analyses of war, the Pitt government, and the treatment of state prisoners as well as inquiries into the political category of the "people"; exploratory pieces on tyranny, and the later subject of Hazlitt's four-volume biography: Napoleon Bonaparte. In this collection and elsewhere in Hazlitt's vast corpus of aesthetics writings, the abiding interest seems to revolve around the problem of sovereignty in a variety of manifestations—as the power held by despots or people, as the power that poetic language exerts over prose, and above all, in Hazlitt's defense of Napoleon as an exception among the kings and tyrants of history.

Despite its recurrence as a political theme in many of Hazlitt's writings, critics have not pursued Hazlitt's interest in sovereignty in any serious way. The lacuna may be explained by the general neglect of Hazlitt's *Life of Napoleon Bonaparte* (1828-30), which critics have roundly dismissed as the "idolatry" of a Jacobin turned Buonapartist.[79] Simon Bainbridge's sympathetic view in Napoleon and English Romanticism (1995) that Hazlitt's idolatry "was no simple exercise in hero-worship," but a highly "polemical" and self-conscious performance has not

[79] Kinnaird, for example, calls *Life of Napoleon Bonaparte* "unoriginal" and "a chauvinistic rationalization...for a Bonapartist's life of blind prostration before his idol" (325-7). But this charged of idolatry ought to be measured, as Bainbridge reminds us, against Hazlitt's own statement about the ruses of idolatry: "Power is the grim idol that the world adore [*sic*]; that arms itself with destruction, and reigns by terror in the coward heat of man; that dazzles the senses, haunts the imagination, confounds the understanding, and tames the will, by the vastness of its pretensions, and the very hopelessness of resistance to them" (7.149; cited in Bainbridge, 197).

given rise to any new scholarship taking up the implication of Hazlitt's attachment to the figure of Napoleon. This omission ought to be corrected because it forecloses the resource offered by the biography for thinking through the specific contribution of Romanticism to the theory of sovereignty in the nineteenth century. Though long and often meandering, Hazlitt's *Life* does contain suggestive points of investigation for understanding the complicated history of modern sovereignty and the rise of a style of dictatorship that emerged with the Napoleonic empire—as the theorist of sovereignty Carl Schmitt, too, would later point out in *The Nomos of the Earth in the International Law of Jus Publicum Europaeum*.[80]

While *Life* presents an important resource for understanding Hazlitt's fascination with power in a variety of forms, it is not the only work containing Hazlitt's reflection on sovereignty, nor is it necessarily his most successful writing on the subject. In this chapter, I provide the context for understanding Hazlitt's concept of sovereignty in *Life* through his earlier essays on the imagination and "disinterest." By tracing the concept of sovereignty in these essays, as a minor theme within a speculative genre, I want to allow Hazlitt's sovereign to emerge precisely as a figure embodying the contradictions of secular power and its claim to the self as *the* legitimating source of authority. By turning to Hazilitt's writings on aesthetics, particularly his essay on "On Coriolanus," I show how Hazlitt's concepts of imagination and interest are, in fact, politically inflected. If Hazlitt's assertion is correct that the poetic imagination falls on the side of "aristocratical" power, then sovereignty—as he might have conceived it—is not only a theological, political, or juridical concept, but first and foremost, an aesthetic problem. Itself a divided concept, the imagination functions in many of Hazlitt's writings as a source of power

[80] "The Bonapartist empire was the first and foremost recent example of pure Caesarism, i.e., one divorced from a monarchy and a royal crown. Thus, it was an "empire" in a completely different sense from that of the Christian Middle Ages" (63).

and vehicle of critique, allowing us to consider how poetry is implicated in the production of power and informs a broad range of issues concerning British sovereignty, including the death penalty, the English monarchy, and the ascendency of the Napoleonic Empire. But Hazlitt's analysis of the political imaginary of sovereignty also reveals our complicated identification with power, which, because imaginary offers no transcendent viewpoint or overcoming of an illusion outside of endless critique.[81]

By bringing the imagination to bear on politics, to address what is perhaps most political about politics, Hazlitt's critique of the political imagination intimates that the ends of politics are not to be found within politics itself. And yet, the imagination does not offer a pure concept of sovereignty raised above the political fray nor a way of unifying a divided nation. As readers of Hazlitt are aware, Hazlitt's critique of the imagination already involves a significant re-orientation of the concept. In "Self-Love and Benevolence," the imagination endows the idea temporality: to imagine is to present the idea (of self, of others, of absent things) with "an eye to future events" ("Self-Love and Benevolence" 108). But to have futurity in Hazlitt's sense is to come up against an enduring sense of absence: "The world of action then, of business or pleasure, of self-love or benevolence, is not made up of solid materials, moved by downright, solid springs; it is essentially a void, an unreal mockery, both in regard to ourselves and others…" (111). It is to find absence where we least expect it, in the world of action, where thought appears to acquire reality, as well as in ourselves as the agent of thought and action:

> That self which we project before us into it, that *we make our proxy or representative*, and *empower to embody*, and transmit back to us all our real, substantial interest *before*

[81] I am indebted to Victoria Kahn's formulation of the political imaginary as a critical concept specifically illuminating the problems associated with political theology.

> *they have had an existence, except in our imaginations,* is but a shadow of ourselves, a bundle of habits, passions, and prejudices, a body that falls into pieces at the touch of reason or the approach of inquiry (113 my emphasis).

Along with the concept of disinterestedness, outlined in his earliest *Essay on the Principles of Human Action,* this passage has been the impetus behind the ethical turn in Hazlitt scholarship. Beginning with Deborah Elise White's *Romantic Returns: Superstition, Imagination*, *History* (2000), this ethical turn has re-directed focus from away from a "metaphysical Hazlitt" to one especially attentive to the ethical conditions of our thought and action. Among many merits, this emphasis on an "ethical Hazlitt" has drawn critical attention to the inter-subjective nature of the imagination. The inter-subjective nature of disinterest is intimated in White's analysis of "dis-*inter*-esse" as "interested being or being circumscribed by and among other beings" (63).[82] The orientation in an ethical world means that my identity as a self is wrapped up in the projection of "the idea of what another feels," my self-interest is co-implicated in my interest in the other in ways that potentially dispossesses me ("Self-Love and Benevolence" 102).[83] White concludes that "[i]n reference to the future, "self" and "self-interest" name something that does not exist…The self's real motives to action are, in other words, really imaginary. This by no means lessens their impact. Hazlitt's point is, on the contrary, that only imaginary motives have any kind of impact" (70-71).

By suggesting that the notion of dis-*inter*-esse provides an important conceptual framework for Hazlitt's later appeals to common interest—especially on the question of the death penalty, I argue that one such impact of the dis-interested imagination is political, in which

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[82] White ultimately moves away from this intersubjective dimension of Hazlitt's concept of self-interest in order to attend to its textual significance.
[83] Jacques Khalip.

the imagination is called upon to embody, make real, or substantial, a proxy or representative who, in turn, empowers or creates the body politic made up of passions, prejudices, and interests. One finds, for example, this notion of disinterest operative in his formulation of sovereignty as well as in the necessary fiction of the people. In "What is the People?" where Hazlitt sought to show that, despite their opposition, the histories and conceptual links between the concept of sovereignty and the people are, in fact, intertwined. To the question "What is the People?" he responds that "[w]e will answer first, by saying what it is *not*" (242 my emphasis).Thus, the text proceeds as an apostrophe, invoking the people in its absence, as an existence that has not, in fact, taken shape because it continues to be haunted by the presence of a sovereignty: "you [the people] would slay the mind of a country to fill up the dreary aching void with the old, obscene, drivelling prejudices of superstition and tyranny…you would make the throne every thing, and the people nothing, to be yourself less than nothing, a very slave, a reptile, a creeping, cringing sycophant, a court favorite, a pander to Legitimacy…" (241). But his genealogy of the development of the concept of the people is equally burdened by the presence of the sovereign, who appears as "frightful spectre", a "detestable fiction," and "a witch's spell" that keeps returning, ever more potent in its afterlife, to haunt and interrupt the voice of reason in the text—Hazlitt's own critical voice which he identifies with the voice of the people. Thus, in the same stroke that the text pronounces the death of the sovereign, it provocatively invokes the sovereignty of the people—perhaps as another fiction that is supposed to fill up the void left behind by sovereignty. "What is the People?" identifies a veritable lacuna in which neither sovereignty nor people are available to control the meaning of a political narrative.

The Politics of the Imagination and the Death Penalty

It is precisely the appeal to the political imaginary of the people and their "sentiment" in an 1821 article in *The Edinburgh Review* that blows open the problem of sovereignty as it relates to the death penalty. Written as a response to the *Report of the Select Committee on Criminal Laws* (1819), this article elaborates of Hazlitt's views on the matter in *Fraser Magazine* (1831) and raises pertinent questions about the right to punish, and the interest of the public in the abolition of the death penalty.[84]

> [The Committee] wish expressly to disclaim all doubt of the right of the Legislature to inflict the punishment of Death, wherever that punishment, and that alone, seems capable of protecting the community from enormous and atrocious crimes. The object of the Committee has been, to ascertain, in the present state of the sentiments of the people of England, Capital Punishment, in most cases of offences unattended with violence, be a necessary, or even the most effectual, security against the prevalence of crimes (*Complete Works* 221, 230).

The Committee on Criminal Laws was convened by James Mackintosh and Thomas Fowell Buxton, and composed of "the most eminent men of the age," well-versed in the abolitionist writings of Beccaria, Lord Bacon, Jeremy Bentham.[85] The appointment of the committee was the outcome of the campaign for penal reform led by Samuel Romilly a decade earlier.[86] The *Report*

[84] Mark Canuel explains the complexity of Hazlitt's shifting positions on both the death penalty and the imagination in the articles in *Fraser Magazine*. While Hazlitt consistently affirms the aesthetic dimension in the capital punishment debate, he is less consistent in his formulation of the imagination and its uses. In the 1812 version of "On the Punishment of Death" alone, Canuel notes the shifting definition of the imagination throughout the argument, and the "proliferation of locations," from which the imagination both resists and affirms the discourse of abolitionism (33).

[85] According to Asa Briggs "the real turning point [for reform] came not in1822 when Peel went to the Home Office, but in 1819 when Sir James Mackintosh′s motion for the appointment of a Committee of Inquiry into the criminal laws was carried against the government by a majority of nineteenth century" (189).

[86] Reform punishment for private stealing 1808.

itself is thought to have significantly contributed to the eventual dismantling of the "bloody code" in the 1830s when a new Whig government came to power.[87]

Culled from a variety of public opinion, anecdote and statistical data, the Committee found that "in general, it appears that Murders, and other crimes of violence and cruelty, have either diminished, or not increased." The committee understood the code to have originated as a temporary expedient, perhaps justified by temporary danger, but which the moral improvement of society or the diminishment of violent crimes makes unnecessary. Consequently, it moved to recommend that the punishment of death, emerging out of the draconian code that had served English penal practices for two centuries might be abolished without injury to law or statute. Next, the Report extolled "The practice of *immediately publishing* the circumstances of every atrocious crime, and of circulating in various forms *an account of every stage of the proceedings* which relate to it, is far more prevalent in England than in any other country, and in our times than in any former age. It is on the whole, *of great utility, not only as a control in courts of justice*, but also as a means of rendering it extremely difficult for odious criminals to escape" (492 italics original). Finally, in the place of capital punishment, it called for the "establishment of *inexpensive and accessible jurisdiction*, for the trial of small offences, *with the assistance of juries*, but with simple forms of proceeding and corrective punishment" (492). In addition to legislative reform, the Committee also proposes transportation and imprisonment as "substitutes" for capital punishment, and expressly hopes that "in the more improved condition in which the

[87] At the time of the Report, the December issue of *The Edinburgh Magazine and Literary Miscellany* regretfully comments that: "It is to other countries, and other times chiefly, we fear, that these materials will be of value; for, while the body of evidence here presented to the public establishes invincibly the striking impolicy of multiplying severe and penal laws, and while the Committee recommend the repeal of various laws of various laws of that description, it has been the tendency of our Legislature rather to add new features of severity to our criminal code" (491).

Committee trust that all the prisons of the Kingdom will soon be placed, Imprisonment may be hoped to be of such a nature as to answer every purpose of terror and reformation" (Howe, 235). According to traditional interpretations, criminal law reform in early nineteenth century is typically approached through three avenues: legal-intellectual, humanitarian, and class interest.[88] But the *Report* significantly appealed to the people to determine the judiciousness of the punishment, the transparency of the law, and the desirability of capital punishment, according to the moral standards of the community. The point is less to impute to the people the discretionary power of judges and kings, than that public opinion may have an appreciable effect on the legislature, as an abolitionism or critique that operates outside the juridical decision.[89]

Recognizing the importance of public sentiment in matters of law and punishment, Hazlitt asserts: "The true practical question therefore is, What circumstance it is that combines efficacy with severity of punishment?—and this seems to be, *its being agreeable to the feelings of natural justice, or having the concurrence of the public sentiment in its favor*. All the evidence to which the public has had access on the question, bears out this conclusion. Up to the tone of public feeling against any criminal act, the severity of the punishment may be increased with effect:—beyond that point it cannot be forced with effect; nor, we might add, with propriety" (223). To be clear, the people invoked here are not exactly *le peuple* of the French Revolution, the suffering mass whose hunger, misery and poverty provided the material impetus for revolution. Rather they were the interested public who were enlightened, who read and wrote about the law; they held ideas about the moral progress of society and the part they would play in bringing it about, perhaps out of "compassion" for the miserable of society.[90]

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[88] See Randall McGowen "The Image of Justice and Reform of the Criminal Law in Early Nineteenth Century England."
[89] See also McGowan on the relationship between public opinion and the *image* of the law, 108.
[90] C.f. Arendt (114).

The role of the imagination in Hazlitt's writings on the death penalty re-introduces the affective dimension that is either misconstrued or suppressed in the debates about capital punishment, "passions & actions of men are determined by the true consequences of things, not by particular objects which influence them more than they ought" (9.9). Beccaria's influential argument is, for Hazlitt, exemplary of the neglect of the role of the imagination in regarding the pain of others:

> It is not the intensity, but the extent of a punishment which makes the greatest impression on the human soul. For our sensibility is more easily and lastingly moved by minute but repeated impressions than by a sharp but fleeting shock. Habit has universal power over every sentient creature. Just as a man speaks and walks and goes about his business with its help, so moral ideas are only impressed on his mind by lasting and repeated blows. It is not the terrible but fleeting sight of a felon's death which is the most powerful brake on crime, but the long-drawn-out example of a man deprived of freedom, who having become a beast of burden, repays the society which he has offended with his labor. Much more potent than the idea of death, which men always regard as vague and distant, is the efficacious because often repeated reflection that *I too shall be reduced to so dreary and so pitiable a state if I commit similar crimes.* (*On Crimes and Punishments* 67)

The omission overlooks the penalty's effect of "terror" on the political imagery. In the same way that the commission of crime cannot be explained by reason, the effect of punishment is not to be determined by principles of utility alone. "The imagination, as in a picture, faithfully represents or even exaggerates the impression made by a single scene of agony, despair, or horror: but it has no means of representing and collecting into one point of view the aggregate of petty evils & daily inconveniences scattered over a long series of years" (9.8-9). To replace the death penalty

with continual punishment *because* it produces the greatest effect is to affirm a logic of cruelty even as one calls for abolitionism.[91] Thus, it is striking that Beccaria's alternative leads him to conceive of punishment in disciplinary terms, in terms of a "moral orthopedics" (to borrow from Michel Foucault), through which morality can be cultivated like good habits in walking and speaking. In effect, Beccaria's abolitionism suggests a rather surprising continuity between the co-emergence of abolitionism and the turn to disciplinary forms of punishments in criminal law over the course of the nineteenth-century. Thus, abolitionism corresponds to the transformation of the relationship of the law to its own violence, which it is obliged to employ *as well as* deny, to tolerate, and perhaps also, to discipline as a primitive aspect of itself.[92] Beccaria's abolitionism does not so much reject capital punishment absolutely as transform the limits that allow us to accommodate violence. This historical and logical complimentarity of abolitionism and disciplinarity—no doubt an indication of the difficulty of oppositional positions against capital punishment—raises the question of unlimited violence.

Of course, this unlimited violence has always been an inherent problem within capital punishment, to the extent that it is not only the deterrent against violence, but *also* a source of violence that is ineradicable because generated by the justice administration system. In Hazlitt's "Capital Punishment," this conception of unlimited violence gets articulated through the analogical problem of slavery alluded to throughout the essay (216, 218, 254). This analogy is historical as well as conceptual. Not only did the abolition of slavery offer the criminal reform movement a discursive model for abolitionism, but more critically, in Hazlitt's article, race

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[91] See for further elaboration of this point, Derrida's critique of Beccaria in *The Death Penalty Seminars*.

[92] See Randall: With the mitigation of the criminal law, the rise of the prison as a primary form of punishment, and the creation of a professional police, a major extension of state power and a transformation of the image of justice occurred (93). See also Anselm Haverkamp's essay "Habeas Corpus: The Law's Desire to Have a Body" *in Violence, Identity, and Self-Determination.*

provides the explanatory framework for a certain manifestation of violence that is as systematic as it is unrestrained. Allow me to quote at length the prefatory digression on race, cited from an anecdote of Prince Naimbanna who reportedly said:

> "If a man should rob me of my money, I can forgive him; if a man should shoot at me, or try to stab me, I can forgive him; if a man should sell me and all my family to a slave-ship, so that we should pass all the rest of our days in slavery in the West Indies, I can forgive him; but…if a man takes away the character of my people, I can never forgive him…If a man should try to kill me or should sell me and my family for slaves, he would do injury to as many as he might kill or sell; but if any one takes away the character of Black people, that man injures Black people all over the world; and when he has once taken away their character, there is nothing he may not do to Black people ever after. That man, for instance, will beat Black men, and say, *Oh, it is only a Black man, why should I not beat him?* That man will make slaves of Black people; for when he has taken away their character, he will say, *Oh, they are only Black people, why should I not make them slaves?* That man will take all the people of Africa if he can catch them; and if you ask him, But why do you take away all these people? He will say, *Oh, they are only Black people—why should I not take them?* That is the reason why I cannot forgive the man who takes away the character of the people of my country" (218-9).

The vagueness of the word "character" does nothing to take away from its conceptual significance in this passage. It explains the type of obscure violence that is perpetuated by racism, which is directed at no object in particular but the character of the people in the most general sense of a species, race, population etc. Racism is not satisfied by stealing, enslaving, or even killing of particular persons insofar as these limited forms of violence end along with the

conclusion of a crime or the death of a victim. In contrast, the hatred along the lines that the Prince of Sierra Leone is suggesting is conceptually total in that it implies the extermination of an entire race of people and the total extirpation of their character.

Thus, Hazlitt's comparison uses race as an explanatory framework for the creation of a "redundant population," a class of artisans, laborers, and former naval or military heroes who have found themselves on the wrong side of the law, which constitutes them as subjects of the law at the same time that it makes it possible to kill with impunity (218). Like slaves, this population is "familiarly spoken of as a sort of *vermin* only fitted to be hunted down, and *exterminated* at the discretion of their betters" (219 my emphasis). In addition, the comparison to race suggests a biopolitical dimension to the problem of capital punishment, especially where it is articulated as an aspect of war waged against bodies rather than nations, and against communities within the nation. This insight on war is already available by the eighteenth century in variety of formulations, but it is in Beccaria that the relationship between war and capital punishment, and the biopolitical implication of that relationship, is clearest:[93]

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[93] In *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison,* Michel Foucault writes: The right to punish, therefore, is an aspect of the sovereign's right to make war on his enemies: to punish belongs to 'that absolute power of life and death which Roman law calls *merum imperium*, a right by virtue of which the prince sees that his law is respected by ordering the punishment of crime [Muyert de Vouglans, xxxiv]' (48). See also Jacques Derrida's *For What Tomorrow: A Dialog*, the equivocation between war and capital punishment culminates in the act of regicide, that is, in an act of terror that de-capitalizes country and king: "Two competing discourse authorized themselves to justify this regicide. One consists in considering the king as an enemy of the nation: this foreigner is therefore to be eliminated, he is "decapitated," just as in a war one kills the soldier of another belligerent country. *The Revolution is a war waged to protect its nation-state.* According to the other discourse, since the Revolution was under way or had already taken place, Louis Capet had to be judged like any other French citizen. As a traitor to his country, this citizen deserved death. Each of these arguments follows a very different logic. But this equivocation is everywhere; it is found, for example, on the porous border that, in *the obscure concept of war*, will always separate civil war, national war, and that "partisan war" of which Schmitt speaks. The modernity of this "partisan war" begins very early on. *This equivocation poisons all instance of the abolition of the death penalty, which are limited, of course, to national penal law and never prohibit legally killing "in war.*" In the end it has to do with a concept like that of "public enemy," which is at the center of the Social Contract, when Rousseau justifies, not without hesitation or remorse, the principle of the death penalty" (Derrida 89 my emphasis).

> Thus the death penalty is not a matter of right, as I have just shown, but is an act of war on the part of society against the citizen that comes about when it is deemed necessary or useful to destroy his existence (*On Crimes and Punishments* 66).

A crime is considered an attack on sovereignty. Insofar as the law is an expression of the will of the sovereign, the force of the law being the force of sovereignty, crime attacks him personally and even *physically* (*Discipline and Punish* 47). Foucault explains the role of punishment in this understanding as an act of war between sovereign and subject, rather than an arbitration between offended individuals. In this case, the penalty of death, even in its warlike aspect, remains, for Foucault, a function of the law and, as it were, a physical manifestation of a normative order, and an alibi for sovereignty. But Beccaria's interpretation raises further the question of the legitimacy of violence in a state of war. If capital punishment is war by other means, then, according to Beccaria, it cannot be the means through which rights are obtained, because capital punishment, like war, is extra-legal and anti-state. It is possible to hear in Beccaria's assessment of the "futile excess" of capital punishment and inquiry into "whether the death penalty is really useful and just in a well-organized state" a peculiar incommensurability between sovereignty and capital punishment that depicts capital punishment as the state of exception within the state.

For Hazlitt this instability or obscurity is rooted in the death penalty itself and undermines its claim to protect or stabilize the body politic. As the faculty tasked with representing the "terror" of capital punishment, the imagination seems also to illustrate the excesses of the law. In the case of good laws, it captures something like the sentiments of the

people or the moral unity of society.[94] But in the case of bad laws, particularly where the punishment is thought to exceed the crime, the political imaginary reveals something of a juridical failure: "The most severe laws will always be the most effectual, as long as they are expressions of the public sentiment; but they will become ineffectual, in proportion as this sentiment is wanting. The disproportion between crime and punishment in the public opinion, will then counteract the dread of the severity of the law" (18). It causes the disarticulation of the law: "In fact, any law constructed on merely automatic and artificial principles, and not actuated by the living spring of conscience in its bosom, and in the bosom of the community, is useless and injurious; is a stumbling-block in the path of justice; an unsightly deformity to the well-disposed; and an idle bugbear, speedily turned by the needy and desperate to mockery and contempt" (*Complete Works* 227). If the punishment were excessively cruel or forceful, it would turn public opinion away from the law and render the law ineffectual. No longer finding the general will expressed in the law, the threat of the death penalty lies in dividing society from itself. Therefore, capital punishment is an exemplification of Hazlitt's view in "What is The People," namely, that the interests of the people do not line up with those of sovereignty—which in and of itself, is a divided concept in Hazlitt's writings.

On Poetic Sovereignty

The significance of Hazlitt's essay "On Coriolanus" (1817) lies precisely in its articulation of Coriolanus's exceptionalism. Offering itself as a piece of literary criticism on Shakespeare's Coriolanus, the essay presents an incisive account of the relationship between imagination and

[94] Citing Basil Montagu, Hazlitt observes that crime "is prevented, not solely by legal enactment, but the joint operation of three powers;--the legal power, or the fear of punishment awarded by law—the moral power, or the fear of censure of the community—and the power of religion, or the fear of divine vengeance...When these powers unite, their effect is the greatest possible—when they oppose each other, their separate efficacy is proportionally diminished" (244). See also Beccaria: "The juster the punishments, the more sacred and inviolable is the security and the greater the freedom which the sovereign preserves for his subjects" (Beccaria 10).

sovereignty. It begins by shifting the priority that is traditionally given to political texts by suggesting that anyone who reads Coriolanus seriously may save himself the trouble of reading Edmund Burke's Reflections of the Revolution in France, or Thomas Paine's Rights of Man, or the parliamentary debates on the French Revolution. Literature becomes the privileged medium through which power and the inequalities that it produces are explored. The lessons of the French Revolution, as well as those found in the work of Burke and Paine, are already present in Coriolanus. This is not because Shakespeare was ahead of his time or had any prophetic sense of what was to happen. More to the point, Hazlitt argues that the struggles for and against tyranny were always already inscribed in the text, because they are actually produced by language and imagination. "The language of poetry," Hazlitt argues, "naturally falls in with the language of power" (125). Poetry is complicit with the language of power, producing the very inequalities that determine the meaning of politics as a struggle for power.

But Coriolanus's bid for power is unconventional. After a series of successful campaigns, "Caius Martius" is renamed "Coriolanus," after "Corioles" the city that he last conquered. He is favored by the Tribune to become consul of Rome, but his arrogance and contempt for popular favor leads instead to his banishment. Soon after, he conspires with his arch-nemesis Tullus Aufidius and declares war on his city, choosing to forfeit his mother, wife, son and country for the sake of self-interest. By "turn[ing] his arm against his country," Coriolanus turns sovereignty into a conflict of interests between sovereignty and the state, which becomes the culminating, but paradoxical expression of sovereign power. From a different perspective, it is precisely the combination of Corialanus's self-interest and self-negation that leads ultimately to his assassination. Martius/Coriolanus is a martial figure who, in the words of his mother Volumnia, bears "the whole name of war (2.1.132). Elaborating on the martial character, Hazlitt writes:

"His [Coriolanus's] pride consists in the inflexible sternness of his will; his love of glory is a determined desire to bear down all opposition, and to extort the admiration both of friends and foes. His contempt for popular favor, his unwillingness to hear his own praises, spring from the same source. He cannot contradict the praises that are bestowed upon him; therefore he is impatient at hearing them" (ibid). He wages wars on friends and enemies alike because he represents a principle of war that is exterior to the state and anti-thetical to politics. However, for that very reason, he represents something distinctive to poetry.

As a character in Shakespeare's play, Coriolanus, according to Hazlitt, exemplifies the privileged place that poetry occupies in the literary production of the nineteenth century. Like Coriolanus, works of imagination, too, seek to "exceed the common" and to achieve greatest possible deviation from the ordinary (4.1.33). Hazlitt describes the imagination as "aristocratical" and "anti-levelling" (126). The poetic imagination puts the right of "the individual" before those of "the species" (126). Poetry does not represent common people, their mundane suffering and petty crimes. But it does not exclude them from representation either. It is difficult to maintain the strict opposition between aristocratic and republican faculties—between poetry and the prosaic understanding—without calling to mind the dialectical reversals that are implicit in such struggles for power: the oppressor and his power are illegible without the oppressed. Poetry does not exclusively portray tyrants. Rather, poetry produces the difference through which we come to understand the terms of subordination, or what it means to be master and slave. Recognizing that dialectic further complicates how one understands its relation to imagination. Explaining the operations of the poetic imagination, Hazlitt writes:

> This is the logic of the imagination and the passions; which seek to aggrandize what excites admiration and heap contempt on misery, to raise power into tyranny, and to make

> tyranny absolute; to thrust down that which is low still lower and to make wretches desperate: to exalt magistrates into kings, kings into gods; to degrade subjects to the rank of slaves, and slaves to the condition of brutes (127).

By exaggerating, heightening, and glorifying the oppressor, poetry simultaneously demeans the oppressed. It exalts the one while debasing the other, by making it still lower. In exalting the tyrant, poetry degrades the struggle of the people by turning it into something ordinary, unheroic, and contemptible. It does not silence the people so much as render their cause prosaic—a rhetoric of "argument and explanation" that appeals to our understanding, but not to our passion (125). Poetry exerts power in both directions, creating a divide that produces in turn the dialectical struggle between master and slave, poetry and prose. When Hazlitt describes the "[t]he history of mankind" as "a romance, a mask, a tragedy, constructed upon the principles of poetical justice," he is not referring to a higher or more disinterested justice. Poetry does not resolve contradictions but exacerbates them. Thus, in this quote, poetic language assumes the role of a mask in a romance or tragedy, wherein language appears duplicitous or doubled like a mask or *prosopon* (πρόσωπον). Poetry speaks for the tyrant as well as for the rabble. It exalts the one by controlling the terms in which the other is articulated. Poetry narrows language down into a single exclusive poetic discourse that produces the rabble and its banal reality as its spectral double, in order to give poetic usurpation the semblance of content, depth and meaning.

Elsewhere the opposition between poetry and prose, the imagination and the understanding appear unstable or not absolutely exclusive. Hazlitt's "On the Prose-Style of Poets" recapitulates the main argument of "On Coriolanus," but it significantly inverts the

hierarchy accorded to poetic imagination and prosaic understanding.[95] Here, "[t]he prose-writer is *master* of his material: the poet is the slave of his style" (8.7 my emphasis). But the opposition between poetry and prose is purely stylistic, and the criticism aimed precisely at poets who write prose as if it were poetry, at the poet's usurpation of a style that is formally incommensurable to it. Consequently, for poets to write prose as if the two genres were the same is to abuse the essay form and, in doing so, confuse their purpose. "[F]ine writing" such as poetry, Hazlitt contends, is ill-equipped to grasp at common, modest "truth" (7). Led astray by the egotistical sublime, the poet would always miss what Wordsworth calls "the real language of men" in the pursuit of "poetic pleasure" (Preface to *Lyrical Ballads).* With its sight on transcendence, poetry would always miss the inaesthetic truth.

By contrast, the aesthetic purpose of prose is said to be "practical" (6). "The principle which guides *his* [the writer of prose's] pen is truth, not beauty – not pleasure, but *power*" (7-8 my emphasis). It is not beauty or imagination but ingenuity, force, and originality that contribute to the aesthetic quality of prose. Unlike the poet who writes from a transcendental position (like that of "an eagle soaring through the air" [8]), the prose-writer "descends with the mean, luxuriates in beauty, gloats over deformity" (8). The prose writer is a writer of "spleen" who inverts the aesthetic privileges of the enlightenment (8). If the poet is driven by "pleasure" and idle inventions, the prose writer is a producer of work, a laborer of close reasoning who inhabits the inhospitable, austere and difficult terrain of ideas: "*He* works the most striking effects out of the most uncompromising materials, by the mere activity of his mind" (8 my emphasis). *His* ideas neither take flight nor retreat from the mean or inaesthetic, but "mingle[…] clay with gold"

[95] "On the Prose-Style of Poets" grew out of *Table Talk* (1821), though it was published later as part of the collection of The Plain Speaker (1826). It was written around the same time as "On Coriolanus."

(8). The alchemical motif finally foregoes the metaphor of sublimation, the turning of clay into gold. Instead, by preserving prosaic matter in its final product, masterful prose is like "a diamond" in its clarity and sparkling brilliance (8). Prose is transparent or at least motivated to uncover the ruses of language by clearing from language the figurative element (poetic language) that dissimulates it. Prose or the essay form are the tools of the critic, with his manly concern for truth and the unsullied idea, while poetic language is associated with illusion, masquerade and even transvestism.

For Hazlitt, the poet who uses "prose as a sort of waiting-maid to poetry" (he cites Coleridge as an example) dabbles with

> bits of tarnished lace and worthless frippery, he assumes an oriental costume, or borrows the stiff dresses of our ancestors, or starts an eccentric fashion of his own. He is swelling and turgid – everlastingly aiming to be greater than his subject; filling his fancy with fumes and vapors in the pangs and throes of miraculous parturition, and bringing forth only *still birth* (11-12).

In spite of the author himself, the example of transvestism seems to suggest that the opposition between masculine prose and feminine poetry is not, perhaps, as stable as Hazlitt would like us to believe. Do prose writers who use poetic language indulge in the same masquerade as poets who write prose as if it were poetry; whence the "power" of prose writing and of what does it consist; and can we really distinguish between the "power" of prose and that of poetry? Hazlitt does not provide straight answers.

One might argue further that the critical authority in "On Coriolanus," too, has recourse to poetic or figurative language since the essay functions as in some respects as an allegory of power. In this way, the allegorical essay raises further questions about the power of prose over

poetry, as well as the capacity of critical prose to transform or convert poetry into philosophical idea (in this case, the idea of power or sovereignty). After all, as Hazlitt himself seems to have been aware, having quoted in full the important penultimate scene where Coriolanus is persuaded by Volumnia to abandon his plan of revenge on Rome, *Coriolanus* is as much a play about the arrogance if Coriolanus, as it is about the kind of power Volumnia wields. More politic than martial, and finally, more artful than politic, Volumnia puts into question the centrality of Coriolanus as the eponymous hero of the play. As a poetic figure herself, Volumnia Volumnia allows us to consider if Hazlitt associates with the poetic figure of Coriolanus. Critics have rightly insisted on the masculinity, would be more accurate to characterize given the heterogenous structure of power articulated by the poetic text, which seems complicates the model of poetic usurpation and war

Indeed, in *Coriolanus*, the gendering of the poetic drama Coriolanus introduces significant complication and heterogeneity to Hazlitt's essay on poetry and power. After all, Coriolanus is a play in which sovereign power is capitulated in the penultimate scene when Coriolanus is persuaded by Volumnia to abandon his plan of revenge on Rome. If "On Coriolanus" is indeed about Coriolanus and the relationship between war and sovereignty, how do we explain the essay's preoccupation with Volumnia, taking up nearly two-thirds of the exegesis? "On Coriolanus" concludes by quoting, nearly verbatim, Volumnia's plea for Rome, in which she describes being torn apart by the contradictory positions of the impending war: to pray for Rome's victory is to wish for the defeat of her son; on the other hand, to pray for his victory is to wish for the fall of Rome. His betrayal is "altogether unmeet and unlawful," and more importantly, tantamount to "tread[ing] upon thy mother's womb, that brought thee first into this world." Not only is war against one's own people unnatural and treasonous, but it is also an act

of self-destruction that doubles back on the challenger—an act of absolute destruction that reaches back as far as the origin (mother and womb as the source of one's inception) in order to pre-emptively abort the progenitor Coriolanus himself.

Arthus Riss reads the womb (here associated with Volumnia, but elsewhere in the play also with Coriolanus's wife Virgilia) as an "ideal image of order" that appears to present a compelling alternative to the metaphor of the body politic invoked by Menenius at the beginning of the play (69). While the politics of the body imagines the nation as a corporate hierarchy that organizes its part by subsuming them into wholes, the politics of the womb is said to "absorb" and "reconcile" the opposition between the individual and the state expressed in Coriolanus' war against his native Rome (ibid). Thus, Volumnia has won "a happy victory" by brokering peace between Rome and Volsces instead of making war—per the policy of her son. With artfulness, she finally convinces Coriolanus to concede to her request (to make peace over war), to which he responds: "for I see myself vanquished by you alone"—prophetic words, since in heeding her counsel, Coriolanus will finally be assassinated at the end of the play for having betrayed his country and his enemy.

Thus, what complicates Riss's image of the ideal mother (or the ideal image of order that she represents) is precisely that Volumnia plays the mother "badly." Hazlitt's quotation below seems to pick up on the oddity of her identification with Hecuba who, after all, ordered the murder of her own son Paris. In Coriolanus, she is represented the fierce mother who raised a fearsome warrior:

> The breast of Hecuba
>
> When she did suckle Hector looked not lovelier
>
> Than Hector's forehead, when it spit forth blood

At Grecian swords contemning.— (cited in 1.130; Coriolanus 1.3.41-43)

In this complex metaphorical sequence, the breast that nurtures and suckles is (or is like) an angry wound that transforms "feeding" or "oral need" into "phallic aggression" (Lowe 88).[96] But in this figure, Volumnia also dis-organizes the body by turning Hector's mouth, an organ that takes in food, into an organ of aggression. Volumnia sends her "tender-bodied" son to "cruel war," from which he returns a hardened warrior—lacerated (indeed invaginated) by twenty-seven wounds that mark his body as peculiarly inviolable: "every gash was an enemy's grave" (2.1.151-152). The dis-organization of his body, which seems to be the condition for the organization of the body politic, prepares us for the conflation of spousal and maternal roles in the Volumnia-Virgilia alliance.[97]

Hazlitt's under-theorization of the scene that he nevertheless quotes in full is suggestive. The women of the play are not only foils to Coriolanus, but also resist the masculine prose style and its author-critic. While the play associates Volumnia with political rhetoric (with "dissembling" words and nature), it associates Virgilia with "Penelope," who seems to function as a self-referential figure of the text's own unworking of the political distinction between friends and enemies, as well as the familial distinctions between father, son, and husband. Thus, the gender politics of "On Coriolanus" implies the heterogeneity of the poetic text, complicating the way Coriolanus has been interpreted as the exemplary figure of power and exceptionalism singled out by the eponymous text bearing his name.

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[96] Janet Adelman's influential argument in *Anger My Meat.*

[97] At the beginning of the play, Volumnia wonders aloud: "if my son were my husband…" (1.3.2-3). Volumnia's sentiment is mirrored by Coriolanus who identifies himself at the end of the play as occupying simultaneously the roles of son, father, and husband.

The Origin of Violence in the Imagination

Hazlitt's "On the Spirit of Monarchy" (1823) presents a poetic history of monarchy as a concept of the imagination. It seeks to understand monarchy "not so much… a matter of state-necessity or policy, as a natural infirmity, a disease, a false appetite in the popular feeling, which must be gratified" (Howe 19.255).[5] It is especially concerned with what it considers imaginary solutions that are called upon to resolve real needs, and thus, imaginary solutions that actualize these needs as "real." Political struggle and war are "real" effects that have forgotten their origin in the imagination. The recourse of the essay to a discourse of origin, its pseudo-historical account of the development of the concept of monarchy, its anthropological analysis of the civilizations that developed alongside shifting conceptions of monarchy, reveal an enduring attachment to the concept of sovereignty that is bolstered and sustained by the imagination. Thus, "On the Spirit of Monarchy" conceives the imagination in broad political terms that demonstrate the political nature of our affective investment in the concept of sovereignty. In its simplest form, the imagination is characterized by a desire to see the "reflex image" of men's love of power and the subordination of other men that makes the fiction of monarchy necessary. Here it is not only the self, but monarchy which is the "idol," "proxy," and "puppet" (256, 257). "On the Spirit of Monarchy" radicalizes the argument of "On Coriolanus," now locating the "aristocratical" imagination in the hallucination of the everyman who fancies himself a king: "Almost every true and loyal subject holds such a barren scepter in his hand; and the meanest of the rabble, as he runs by the monarch's side, has wit enough to think—'There goes my royal self!'"(256). "The Spirit of Monarchy" expands upon the role of the imagination, which is turned from an

epistemological faculty into an agent whose desires now participates in the history of kings and nations, and whose identification with tyrants and kings keep the structures of power intact.[98]

> Harmless illusion! that can create something out of nothing, can make that which is good for nothing in itself so fine in appearance, can clothe a shapeless piece of deal-board with the attributes of a divinity! But the great world has been doing little else but playing at make-believe all its life-time. (258)

By conceiving superstition and religion as a complex system of "make-believe," the essay ultimately affirms the complexity of the imagination in the corroboration of the make-believe, in its role in making believable, tangible, and even historical the spirit of religion (258). The imagination does not turn God into an illusion. Rather, it is the very means by which spirit is converted into a belief system with a material history that endows the divine with the concrete attributes of divinity. Thus, the imagination is not at all opposed to reality in the way that we might distinguish fiction from reality or the operations of the mind from the world of actions or things. In making the real, it reveals its scaffolding: the imagination constructs in the same stroke that it deconstructs; it is the source of power at the same time that it is a means of exposing that power to critique.[99]

In "On the Spirit of Monarchy," the imagination is a profoundly historical concept, changing over time, and according to the uses men make men make of it. Thus, when "[t]he barbarous Gods of antiquity reigned in contempt of their worshippers," the imagination worked

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[98] The allusion seems to pertain to the restoration of the monarchy in post-Waterloo France and the creation of a constitutional king—that is to say, a king who would embody the spirit of monarchy while adhering to the principles of the Revolution. Unlike Napoleon, who exemplifies the 'right' kind of relationship between king and his people, the restoration participates in the farce of producing an image of what has already become an empty cipher: a constitutional king who is neither truly self-legitimating nor representative of a people.

[99] See also Deborah Elise White's discussion the imagination as a source of ideology and critique.

hand in hand with "superstition" to mask the absurdity of the belief in a terrible, absurd, and contemptible God, that they were nevertheless obliged to obey:

> The more absurd the fiction, the louder was the noise made to hide it—the more mischievous its tendency, the more did it excite all the frenzy of the passions. Superstition nursed, with particular zeal, her rickety, deformed, and preposterous offspring (258).

Here, imagination generates noise, passion, frenzy, and zeal in order to bolster the make-believe, to turn the absurd into something believable. It is as affective realities that noise, passion, and zeal retrospectively secure for the fiction a sense of reality. Likewise, in his analysis of primitive religion, it is not God who commands sacrifice, but sacrifice that corroborates the existence of God, by giving "color, sanctity and sway" (259). It is the sacrifices of wars, massacres, and the horror perpetrated in the name of religion that give sanguine reality to the idea of a God.

> As civilization moves away from the founding violence of religion, the imagination becomes synonymous with idolatry or image making: "No, they must have Gods of their own making, that they could see and handle, that they knew to be nothing in themselves but senseless image" (259).

The interest from this period onwards is to represent the transcendental element of God in man-made forms that mirror our desire and human condition. God is no longer an unknowable entity, but a product of our desires that we can reproduce in crude and inanimate idols. Hazlitt's metaphor is suggestive: like naive girls, he implies that we are dazzled by monarchy and its power, as we might be by a favorite doll that we have dressed up to look like a real princess. The

imagination is denigrated into an exercise in making senseless images and empty titles that no longer have the power to exert a claim on reality nor vouch for the existence of a God.

From this point, it is only a short step, Hazlitt argues, to investing the inanimate idol with what Hazlitt calls a "living subject": "It is not now the fashion to make Gods of wood and stone and brass, but we make kings of common men, and are proud of our own handy-work" (260). But as Hazlitt continues, it becomes clear that we are no less alienated in the making of a king from common men than the making of a God from common wood and brass.

> He who has the greatest power put into his hands, will only become more impatient of any restraint in the use of it. To have the welfare and lives of millions placed at our disposal, is a sort of warrant, a challenge to squander them without mercy. An arbitrary monarch set over the heads of his fellows does not identify himself with them…but looks down upon them as of a different species from himself, as insects crawling on the face of the earth, that he may trample on at his pleasure, or if he spares them, it is an act of royal grace…and instead of being the organ of public feeling and public opinion, [he is] is an excrescence and an anomaly in the state, a bloated mass of morbid humors and proud flesh! (263)

The incarnation of spirit into flesh, which makes kings out of God, produces or engenders an anomaly, excrescence, or surplus.[100] It creates an arbitrary monarch who appears to rule his

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[100] In *The Royal Remains: The People's Two Bodies and the Endgames of Sovereignty*, Eric Santner argues that the flesh figures as a particularly troubling material for the concept of sovereignty. For Santner, sovereignty is not simply the transcendent body that contains all other bodies, but "a surplus immanence," that is invented for transmitting back to these bodies their rights to enjoy life and protection as political subjects (19). For Hazlitt, too, sovereignty is a "surplus immanence" of the body politic: a fleshly excess or bloated mass, a surfeit of power that elevates the sovereign above the people (29). Moreover, sovereignty is "arbitrary," a political fiction with real legal consequences. According to Roberto Esposito: More than an expulsion of the flesh, this concerns its incorporation into an organism that is capable of domesticating the flesh's centrifugal and anarchic impulses. (Esposito164). See also the reversal of Plowden's Reports, which argues that "the Body politic wipes away every Imperfection of the other Body [the King's natural body, which, like all physical bodies, suffers from age, disease, and death…"(Kantorowicz 11).

people from on high. And yet the arbitrary monarch is not a spiritual body, whose relationship to the divine or the sacred allows him to redeem the imperfections of the state or members of its body politic. Instead, he is characterized as bloated mass of morbid humors and proud flesh. Removed from common misery and devoid of fellow- feelings for his people, the arbitrary monarch is rather an excrescence and anomaly of the state, a disease that presents a mortal threat to the body politic.

But the emergence of Napoleon and his empire seem to signal a departure from the kings of bygone ages. In an article entitled "On the Late War" that was published in *The Champion* on 3 April 1814 (a week before Napoleon's abdication), Hazlitt describes the late war as "a war of extermination" which, he argues, could only be concluded by a "peace of extermination" (68). By this extermination, Hazlitt means that the destruction of France would also imply that of England too. He argues that the originality of the late war was that it was not "a war of mercantile advantage, or a trial of strength between the two countries…but a war against an opinion, which could, therefore, never cease but with the extirpation of…opinion" (69). The effects of the late war and its destructive character may be traced to competing ideologies about sovereignty:

> It was not a temporary or local question of the boundaries, the possessions, or particular rights of rival states, but a question, in which all states are at all times equally interested, of the internal right of any people to choose its own form of government. Whether this was a just ground or not, is another question; but it was the true one – that which gave its character to the war, and accounts for all its consequences…It was a question of the balance of power between kings and people; a question compared with which the balance of power in Europe is petty and insignificant (69).

For Hazlitt, then, nations appear to inhabit the same relational field that individuals do, in which self-interest seems perennially contaminated by interests of others. The sovereignty of one nation is not simply the interest of that nation alone, but co-implicates the interests of all nations. The freedom for self-government, achieved by peaceful or revolutionary means, is as much the condition for cosmopolitanism as it is for war, for securing one's rights among a community of states as it is for the protection of one's self- interest. The character of modern war and the peculiarity of their violence have their roots, according to Hazlitt, in a new concept of sovereignty, which though internally divided, is nonetheless global in its outlook and total in its implication.

Life of Napoleon Bonaparte: A New Poetics of Sovereignty?

It is interesting to read Hazlitt's commendation of Napoleon as a secular solution to the problem of legitimacy and its combination of politics and theology, doctrine and ideology, the eternal kingdom of god and the temporal realm of politics. Hazlitt believed that by putting theology in the service of politics, legitimacy or hereditary monarchy perpetuated the rule of tyrants as undisputed representatives of God on earth. In this section, I am interested in outlining the conceptual stakes of Hazlitt's biography Life of Napoleon Bonaparte (1828-30) in order to glean from it a theory of sovereignty. Thus, though Life has been roundly dismissed by critics as mere "idolatry," I argue that the biography does contain suggestive points for understanding the complicated history of modern sovereignty.[101] The persistent neglect of Life in Hazlitt's scholarship is regrettable not only because it forecloses a comprehensive evaluation of Hazlitt's

[101] Kinnaird dismisses Life as "unoriginal" and "a chauvinistic rationalization…for a Bonapartist's life of blind prostration before his idol" (325-7).

politics, but also an understanding of the specific contributions of Romanticism to the modern theory of sovereignty.

In the "Preface" to Political Essays, With Sketches of Public Characters (1819), Hazlitt writes:

> Tyranny in him [Napoelon] was not sacred: it was not eternal: it was not instinctively bound in league of amity with other tyrannies; it was not sanctioned by the laws of religion and morality. There was an end of it with an individual. (4.9 my emphasis)

What makes Napoleon radical for Hazlitt is not simply his position as an anti-Legitimist, as his sympathetic critics assert, but that Napoleon was as a profane example of a tyrant. For Hazlitt, it is conceptually important that his tyranny had broken with the sacred and the eternal, that his tyranny was not sanctioned by an appeal to a higher power than that of his own. His sphere of influence was not supposed to extend beyond the life of his person and would, for this reason, come to an end with the individual. Thus, Hazlitt's commendation of Napoleon also functions as a de-limiting of his power, a theory of sovereignty that is circumscribed by the finitude of power itself.

One may be tempted to think that Napoleon embodied, for Hazlitt, a kind of sovereignty that was stripped of the aura, pageantry, and poetic excesses of old power. But Hazlitt's interpretation seems to suggest a much more nuanced and even parodic relationship to that power. Napoleon, he argues, "had assumed the mock-majesty of king" (Howe, 239). In making himself Emperor of France Napoleon, he exposes the arbitrariness of legitimacy or the divine right of kings; in making himself the source of power, he stages the illegitimate nature of all power to begin with:

> Those who look upon this as a violent usurpation seem willfully to forget all the intermediate steps which led to it, as though it were an effect without a cause. A crown resting on merit alone appears ridiculous, because there is no necessary connection between the two things; a crown worn without any merit in the wearer seems natural and in order, because no reason is even pretended to be assigned for it (243 my emphasis).

In this symbology of power, power appears most natural to us when it elides all the intermediate steps leading up to it, all the stuff that makes up politics—especially the use of violence—as if the symbol of the crown were enough to explain the vicissitudes of power, or to vindicate its underhanded or forceful means. Symbolic power is the desire for power as poetry or a form of poeticization that insists on the connection between crown and power i.e., hereditary monarchy as the only meaningful expression of politics, at the expense of other forms of political action (revolution, *coup d'etat*, usurpation etc). By effacing all traces of work and material history, what remains is precisely the semblance of a natural connection or symbolic unity between crown and power.

Conversely, then, the crown whose merit may be traced to conquest or popular support appears out of step with the natural order of things precisely because it reveals the arbitrariness of the connection between power and the crown as well as the contingency of its own meritorious claim to the crown, which it secures through violence and conquest. The crown won through merit retains traces of its originary relationship to violence, but it also signals, for the same reason, the disintegration of the poetic symbol (perhaps into what we refer to today as the arbitrary relationship between "sign" and "signifier"). It is perhaps owing to this disintegration within poetic language that a new significance, perhaps beyond the obfuscation of violence that Hazlitt consider the raison *d'*être of poetry, could finally emerge out of the relationship between poetry and power. For Hazlitt,

the implications of Napoleon's sovereignty is not merely political, but poetic insofar as it raises questions about poetic representation and its capacity to grant aesthetic unity to an essentially fragmentary notion of power and sovereignty.

The question nonetheless remains: how does Hazlitt's Napoleon conceptually different from the sovereignties of the past?

> Emperors and Kings are born and not made, ever since an Elector of Hanover was made King of England! From that period the two races of men and kings are supposed to go in parallel and opposite lines forever; and it was for having made a breach in this order that Bonaparte was the first to be hunted down and then made to feel his fall with every refinement of studied insult, to wipe out the stain of the unheard-of-equality he had assumed with natural-born tyrants—or the chosen kings of a free people!"(15.303).

In bringing together the separate orders of people and king, Napoleon effectively engenders a breach in the order of sovereignty that makes the people's king unlike any other king. Hazlitt's wager is precisely that, far from making Napoleon the King of kings, this breach, in the incarnation of a popular sovereign, serves as a passage to genuine populism and the people's rule. Napoleon did not only represent the people, but changed the very terms representation:

> Even his abuse of power and aping the style and title of the imaginary gods of the earth only laughed their pretensions the more to scorn. He did many things wrong and foolish; but they were individual acts, and recoiled upon the head of the doer. They stood upon the ground of their own merits, and could not urge in their vindication 'the divine right of kings to govern wrong'… Whatever fault might be found with them, they did not proceed upon the avowed principle, 'that the millions were made for one' but one for millions;

> and as long as this distinction was kept in view, liberty was saved, and the Revolution was untouched"(*Life* Chapter 31).

There is no illusion in Hazlitt's mind that Napoleon abused his power and aped the majesty of kings. But in this passage the significance of Napoleon is rather to recast the old philosophical problem of the one and the many in secular terms, that is to say, without invoking "the one" as transcendental identity. In this way, the one does not contain the many in the way that a box contains contents that are substantially or ontologically different from it. Napoleon was one of the millions that he sought to represent, and therefore, a surplus of the million, the one in addition to the million, an addition that does not add up to a whole. He sought to represent the many as a "surplus immanence" (to borrow Santner) who was part of the many that he stands for. Hazlitt's articulation of Napoleon's exception to the millions, to whom he does and does not belong, constitutes the modernity and prescience of his concept of sovereignty.

> When Bonaparte put the crown on his own head, he virtually uncrowned every one of them. This was the hateful point always at issue. With this clue all is clear; without it, all is a disjointed dream (73 my emphasis).

Napoleon conquers, but in putting the crown on his head, he bars the crown from other kings. By occupying the place of king, Napoleon is said to finish what the Revolution began. In this regard, Napoleon was the culmination of the Revolution: he brought the Revolution to a decisive conclusion, or, by his campaigns he made the Revolution the final end. The self-divided signification of the crown that uncrowns raises the question of what it means even to assume the crown, to incarnate (in the sense of "splitting" that Esposito delineated) the transcendental position at all, to play the king in a context where monarchy in the legitimate sense is no longer an option?

Hazlitt insists that Napoleon's roles as first consul and later as emperor are not simply a repetition of the past or regression. Hazlitt sees Napoleon as an exception to the crown, a repetition of monarchy that would end and foreclose the possibility of all other monarchies. Napoleon was the last monarch because he brought about the end of monarchy. For as long as he was emperor, his crown effectively uncrowned or delegitimized the entire race of kings. But his dictatorship, which made him the scourge of monarchs, also made him an exception to the revolutionary ideals that he is said to embody. It is not so much that Napoleon had betrayed the ideals of the revolution, or that he denigrated the monarchy. The difficulty of Hazlitt's thinking of Napoleon's exceptionalism is precisely that, by bringing the Revolution to its conclusion, Napoleon brought an end to both revolution and monarchy. By occupying the crown, he turned it into a mere cipher, barring others from occupying its symbolic role.

CHAPTER FOUR

De Quincey and the Global Nineteenth-Century

"Papuan and Melanesian," [Mauss] notes, "have one single term to designate buying and selling, lending and borrowing. Operations that are opposites are expressed by the same word." That is ample proof that the operations in question are far from "opposite"; that they are just two modes of the self-same reality. We do not need *hau* to make a synthesis because the antithesis does not exist.

—Claude Levi-Strauss (cited in Derrida 74-5)

Englishness and Globality

Turning to De Quincey's opium writings in *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* and his two essays on "The Opium Question with China in 1840" and "The Chinese Question in 1857"), my chapter examines the figure of the gift and the issue of debt that are embedded in the imperial economy, especially as it pertains to the relations between England and China during the nineteenth century. I am particularly interested in reading what has been cast as a commercial and diplomatic relation through the figurative language of gift and debt that appears frequently in De Quincey's writings in order to track the "sympathetic exchanges" between two empires. Within the scope of the dissertation, the chapter is concerned with the ways these "sympathetic exchanges" are themselves embedded in the paradigm of war. The two Opium Wars (1839-1842, 1856-1860) did not merely result in the Treaty of Nanking, which opened China up to foreign trade and ceded Hong Kong to British rule. Britain's victory over China in these wars helped secure the conditions for the ascendency of Western liberal economics, through the spread of notions of freedom and sympathy, and thus, established the social and ideological conditions for a global political order that has been largely dominated by the West.

In doing so, I mean to contextualize these exchanges in an emerging sense of the global that was sanctioned by European imperialism, with Britain as the prime agent of a universal maritime conquest that invented a new global order as well as new ways of navigating the peoples and spaces of the entire globe, that is, new technologies, discursive knowledge, and modes of governance. In other words, I am less interested in the bilateralism of the British-Sino relation than the global questions and global identities it gives rise to and the ways in which it undermines familiar oppositions of empire and periphery, territory and sea, self and other. More specifically, my entry into the global questions raised in the discussion to follow has to do with the sense of globality in the nineteenth-century as it informs and comes to be informed by De Quincey's writings.

De Quincey is a particularly crucial figure through which to explore the way globality was experienced in a period when England had become the principal agent in the a new "*nomos* of the earth," that shifted from or combined territorial conquest with mastery of the seas, from the control of land to the movement of goods, people, and capital across the globe to sustain its trade in slave or indentured labor as well as in opium and tea in China (Schmitt 178).[102] Its dominant position as a maritime Empire allowed Britain to become, as Carl Schmitt claims, "the operational base for the later leap into the total rootlessness of modern technology," by which modern technology I would include all the ways in which imperialism provided the language and the framework for the classification of race, the mapping and division of territory, right down to the way intimate pleasures and pains of the bodies are not only categorized or medically classified, but also manufactured for consumption (178).

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[102] According to Lowe: "the forms of imperial government practiced in the post-Opium War treaty ports and in Hong Kong consisted in the power to adapt and combine the projects of earlier colonial conquest with forms of transportable migrant labor, monopoly with laissez-faire, and historic territorial rule with new powers over circulation and mobility of goods and people" (108).

My chapter takes De Quincey as a case study of Britishness as a global identity, negotiated by its trade and affective relation to the rest of the world. The question remains: can we speak of something like a sense or affect of the global? Moreover, how do we understand the affect—of a rootlessnes and borderlessness that routed through an imperial will to map, conquer, and divide—that is associated in *Confessions* and *Suspiria de Profundis* with the ocean as the privileged site of intense commercial and military activity over the long nineteenth century. To what extent does the figure of the ocean offer a directive for the way we think about affect as a flow that exceeds the borders of the nation state, presenting us continually with the occasion for our ethical relation with an Other? How can an we understand the xenophobia and anxieties of De Quincey's later writings, its attempt to give an economic account of pleasure and pain through England's trade war with China?

De Quincey's autographical and political essays on opium-eating and the wars that take place in the backdrop of his addiction are of interest precisely because they consistently sought to address the political question of China in *affective* terms: his xenophobia in *Confessions* cannot be understood outside of the "affective economy" that he sets up in the text, a symptom of the text that invites us to consider the work itself as an affective production. De Quincey's text reminds us constantly of the indivisibility between affect and textual meaning, of the difficult, and obscure implications of their mutual inclusion. His own solution to the difficulty of giving an account of the pleasure and pains of opium-eating, of putting feelings into words, is resolved by an appeal to the language of economy that leads us to wonder about the kind of textual economy that is here designated to the rendering of affective production. Such an economical view brings to mind, too, the connoisseurship of opium-eater who has claimed to have tasted happiness "both

in a solid and a liquid shape," who has, in effect, understood affect as a residue of the exchange and circulation of commodities, that is, as part of the economy of things (109).

The notion of debt provides a clue, especially as De Quincey employs it in Confessions, where it points to the sense of financial burden that is owed someone or something (as for example England's national debt caused by a deficit in silver bullion used in the payment for Chinese tea) and a *feeling* of indebtedness that is almost always ambivalent in De Quincey, to the extent that it implies sense of obligation that could never be discharged, and thus, a gratitude for a thing that seems always owing. The latter is especially evident in De Quincey's continuous worry over the debt he owes to his literary predecessors—an anxiety of influence that seemed to have led him to conceive of literature itself according to a logic of the debt that turns its objective claims into the work of speculative fiction, based entirely on a system of credit, as it were. Like Mauss's *hau*, the notion of debt highlights the instability of positions like reader and author (in the case of De Quincey especially, whose writing is itself an interpretation of his literary influences), and the untenability of giving and receiving.

Nonetheless, the figure of the gift remains one of the cornerstone of De Quincey's writings and bears examination, especially as it is bound up with the notion of debt, or with a certain form of giving, in which one gives what one does not have, or takes credit for something which was never given. To this extent, my chapter builds on works by Kitson and Markley who have also taken up "the role of civility and the function of the gift exchange and similar ceremonial events in constituting the semiotics of international trade and exchange," in the historical context of the first Macartney Emmbassy to China in 1793. The Embassy failed in its mission to secure a diplomatic trading treaty, commercial ports of trade, and compensation for English merchants (143). Commentators such as Kitson have attributed the most significant of

these failures to the profound insensibility of the envoys of His Britannic Majesty, as dramatized first by the refusal of the ambassador to perform the traditional ceremony of the full imperial *kowtow* of three full kneelings accompanied by three knockings of the head on the floor, and second, in the tribute to the Emperor Qianlong.[103] Among the diplomatic gifts presented to the Emperor of China were gifts including an orrery, a planetarium, a large lens, a diving bell, an aerial balloon, a coach, ornate clocks, and numerous examples of British manufacture—all carefully selected to impress the Chinese with the innovation of Western science and to excite an even greater demand for the purchase of British manufacture" (127, 148).[104] Hoping to gain some form of recognition of their scientific superiority over the Chinese, the English were nonetheless met with "a studied indifference" (143). The Emperor was unimpressed at the display of industrial progress and scientific hegemony. It is a moment of untranslatability that would also be of interest to De Quincey and which plays out in his own scene of hospitality and gift-giving. Thus, what the English viewed as a gesture of civility was interpreted by the Chinese as a "ritual of subjection" and possibly a reproach of their failure to engage in the scientific and social revolutions that had already transformed Europe many times over (135).

The British encounter with the Qing empire often has been portrayed as that of a modern, technological, and industrial power confronting an older, stagnating polity whose glories were firmly in the past. (131). The "*piece de resistance*," however, was the complex and substantial planetarium known as the *Weltmaschine*, manufactured by the German Philipp Matthäus Hahn, which seems to me a significant detail deserving of more consideration than has been given since it demonstrates both the entry and subsequently denial of the more complex figure of globality

[103] Instead, Macartney knelt on one knee and bowed his head as prescribed by the custom of the English court.
[104] For a full catalogue of presents of the presents brought before the Emperor see Cranmer-Byng and Levere.

that intervenes in the ostensible relation between the two countries (148). It is the prism through which the identities such as "British" and "Chinese" ought to be examined, not as discrete or pre-established units but as always implicated with one another and within a larger network of relations. That is, their relations with one another are embedded within a convoluted structure—not unlike that of the gift—that I am calling here "globality." "Globality" is therefore an opening rather than a totalization of the relations among different national or political units: a relation of relations that obliges us to think of categories that emerge out of comparative identifications and the affective connections that develop transnationally.

The figure of globality looms over De Quincey's *Confessions*, not least in figure of opium as global commodity, whose Indian origin is often suppressed in the synonymy between opium and China in De Quincey's writings. Even so, the *pleasure* of opium is in fact a rather "global" experience, in spite of De Quincey's insistence on British proprietorship over opium-eating: While opium induces in the Turks "a torpid state of self-involution," it is a privileged aesthetic experience for the Englishman ("an elaborate intellectual pleasure" [96]), comparable and in fact, rather congenial to the pleasure, for De Quincey, of spending Saturday night at the Opera. Note the international cast appearing in his reconstruction of his "Opera pleasures":

> But, says a friend, a succession of musical sounds is to me like a collection of Arabic characters: I can attach no ideas to them. Ideas! My good sir? There is no occasion for them: all that class of ideas, which can be available in such a case, has a language of representative feelings. But this is a subject foreign to my present purposes: it is sufficient to say, that a chorus, &c. of elaborate harmony, displayed before me, as in a piece of arras work, the whole of my past life—not, as if recalled by an act of memory, but as if present and incarnated in the music: no longer painful to dwell upon: but the

> details of its incidents removed, or blended in some hazy abstraction; and its passion exalted, spiritualized, and sublime. All this to be had for five shillings. And over and above the music of the stage and the orchestra, I had all around me, in the intervals of the performance, the music of the Italian language talked by Italian women: and I listened with a pleasure such as that with which Weld the traveler lay and listened, in Canada, to the sweet laughter of Indian women; for the less you understand of a language, the more sensible you are to the melody or harshness of its sounds: for such a purpose, therefore, it was an advantage to me that I was a poor Italian scholar, reading it but little, and not speaking it at all, nor understanding a tenth part of what I heard spoken (96-97).

The Arabic language, the chatter of Italian women, the sweet laughter of Native Indian women in Canada, all labor in the scene to present us with a conception of the aesthetic experience. As De Quincey represents it, then, the aesthetic experience of sublimity is here an effect of *untranslatability*, the result of a meeting of worlds and a certain resistance to the assimilation of differences. In other words, we are dependent on the notion of an untotalizable globality to produce for us the *feeling* of the sublime or of untranslatability. And yet, the untranslatability of ideas does not appear to hinder the way the aesthetic experience is also affectively construed: it is first and foremost a *feeling* that continually exceeds the language of representation. It is, according to De Quincey, closer to musical sounds that contain neither content nor even specific sensory feelings (such as pain) that one might attach to the sounds of words or representative language. A purely aestheticized language is therefore also an anesthetized language that seems to modulate specific feelings, while heightening and intensifying others to a state of sublime or exalted passion—an experience that is, according to De Quincey, far from rarefied and could be had, like the manufactured pleasure of opium, for

mere shillings. The work of art, De Quincey suggest, no longer sits isolated from the world that produces it, but takes place in the experience of the crowd, in the midst of an incomprehensible cacophony of Italian women and the sounds reminiscent of those Weld might have heard from the North American Natives, which might almost be as incomprehensible to some as the Arabic language.

The polyphonic structure permeates *Confessions* and in my own discussion of the text, I have preferred to think about the hybrid constructions of "the Malay" or "the Oriental" in De Quincey's writing as an effect of this global imaginary that sought to envision the world ordered, divided, brought together by "the global commodity regime" and yet also marked by the untranslatable and inassimilable. To this end, I have focused my consideration to the problematic of the gift in the *Confessions* as well as De Quincey's writings on colonialism, particular in his essay "Ceylon," where it is colonialism and the free-trade themselves that are characterized as "British gifts" to the world. I appeal to Derrida's writings on the gift is to show the complicated lines of giving that occur in the these texts, where giving and taking (crediting and indebting) are not at all opposed operations; to consider the gift as a convoluted structure, in which opposites emerge out of one another in the way that the notion of poison is often couched in the idea of the gift as a gift of death (to use Derrida's suggestive title). My readings of De Quincey in this chapter ultimately contribute to reconstructing the event in the imperial relation between England and the Far East as mediated through the figure of the gift. To what extent can one speak of colonialism as a gift as De Quincey suggests in "Ceylon"? Are there other ways to understand the gift, that is, the incalculable of colonialism? For my purpose, then, the structure of the gift and giving are hypotheses or thought figures that allow us to interrogate the formation of opposite operations, to account for the meanest or most obscure link, such as the affective

connections, between peoples and things that are supposedly opposite. My aim is to understand what kind of economy a gift constitutes on the one hand or undermines on the other, and what affective possibility may be opened up by the gift that otherwise foreclosed in a pure relation of trade and exchange.

On Literary Debt

The notion of debt constitutes one of the central preoccupations of the *Confessions*: there is the debt owed to Ann, who has made the author "a debtor for life"; then there is the pecuniary debt of the man of letters, which is the condition under which the author writes as much as it is also the means through which he dispenses his debt to the money-lenders and creditors who figure in the text; more broadly, there is also Britain's debt to China, which looms over the text since the trade in Indian opium (with China) was intended to correct the deficit incurred by the import of Chinese tea to Britain.[105] Not unrelated to these forms of debts and informing their meaning, is the more complicated notion of literary debt (to Ricardo, Coleridge, and Wordsworth to name but a few of his predecessors), whose idiosyncratic significance in the text warrants separate attention.

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[105] Lowe writes: "By the late 1790s, East India Company administrators were preoccupied with increasing debt to China and sought to change the imbalance of trade from the British tea imports, with reports showing the export in bullion exceeding many times that of the export in produce and manufactures. To balance exchange and prevent the 'drain of silver' required in payment for the Chinese imports, the Company improvised an elaborate, layered opium trade, despite the Qing government's explicit prohibition of the drug's import. The Company managed the cultivation, production, and packaging of opium in Benares, India, and private merchants like Jardine, Matheson, and Company, and others, imported the opium for sale along the Chinese coast. By the 1820s and 1830s, opium was the single largest single treaded commodity that Britain imported to China. Silver received from drug runners at Lintin was paid into the Company's factory at Canton, and by 1825, the illegal trade rapidly raised most of the funds needed to buy Chinese tea. *Yet opium was more than simply an economic commodity. The distribution of the highly addicting drug that induced total docility and dependence targeted the biology of the Chinese population, constituting a very different form of governance than earlier modes of political dominance or territorial conquest*" (103 italics mine). Lowe's version of the history of the opium trade is exemplary in that it takes seriously the biopolitics of the trade in the production of docile and dependent colonial subjects—a point that is acknowledged, but ultimately dismissed by most commenters including De Quincey himself. The regular dismissal of the point raises of the question of how the biopolitical and affective impacts of colonialism may be measured at all.

Though we may be tempted to think of debt as establishing stable borders between self and other or what I have over and against what my neighbor has, the notion of literary debt, particularly as it is sketched out in *Confessions*, serves rather to disrupt the distinctions between self and other and to complicate the relations between giving and taking, as well as the stability of the thing that changes hands between debtor and creditor. In *Confessions*, especially, the literary debt owed to one's literary predecessors highlights the fragility of the notion of authorship.[106] Given de Quincey's admiration of Wordsworth and their subsequent fallout, Wordsworth's absence in the text becomes particularly meaningful, especially in the famous scene at Dove Cottage—which had been at one time Wordsworth's home at Grasmere and where he made his reputation, along with Coleridge, as a Lake poet.[107]

> Paint me, then, a room seventeen feet by twelve, and not more than seven and a half feet high. This, reader, is somewhat ambitiously styled in my family the drawing-room; but being contrived "a double debt to pay," it is also, and more justly, termed the library, for it happens that books are the only article of property in which I am richer than my neighbors (111).

To save himself from "too much verbal description," De Quincey "credits" the scene to a painter, to whom directions are "given" to paint a picture of what Dove Cottage would look like from inside the house, which is also to say, from the view of the master who already inhabits the home and who delineates its borders. Thus, credit takes place here in a peculiar context of "giving," of making a painter appear *ex nihilo*, and in which "directions" have to be invented for

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[106] See Rzepka, "All of his biographers, including Japp, agree that, had it not been for the pressures of debt, De Quincey would most likely not have left behind even a scarp of published work recording his life or thought" (19)
[107] Of course, not all debts engender writing: Clej notes the failed attempts at poetry and the mastery of metaphysics in the shadow of Wordsworth and Coleridge (277 n.23 &24).

an invented painter in order for the credit to be given, in effect, for the invocation of a debt or a debtor to even work. In order words, to credit someone (especially with some *thing* that one does ostensibly possess: the genius of painting, the origin of an idea)[108] is not here to give back what is owed to them, but to give in an originary way and through a speculative relation, a thing that was never possessed and thus never, in fact, owed.

Indeed, De Quincey's gesture of crediting an imaginary painter is not unrelated to his frequent appeals to the generosity of his reader, suggesting perhaps that the act of reading is as much determined by the text and its author as it is, in a certain respect, by its reader. In the example below, where the author performatively demands credit from his reader, the functions of giving and taking (of credit) become nearly inseparable:

> It remains then that I *postulate* so much as is necessary for my purpose. *And let me take as full credit for what I postulate* as if I had demonstrated it, good reader, *at the expense of your patience and my own*. Be not so ungenerous as to let me suffer in your good opinion through my own forbearance and regard for your comfort. No: believe and as an act of grace: or else in mere prudence: for, if not, then in the next edition of my Opium Confessions revised and enlarged, *I will make you believe and tremble*: and *à force d'ennuyer*, by mere dint of pandiculation I will terrify all readers of mine from ever again questioning any postulate that I shall think fit to make" (104 italics mine).[109]

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[108] For "the problem of giving-taking" as it pertains to language, see Derrida: "In short, one must not only ask oneself, in something close to rapturous wonder, how it is possible that to give and/or to take are said this way or that way *in* a language , but one must also remember first of all that language is as well a phenomenon of gift-countergift, of giving-taking—and of exchange. All difficulties of nomination or writing in the broad sense are also difficulties of *self*-naming, of *self*-writing [se *nomer*, s'*écrire*]. Everything said about language and everything written about giving-taking in general *a priori would* fold back on language and writing as giving-taking. Giving would come back, come down to taking and taking to giving… (80-81)

[109] The omission here not only includes a narrative and chronological leap from the first to the final stage of opium-eating, but also the passing over of the death of Wordsworth's youngest daughter, Catherine Wordsworth, to whom De Quincey was close (101,103 n.1)

Here, "postulation" is a certain form of credit, which asks that the reader take the author at his word or to take his word for truth. What is given in confessional writing is not the "reality" behind the writing, but the writing itself which must be taken for reality. In a sleight of hand, the authorial voice intervenes in the above to reveal the speculative nature of confessional writing, and within it the event and the author himself as a witness of the event, which precedes the writing only as an appearance, retroactively and through the act of postulation.[110]

One might read the visitation of the Malay at Dove Cottage as an example of such a postulation, as an event that is interpolated into the text, an axiom of giving that is given by the text to elucidate all the other instances of giving (taking, crediting, indebting) in the text. In this *formal* sense, the Malay sequence performs the same *rhetorical* function that is assigned to the *figure* of opium, clothing experiences in dreams and intuitions and arraying them before the reader, composing them into an account that renders experience intelligible (120).[111] Literature, he implies, begins as a speculative moment or a plea *au lecteur* (which barely disguises the threat of the author's authority). Not unlike the room formerly invoked at Dove Cottage, which confounds the borders between drawing room and library, as well as between, Wordsworth and De Quincey (or guest and host), literature, too, is has a double debt to pay, a debt to both its readers and its predecessors.[112]

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[110] De Quincey compares his own style of writing to "those wandering musical variations upon the theme—those parasitical thoughts, feelings, digressions, which climb up with belles and blossoms around the arid stock; ramble away from it at time with perhaps too rank a luxuriance; but at the same time, by the eternal interest attached to the subject of these digressions, no matter what were the execution, spreads a glory over incidents that for themselves would be—less than nothing" (141).

[111] "The minutest incidents of childhood, or forgotten scenes of later years, were often revived: I could not be said to recollect them; for if I had been told of them while waking, I should not have been able to acknowledge them as part of my experience. But placed as they were before me, in dreams like intuitions, and clothed in all their evanescent circumstances and accompanying feelings, I recognized them instantaneously" (120).

[112] De Quincey is also a reader of Wordsworth, and at this time, an editor of the latter's *Convention of Cintra.*

Among the "readers" to whom De Quincey owes such a credit is the servant girl whose only role in the text—apart from providing the exotic Malay visitor with a foil—seems exhausted in vouching for the credibility her master. Born and bred amongst the mountain, "the young girl" who, De Quincey speculates, "had never seen an Asiatic dress of any sort," is not only confounded by the visitor's head dress, but by the "impassable gulph" between them that prevented "all communication of ideas" (107)

> In this dilemma, *the girl, recollecting the reputed learning of her master* (*and doubtless giving me credit for a knowledge of all the languages of the earth, besides, perhaps, a few lunar ones*), came and gave me to understand that there was a sort of demon below, whom she clearly imagined that my art could exorcise from the house. I did not immediately go down: but, when I did, the group which presented itself, arranged as it was by accident, though not very elaborate, took hold of my fancy and my eye in a way that none of the statuesque attitudes exhibited in the ballets at the Opera House, though ostentatiously complex, had ever done. (107, my emphasis).

The inversion of the hierarchy between master and servant in the scene where it is the servant who is giving and the master who is owing, points to the clear sense that De Quincey is credited with knowledge he does *not* have. The famous sequence that will follow from here—the exchange of words and opium that takes place between the Malay and De Quincey—is thus augmented by what is essentially a scene of speculation, and as De Quincey himself seems to suggest, in the over-speculation of the girl in her master's ability to speak all the languages of the earth, and *even*, "a few lunar ones." What complicates the giving of credit further—a further convolution in the gesture of giving—is that the one who takes the credit (from the servant) is also the author who gives and whose gift is precisely the carefully constructed scene of giving.

Does De Quincey not participate in the logic of credit (i.e. speculation) when he imagines his servant as an allegory of virtuous English simplicity who has not only never met a Malay, but whose "native spirit of mountain intrepidity" requires the scholar's defense (107)? He imagines that she imagines, as she credits him for what he does not have, namely, a language that holds the talismanic power to exorcise demons, to dispel shadows with the light of knowledge and representation. Above all, it is a painterly gesture on De Quincey's part to picture the otherwise nameless "young girl" in a constellation of figures whose relations to one another is not only the product of "fancy" (imagination), but whose meaning is highly aestheticized (more artful than even the ostentatiously complex,statuesque figures of the ballets at the Opera House), and tropological in juxtaposition of the perverse Oriental and the threatened innocence of Britannia. He pictures the young servant girl standing between the stranger (whom it is said by the omniscient narrator that she gazes upon as if he were a "tiger cat") and the curious "little child" who had followed the stranger into the house.

> And *a more striking picture there could not be imagined*, than the beautiful English face of a girl, and its exquisite fairness, together with her erect and independent attitude, contrasted with the sallow and bilous skin of the Malay, enameled or veneered with mahogany, by marine air, his small, fierce, restless eyes, thin lips, slavish gestures and adorations (107 my emphasis).

Itself a painterly vision, the scene solicits spectatorship, admiration, and interpretation. The contrast between the beautiful English face and the sallow bilous skin of the Malay, between "fairnesss" (in a word that seems to magically confer whiteness with moral and beautiful qualities) and the man who is barely flesh, mummified or preserved by the marine air and the elements. But as the text suggests, the scene is also an enframing one, in which the foreigner is

codified through a repertoire of existing images of the Orient that render the unknown known precisely by dressing him in the most familiar conventions, in the "turban" and "loose trousers of dingy white," which become commonplace signs of the foreign and the exotic: "the picturesque exhibition that he assisted to frame" (109). In this regard, the scene of encounter is indeed one of exorcism: the expulsion of the demonic spirit by a language that turns the intruder into nothing more than an archetype (107).

And yet, despite the petrifying effect of language and archetypal (or stereotypical) representation, the famous encounter with the Malay visitor contains one of the most interesting commentaries on the work, or rather, un-working of language in the text:

> My knowledge of the Oriental tongues is not remarkably extensive, being indeed confined to two words—the Arabic word for barley, and the Turkish word for opium (madjoon), which I have learnt from Anastasius. And, as I had neither a Malay dictionary, nor even Adelung's *Mithridates*, which might have helped me to a few words, I addressed him in some lines from the Iliad; considering that, of such languages as I possessed, Greek, in point of longitude, came geographically nearest to an Oriental one. He [the Malay] worshipped me in a most devout manner and replied in what I suppose was Malay. In this way I saved my reputation with my neighbors: for the Malay had no means of betraying the secret. He lay down upon the floor for about an hour, and then pursued his journey. On his departure, I presented him with a piece of opium. To him, as an Orientalist, I concluded that opium must be familiar: and the expression on his face convinced me that it was (108).

Literature and literary history come to the rescue of a language that is burdened by national or regional differences. The works mentioned are suggestive: Thomas Hope's memoir

of the Roman emperor Anastasius not only contains references to opium but also the latter's personal account of the Roman war against the last Sasanian Empire (502-504);[113] The *Iliad*'s lyrical account of the epic war between East and West, the Trojan War that pitted the Greeks against the Asiatic Dardanians, the Zeleians, Pelasgians, Paionians, Paphlagonianis, Mysians, Phyrgians, Maionians, Carians, Lycians, and Thracians;[114] then, there are the references to William Marsden's *A Dictionary and Grammar of the Malayan Language* and Johann Christoph Adelung's incomplete *Mithridates, oder allgemeine Sprachenkunde* (1806) (the latter contains a volume devoted to Asiatic languages). The works converge in their preoccupation with the Orient, understood through the lens of war, ethnography, and the study of language.

Beyond signification, it is significant to consider in the scene what language *does* and *does not do*. The lines from the *Iliad* mean little other beyond its use or its effect, to preserve the scholar's reputation in front of his servant and his neighbor, and thus, to conceal rather than reveal the ignorance of the master, to dissimulate rather the work of language, which appears to its reader to relay or communicate meaning, but to its users as a speech act or a mode of doing that gets done, in spite of meaning or comprehensibility. In the absence of a referential structure (the dictionaries and books of grammar are unavailable in the scene above), language no longer represents and words are redundant as signs. The giving of opium takes place without mention of the word "madjoon," despite it being one of two words in the Oriental *tongue* that De Quincey

[113] The Sassanid War or Anastastian War was the early of many wars between the Roman Byzantine and Sasanian Empire. At its height of power, the Sasanian Empire consisted of most of Persia and the near East, including all of today's Iran, Iraq, Eastern Arabia (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatif, Qatar, UAE), the Levant (Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan), the Caucasus (Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Dagestan), Egypt, large parts of Turkey, much of Central Asia (Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan), Yemen and Pakistan. The last of the Roman-Sasanian wars would result in a considerably weakened Sasanian Empire, which fell in the next century to Islamic conquest.

[114] (Il.II, 811-877). As Edward points out the demarcation between the Orient and the West "already seems bold by the time of the *Iliad,*" (Said 56).

claims to know. Much depends not on the interpretation of signs (or the relation between words and things), but faces and gestures that refer to nothing other than the exchange itself, which keeps going, quite miraculously, without the aid of signification as if the scene itself were a gift or some unexpected element given of language, a gift of language that is given at the expense of language and even translatability.

What distinguishes the exchange with the Malay from other forms of "glossolalia," which Daniel Heller-Roazen defines as a "non-signifying modes of communicability," is the profound investment it has in the geopolitical history of East and West, of language as an experience that is, first and foremost, rooted in the encounter and the geopolitical proximity with the foreign Other (amongst other forms of proximities and intimacies—for instance the intimacy of sharing a secret with a stranger). What makes Greek significant in the example has nothing to do with the relations between sign and signifier (nor even the non-relation between sign and signifier, as in the case of speaking in tongues that Heller-Roazen characterizes as a "speech that preserves only the envelope form of semantic intention"[115]), but England's historical, cultural, and geopolitical *proximity* to the Orient.

Towards an Affective Economy

The economy that is invoked through the theme of debt is intimately associated with the narrative strategy of the text, with the system of checks and balances, debits and credits, through which feelings such as guilt, euphoria, indebtedness are accounted for, and in the end, organized

[115]Heller-Roazen: "[Glossolalia] is a technical expression of referring to a variety of speech act whose name derives from the Greek term for speaking in tongues. Giorgio Agamben has commented that such speech consists not so much in the 'pure uttering of inarticulate sounds' as in a 'speaking in gloss'; that is, in words whose meaning one does not know" (66). In his entry on Glossolalia, Heller-Roazen remarks: "To hear such sounds is to know they mean something without knowing exactly what such a 'something' might mean" (2006). See Apter's *Against World Literature* for a discussion Heller-Roazen's notion of "glossolalia" in the context of translation (9-10)

into broad categories of pleasures and pains. In other words, one might interpret economy and political economy as a language in *Confessions* to articulate the work of affect i.e., its flows, currency, or displacements in the text.[116] In *Suspiria de Profundis* the causal link and structural analogy between economy and affect represents one of the most important lessons of childhood:

> It happened that I had now, commencing with my first introduction to Latin studies, a large weekly allowance of pocket-money, too large for my age, but safely entrusted to myself, who never spent or desired to spend one fraction of it upon anything but books. But all proved too little for my colossal schemes. Had the Vatican, the Bodleian, and the *Bibliothéque du Roi* been all emptied into one collection for my private gratification, little progress would have been made towards content in this particular craving. Very soon I had run ahead of my allowance, and was about three guineas deep in debt. There I paused; for deep anxiety now began to oppress me as to the course in which this mysterious (and indeed guilty) current of debt would finally flow. For the present it was frozen up; but I had some reason for thinking that Christmas thawed all debts whatsoever, and set them in motion towards innumerable pockets. Now *my* debt would be thawed with all the rest; and in what direction would it flow? There was no river that would carry it off to the sea; to somebody's pocket it would beyond a doubt make its way; and who was that somebody? This question haunted me forever" (177-8).

[116] The link between the figure of debt and the feeling of guilt also appears later in Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*, where he argues that "the major moral concept of *Schuld* [guilt]…has its origin in the very material concept *Schulden* [debt]" (62-3). For Nietzsche, the connection meant that the justice was not predicated on abstractions like "freedom" or "non-freedom" of the will, or ideas of "accountability" or intentionality" (36). His suggestion that "the idea that every injury has its *equivalent* and can actually be paid back, even if only though the pain of the culprit" indicates not only, as he argues, that the idea of 'legal subjects' owes something the contractual relationship between debtor and creditor and the fundamental forms of buying, selling, barter, trade, and traffic (63). Rather significantly, in showing how an affect such as pain could suffice to compensate for an injury, he also suggests that affect itself may be part of the economics of buying, selling, and exchange and could be thought of economically, as it were.

The introduction to, or indeed, induction into the language of lettered men comes at the price of "feverish irritation" and "gnawing care": despite being abundantly provided for, the young narrator soon finds himself three guineas in debt over his "craving" (ibid). The colossal scheme to possess all the books in the world and surpass the collections at the Vatican, the Bodleian, and the *Bibliothéque*—an appetite for knowledge that extends beyond Europe, or certainly what the large weekly allowance of an English schoolboy could afford (ibid). Here, literature amounts to the sacrifice, rather than flourishing (of spiritual or moral rejuvenation) of the man of letters—a burden or liability that appears impossible to discharge. De Quincey's classicisim and Latinism seem themselves anachronistic remnants in a world where literature is monetizable (and where money has become the language of literature) and where the history of the literary arts now has to take place alongside the emergence of capitalism and global commerce, the consolidation of a certain European Empire that is symbolically articulated in the narrator's fantasy of the merger of the Vatican, the Bodleian, and the *Bibliothéque* along with a European knowledge of itself and Others, which allows it to define itself as an empire or an Occidental power against the rest of the world. The source of the trauma seems multifold, having to do with the debt that seems impossible to discharge, and quite concretely, with the incursion of the global into the sphere of the private. The fantasy of a child is here also the fantasy of childhood dreamed up by a solitary opium-eater, which cannot be recalled without simultaneously calling upon the colonial and imperialist undertakings of Britain overseas.

Such entanglement between the personal and the global are, in fact, commonplaces in *Confessions* and seem to echo the non-identity of the text illustrated by its fascination with and use of doppelgangers, doubles, and simulacra. One might consider, in this regard, De Quincey's poetic experimentation with identity and authorship as reflective of a more global anxiety about

an unbounded national identity disappearing into its own unbridled appetite. Symptomatically, his idiosyncratic reading of Ricardo's "political economy" merely reveals his own "irretrievable confusion" among the different economies that he traverses. His "physical economy" (physical constitution) is imbricated in the "domestic economy" of the nation and the household (118): bills have accumulated amidst the pleasures of opium and texts. The domains of self, home, and nation are connected precisely by a notion of economy that guarantees the passage between discrete domains.

At issue, then, is a notion of "economy" that undermines the very closed monetary or poetic system it appears to evoke. Thus, while Ricardo's political economy is admired for its organicity, the *pleasure* of the text is derived specifically from the capacity for the text to be taken apart and considered singly: "political economy offers this advantage to a person in my state, that though it is eminently an organic science [no part, that is to say, but what acts on the whole, as the whole again re-acts on each part], yet the several parts may be detached and contemplated singly" [116]. Is this De Quincey's directive for reading *Confessions* as a poetic work without head or tail—like the serpentine poems of *Paris Spleen*, which Baudelaire dedicated to his friend Arsene Houssaye? Here, the *pleasure* of the opium-eater eclipses all other affective relation to political economy because the subject of political economy itself is already, according De Quincey, an opiate goading the dreamer with the delusion of a great work to be written, while standing in the way of productivity and labor. "The opium-loses none of his moral sensibilities, or aspirations: he wishes and longs, as earnestly as ever, to realize what he believes possible, and feels to be exacted by duty; but his intellectual apprehension of what is possible infinitely outruns his power, not of execution only, but even of power to attempt" (118). *Confessions* is an account of the life unlived and counter-economy of the losses and expenditures

that have in fact depleted it, cored out its experiences, leaving behind an affective body governed by "irritability and excitement of the whole system."[117]

To be sure, the pairing of economy and affect is not an altogether new one. One could find precedent for it in the literatures of sensibility that emerged, according to Robert Mitchell, as a means for the cultivation sensibility, for the regulation of social relations or moral sentiments as sympathy in world that being exposed to the contingency of paper money.[118] And yet, De Quincey's rendering of the relationship between economy and affect seems entirely modern, not least because of his understanding of economy as a system of lack, illuminating insofar as it is incomplete – an edifice with infinitely variable parts entering into differing combinations. Consequently, his economic rendering of affect is configured as a negative dialectics that offers little instructional or disciplinary value for the formation of a national consciousness even as it is, all too often, unrestrained in its xenophobia and national prejudice. Despite the celebrity of the book and its author, nothing about the life that is recollected here is

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[117] "Meantime the symptoms which attended my case for the first six weeks of my experiment were these: enormous irritability and excitement of the whole system; the stomach in particular restored to a full feeling of vitality and sensibility, but often in great pain; unceasing restlessness night and day; sleep—I scarcely knew what it was; three hours out of the twenty-four was the utmost I had, and that so agitated and shallow that I heard every sound that was near me. Lower jaw constantly swelling, mouth ulcerated, and many other distressing symptoms that would be tedious to repeat; amongst which, however, I must mention one, because it had never failed to accompany any attempt to renounce opium—viz., violent sternutation. This now became exceedingly troublesome, sometimes lasting for two hours at once, and recurring at least twice or three times a day. I was not much surprised at this on recollecting what I had somewhere heard or read, that the membrane which lines the nostrils is a prolongation of that which lines the stomach; whence, I believe, are explained the inflammatory appearances about the nostrils of dram drinkers. The sudden restoration of its original sensibility to the stomach expressed itself, I suppose, in this way. It is remarkable also that during the whole period of years through which I had taken opium I had never once caught cold (as the phrase is), nor even the slightest cough. But now a violent cold attacked me, and a cough soon after. In an unfinished fragment of a letter begun about this time to—I find these words: "You ask me to write the—Do you know Beaumont and Fletcher's play of "Thierry and Theodore"? There you will see my case as to sleep; nor is it much of an exaggeration in other features. I protest to you that I have a greater influx of thoughts in one hour at present than in a whole year under the reign of opium. It seems as though all the thoughts which had been frozen up for a decade of years by opium had now, according to the old fable, been thawed at once—such a multitude stream in upon me from all quarters. Yet such is my impatience and hideous irritability that for one which I detain and write down fifty escape me: in spite of my weariness from suffering and want of sleep, I cannot stand still or sit for two minutes together. 'I *nunc, et versus tecum meditare canoros.*'" (293-4).

[118] See Robert Mitchell on the role of sympathy during the financial crises of the late eighteenth century (18-19).

represented as exemplary or worthy of emulation. Specifically, De Quincey's pairing of economy and affect revolves around the notion of debt as a metaphor and a material analogy for guilt. What gives debt its affective charge in the boy's fantasy is its peculiar association with liquidity and its different states of thaw and flow in the months leading up to Christmas. In fact, it is the discharging of the debt and the implied sense of the debt as itself a discharge or currency (apart for its capacity of annulment), which seems to hold a certain fascination for the young narrator. Guilt is an affect without a root, an intensity that diversifies or branches out like a river: when the debt is finally discharged, it is by disappearing into the expenses on someone else's account like "a little tributary rill that was lost in the waters of some more important river" (178).

Indeed, the water and oceanic motifs seem to occupy a special place in *Confessions* that remains largely unaccounted for in the scholarship on De Quincey. In the first place, they take the place of the architectural motif of the earlier first half of the text, which is filled with images of late eighteeenth-century London, alabaster domes, silver spires, and treacherous labyrinths inspired by Wordsworths and Piranesi.[119] The opium dreams in which the buildings and cities appear function thus as citations of Wordsworth and Piranesi that turn *Confessions* itself into a Piranesian architectonic "[w]ith the same power of endless growth and self-reproduction" (123). *Confessions* is thus the product of a citational structure that produces itself consciously as a collection of citation and tropes, a text whose originality lies in its status as commentary or as a text that interprets other texts, a text that ventured to encompass other texts, and in so doing,

[119] Although these images were conceived, apparently, in the narrator's fevered dreams, they are described in the text through De Quincey's citation of Wordsworth's depiction of "New Jerusalem" in *The Excursion*. See *The Excursion* (2.834-51) cited in *Confessions* (122-3): "The appearance, instantaneously disclosed/Was of a might city—boldly say/A wilderness of building, sinking far/ And self-withdrawn into a wondrous depth,/Far sinking into splendor—without end!/ Fabric it seem'd of diamond and gold,/With alabaster domes, and silver spires,/And blazing terrace upon terrace."

created itself out of the citation of other texts. The shift in the text to address the "pains" of opium is announced by the dissolution or progression of architectural motif to that of water:

> To my architecture succeeded dreams of lakes—and silvery expanses of water:—these haunted me so much, that I feared (though possibly it will appear ludicrous to a medical man) that some dropsical state or tendency of the brain might thus be making itself (to use a metaphysical word) *objective*; and the sentient organ project itself as its own object (123).

Leaving behind the domain of the sublime and the architectural, we have entered the murkier waters of the text. The silvery expanses and the placid waters suggest some kind of reflection—a doubling or mirroring effect that operates through analogy through a logic that is pre-scientific or magical and ludicrous to a man of medicine. The man who dreams of water must himself be saturated with water and in a dropsical state, a horrifying vision of reflection as absolute objectivity (without the filter or mediation) that makes the specular object an inverted mirror of the self and its symptoms.

Empire and Oceanic Economy

The oceanic motif is unsettling for a different reason that extends the domain of the preconscious to encompass more global anxieties about the relationship of the Empire to the rest of the world. In a childhood anecdote from *Suspiria de Profundis*, much of the anxiety around debt seems principally focused around his fascination with the subject of history and especially the "general history of navigation" (179). It was this preoccupation that had produced in the young narrator the resolve to order—on credit—every book written on the subject, which was as innumerable as it was "indefinite as to its ultimate extent" (179). The "general history of navigation," compared to that of Great Britain itself, seems potentially infinite:

> Now, when I considered with myself what a huge thing the sea was, and that so many thousands of captains, commodores, admirals, were eternally running up and down it, and scoring lines upon its face so rankly, that in some of the main "streets" and "squares" (as one might call them) their tracks would blend into one indistinguishable blot,—I began to fear that such a work tended to infinity. What was little England to the universal sea? (179).

Far from validating the progress of (British) history, such a work on the general history of navigation would produce nothing but palimpsests, traces, and lines that reduce history into one indistinguishable blot or unreadable and unnavigable plot. Marking the tension between the borderlessnes of the ocean and its modern figuration as a passage and a maritime space that is mapped and remapped according to commercial or colonial interests, it would demonstrate the contingency of progress that could crossed out, retracted, or redrawn; the potentially infinite nature of history and, for that reason, the senselessness of it all. History would be nothing more than a vertiginous image of innumerability and terrifying profusion that appear to describe the futility and excesses of Empire.[120] It is the image of the *face* of the sea (a not uninteresting enfleshment of the sea) *repeatedly* scored that relates the violence or *pain* of colonial encounters: a kind of carving up of the world that does not only divide into colonial territory, but invents the oceanic according to the commercial interests of Europe, turning the ocean into the mirror of its own bad infinity.

> But now that which I have called the tyranny of the human face began to unfold itself. Perhaps some part of my London life might be answerable for this. Be that as it may, now it was that upon the rocking waters of the ocean the human face began to appear: the sea

[120] C.f. Newlyn 45ff.

> paved with innumerable faces, upturned to the heavens: faces imploring, wrathful, despairing, surged upwards by thousands, by myriads, by generations, by centuries:—my agitation was infinite,—my mind tossed—and surged with the ocean (124)

Here, what could have been an ethical encounter with the Other (or per Levinas, the face of the Other)[121] turns instead into an instance of tyranny, in which one's failure in the ethical encounter becomes the occasion that turns the Other into a "tyrant" whose tyranny consists in demanding hospitality and ethical relation.

The passage appears as a kind of prelude announcing the return of the Malay. It is followed by the nightly visitations of the Malay in dreams where, time and again, the missed opportunity for an ethical relation with the other is rehearsed. The visitations are themselves occasions for the "transportation" of the dreamer into "Asiatic scenes" of "imaginable horror," "oriental imagery," "mythological tortures":

> Under the connecting feeling of tropical heat and vertical sun-lights, I brought together all creatures, birds, beasts, reptiles, all trees and plants, usage and appearances, that are all found in all tropical regions, and assembled them together in China and Indostan. From kindred feelings, I soon brought Egypt and all her gods under the same law. I was started at, hooted at, grinned at, chattered at, by monkeys, by paroquets, by cockatoos. I ran into pagodas: and was fixed, for centuries, at the summit, or in secret rooms; I was the idol; I was the priest; I was worshipped; I was sacrificed. I fled from the wrath of Brama through all the forests of Asia: Vishnu hated me: Seeva laid wait for me. I came upon Isis and Osiris. I had done a deed, they said, which the ibis and the crocodile trembled at. I

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[121] Levinas: "The epiphany of the face brings forth the possibility of gauging the infinity of the temptation to murder, not only as a temptation to total destruction, but also as the the purely ethical impossibility of this temptation and attempt" (129).

> was buried, for a thousand years in stone coffins, with mummies and sphynxes, in narrow chambers at the heart of the eternal pyramids. I was kissed, with cancerous kisses, by crocodiles; and laid, confounded with all unutterable slimy things, amongst reeds and Nilotic mud (125).

Like the water motifs, the opium dreams offer a distillation or making visible of the work of reflection. Here, what is given or made visible are the images of fear and loathing, which ought not to be read separately from the racial vocabulary developing out of colonial contact that make them articulable in the first place. This is not to suggest that hatred did not exist before the colonial period, but that colonialism provided fear with its peculiar structure and distinct imagery of excess and over-production. What the dream sequence illustrates then is an affective state that is deeply embedded with the history of Britain's imbrication with the rest of the world. To be distinguished from the more conventional fear of the unknown (which is not unrelated to it), this is fear that is itself a reflection of the surfeit of cultural imagery of the Orient, a reflection of an already reflected upon, already mediated image of the Orient and finally, a reflection on an image of infinite regression ("A young Chinese seems to me an antediluvian man renewed" [124]). It is striking, moreover, how what goes under the name of feeling ("connecting feeling" or "kindred feelings") is used in the passage as a way of unifying or bringing together the different images and the distant regions of Egypt, China, and Indostan together under a broad category of Asia. "Feeling" in this sense participates the assemblage of discourses about the Orient that is itself distorted, perhaps producing the monsters that it claims to have discovered in the same way that reflection, too, partakes in a certain dis-ordering in which the copy in infinitely reproduced as an object of consciousness.

The identities are no less unstable than the affective states attached to them. The "I" of the passage, while posed in "enmity" and against the other, is only meaningful as a product of the relation between self and other. This relation may be described as desire or, rather, as a constituent of an identity in-process. The figure of the Malay is similarly ambiguous—an indeterminate identity attached to an amorphous fantasy of Asia. To be sure, the complexity of the "Malay" identity seems to have always been, and continues to be, the subject of contestation, not merely among the sources that De Quincey drew upon for the construction of the character, (scholars of Indo-China and Southeast Asia such as William Marsden and John Crawfurd), but as a rather capacious identifier of a vast and incoherent commercial diaspora of seafaring populations (traders, sailors, merchants, and intermediaries) thoughout Sumtra and the Straits of Melaka. Referring specifically to the role of the Malay in commodity exchange, Sanjay Krishnan writes, "As it is used by De Quincey, the word 'Malay,' like the archipelago from which he comes, is viewed as an effect of a global commodity regime; the self-identity of the 'Malay,' like 'opium,' serves in a different way to secure the 'identity' of a global civil society founded on commodity exchange" (76). While British contact with the Malay world in the nineteenth century is determined by Britain's commercial ventures in Asia, particularly its desire to establish a trading port in the Malay archipelago as a means of securing the opium trade between India and China, the English understanding of the "Malay" identity consistently referred to its provenance as an identity constituted through a shared language, rather than a single source of national origin.[122]

[122] For a helpful and contemporary attempt to rethink the Malay identity, especially as a "language-based nation, see Barnard's *Contesting Malayness*, Specifically, see the example of Stamford Raffles "Together they [Stamford Raffles and his friend, the Scottish surgeon Dr John Leyden] formed their vision of the Malays as one of the language-based 'nations' that Johann Gottfried Herder and his counterparts in the English Romantic movement, such as Scott, had seen the world divided into" (10).

But Southern Asia is also, according to De Quincey, "the great *officina gentium*"—the workshop of the world where *mankind* is, as it were, manufactured (124).[123] Prior to De Quincey, the phrase may be found in two places: first, in a treatise by the Bishop Jordanes, *De Getarum sive Gothorum origine et rebus gestis* and second, in Walter's Scott' *The Antiquary* (1816). Both designate Scandinavia as the *officina gentium* (Jordanes 20; Scott 125). De Quincey's designation of the *officina gentium* in Southern Asia is somewhat of a prescient departure from his predecessors: since its admission to the World Trade Organization in 2001, China has indeed become a major exporter of goods with a large capacity for voluminous output at a relatively low-price permitted by its inexhaustible human and labor resources. Hailed as factory or workshop of the world, China now supplies almost half the world's goods. These economic possibilities were muted in *Confessions* by colonial interest and an unmistakable xenophobia. As the workshop of the world, China, according to De Quincey, is both "the part of the earth most swarming with human life [. . .] man is a weed in those regions"; it is teeming with human life and yet devoid of humanity; it is a swarming intensity, a mere number or massiveness that has lost its human distinction (124-5). According to John Barrell, "The Orient" is for De Quincey a name for a "malign," "luxuriant," or "virulent" productivity, a breeding-ground of images of the inhuman" (19). Such an understanding of life, as De Quincey, lends itself quite easily to a notion of its dehumanization and expendability that characterizes De Quincey's writings on "the Chinese question" in a way that is not applied to his examples of the colonies in the South Pacific, America, or South Asia.

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[123] The *OED* defines *officina gentium* as "A country or area from the inhabitants of which several nations *develop*" while in his edition of *Confessions* Faflak translates the phrase as "the workshop of the world" (124 n.2). John Barrell reads the phrase to mean "factory where people are made," but also points to the more familiar meaning deployed by Disreali in 1838 to describe England's aspiration to "the workshop of the World," that is, to be the producer of all the world's manufacture (5).

The Ceylon Example

For example, De Quincey's essay "Ceylon" does not deviate much from the standard position of the Empire, which regarded India as the crowning jewel of British colonial and commercial success abroad. Affectionately regarded in familial terms, Ceylon ranks among the "children" of Empire, like the United States, who have "prosper[ed] by our blood, and have ascended to an overshadowing altitude from an infancy tended by ourselves" (7.429).[124] Colonialism was not so much a regime of commercial subjugation or a demonstration of power over colonized populations, as Britain's "gift" the rest of the world (7.455).

> Wheat, potatoes, and many esculent plants or fruits, were introduced by the British in the great year—(and for this Island, in the most literal sense, the era of a new earth and new heavens)—the year of Waterloo. From that year dates, for the Ceylonese, the day of equal laws for rich and poor, the day of development out of infant and yet unimproved advantages…How often has it been said by the vile domestic calumniators of British policy, by our own anti-national deceivers, that, if to-morrow we should leave India, no memorial would attest that ever we had been there. Infamous falsehood! Damnable slander! Speak, Ceylon, to that. *True it is that the best of our gifts,—peace, freedom, security, and a new standard of public morality,—these blessings are like sleep, like health, like innocence, like the eternal revolutions of day and night, which sink inaudibly into human hearts, leaving behind (as sweet vernal rains) no flaunting records of ostentation and parade.* We are not the nation of triumphal arches and memorial obelisks;

[124] "But on the fields of India it is that our aptitudes for colonization have displayed themselves most illustriously, because they were strengthened by violent resistance. We found many kingdoms established, and to these we have given unity; and in processes of doing so, by the necessities of the general welfare, or the mere instincts of self-preservation, we have transformed them to an Empire, rising like an exhalation, of our own—and a might monument of our own superior civilization" (7.429).

> but the sleep, the health, the innocence, the grateful vicissitudes of seasons, reproduce themselves in fruits and products, enduring for generations, and overlooked by the slanderer only because they are too general to be noticed as extraordinary, and benefiting by no light of contrast simply because our own beneficence has swept away the ancient wretchedness that could have furnished the mass. *Ceylon, of itself, can reply victoriously to such falsehoods* (7.453-4; my emphasis).

What constitutes a gift in the "imperialism of free trade"?[125] In a later example, De Quincey reasons that "[i]t is a fact infamous to the Ceylonese that an island which might easily support twenty million of people has been liable to famine, not unfrequently, with a population of fifteen thousand. This has already ceased to be a possibility: is that a blessing of British rule…" (7.454). It is almost as if the gift of empire gives what has already been given. Among the foods brought over to feed the poor, medicine to cure the sick, and tools to build a civilization, the colonists also bore with them the gift of history. Colonialism brought the victory of Waterloo to Ceylon, so that from 1815 onwards, Ceylon, too, could be released from the despotism of its past and partake in the laws of equality and the universal progress of civilization. But the gift of history is also a gift that takes with one hand what was given in the other. In this sense, one could say that it is a gift of amnesia, a beneficence that wipes out or makes one forget the "ancient wretchedness" that would have been without the interference of commerce and civilization. The gift of "*peace, freedom, security, and a new standard of public morality*" are the highest and most beneficent gift because they bear no trace of the hand that freely gave them and one might add, too, no trace of its peculiar form of violence. Here, De Quincey's rhetorical ventriloquism of Ceylon captures something of the supplanting form of

[125] The phrase refers to the title of Gallagher and Robinson's essay. C.f. Lowe (107) and passim.

violence. After all, as De Quincey explains, colonialism does not leave its mark in triumphal arches and memorial obelisks. Its "blessings" have the "natural" regularity of night and day, the regulative function of sleep; it is concerned with the wellbeing of its colonial dependents, with the health and productivity of colonized bodies, in regulating them with its own stand of public morality; it is invested in the kinds of truths or beliefs that sink *inaudibly* but are impressed deeply upon *human hearts*:

> It ought also to be published everywhere that, immediately after the conquest of Kandy, the government entered upon the Roman career of civilization, and upon that also which may be considered peculiarly British. *Military roads were so carried as to pierce and traverse all the guilty fastnesses of disease, and of rebellion by means of disease. Bridges, firmly built of satin-wood, were planted over important stream. The Kirimé Canal was completed in the most eligible situation. The English institution of mail-coaches was perfected in all parts of the Island"* (7.452 my emphasis).

In some cases, these bridges and roads were built to facilitate the circulation of commodities in colonial India, along with the establishment of an expansive and rigorous network of checks and outposts, as well, as custom houses that sought to control the free movement of goods from one place to another, and thus, contradicted the expressed purpose of liberal economy (Sen 101). But at any rate the building infrastructure and the vast networks of waterways were themselves justifications for military coercion in places such as Dacca in India, where the dense web of waterways made it difficult to extract tolls from boats and to keep crime out of the commercial activity of the Empire (Sen 98).[126] Thus, these "gifts" of civilization that were so generously bequeathed effectively divided Ceylon into zones that came under military

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[126] Sen (99-101).

control and police control that routinely subjected the local population to surveillance, to racial and criminal classification as well as the suppressing local dissent. It is significant to trace the lines of giving here (in De Quincey's writings on Ceylon), as we have traced it in the above (in his *Confessions*), in order to discern exactly what is at stake in the giving and taking in the colonial example, where "civilization" and the liberal notions of education, trade, and government that append it are said to have "[grown] out of the colonial encounter, and were themselves precisely philosophical attempts to grapple with the and manage colonial difference within an expanding empire" (Lowe 106). Put differently, one ought to think how the principles of free trade, of freedom and equality, are not only coextensive and logically contiguous with Empire, but more intimately, how they are given by the colonial encounter and given precisely in the form of an antidote against Empire.[127]

"The China Question"

While one might read the Ceylon example as illustrative of the colonizing genius of Great Britain, De Quincey's portrayal of England's relationship with China seems indicative of an altogether different affective investment in the moral and racial constitution of the Chinese people. His opinion about the moral degeneracy and the inferiority of the Chinese as a race was fueled by the possibility of war, and his investment in that war was itself fueled by his xenophobia.[128] China seems to have remained for him a "question" to which the only solution was war.[129] It is perhaps the paradigm of war that factors into China's exclusion or marginal

[127] For a discussion of inoculation, see John Barrell (15-16).
[128] De Quincey also lost his elder son to the very war that he advocated (364).
[129] It may be interesting to compare De Quincey's point here to Mill's description of the colonies in America and Australia in "Considerations on Representative Government," where British rule is "a step towards universal peace, and general friendly cooperation among nations" and "renders war impossible among a large number of otherwise independent communities," besides "[hindering] any of them from being absorbed into a foreign state" (394).

position within the field of postcolonial studies more generally, demanding a different mode of inquiry than has been applied to the South Asian context.[130] Indeed, *Confessions* and the essays on the Opium wars essays consistently betray, behind the rhetoric of war—a particular desire to conceive of the Chinese as something of an exception—recalcitrant to either rule or diplomacy and thus, finally, expendable. De Quincey's writings participate more generally, alongside other works of the nineteenth-century, such as the writings of Balzac and Chateaubriand as well as Adam's Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiment*, in a figuration of the Mandarin as a hypothetical figure conceived to test the reach of the notions of sympathy and moral responsibility and the universality of Western concepts of humanism as it is applied to faraway neighbor in China.[131]

De Quincey's writings on the first Opium War, "The Opium Question With China in 1840," is a case in point.[132] Differing from the wisdom of its contemporaries, the essay sets out to explain that war with the Chinese had little to do with trade, ideological differences, or even the contraband sale of opium. Rather, the essential difference between the two empires is said to be reflected in an incident that involved the shooting of a Chinese by a gunman on the English side who had been ordered to fire a salute in honor of the birthday of George III.[133] The gunman

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[130] See Hayot (10).

[131] Hayot discusses a version of the hypothetical figure in François-René de Chateaubriand's *Le Genie du Christianisme* (1802), where it takes this form: "If, merely by wishing it, you could kill a man in China and inherit his fortune in Europe, being assured by supernatural means that the deed would remain forever unknown, would you allow yourself to form that project?" (5 n.3). See also Freud's discussion on the Mandarin in "Thoughts for the Times on War and Death": "In *Le Père Goriot*, Balzac alludes to a passage in the works of J.J. Rousseau where the author asks the reader what he would do if—without reading Paris and of course without being discovered—he could kill, with great profit to himself, an old mandarin in Peking be a mere act of will. Rousseau implies that he would not give much the life of that dignitary. 'Tuer son mandarin' has become a proverbial phrase for this secret readiness, present even in modern man" (298). For a slightly different instantiation of the problem, see Carlo Ginzburg's chapter "To Kill a Chinese Mandarin: The Moral Implications of Distance," where the question seems to be of whether morality can be mediated by distance: a European murderer is transported to the coast of China and no longer feels the sting of his conscience. I have relied on Hayot's account of the Ginzburg (165).

[132] The essay appears in Blackwood's Magazine in June 1840 as "The Opium and the China Question" (see 14. 163 n.1). All citations of the essays on the opium wars are taken from *Collected Writings*.

[133] When De Quincey returns to the incident in "The Chinese Question in 1857," the event is said to have occurred in 1784 instead of 1785: "If you, being a foreigner, should, by the bursting of your rifle, most unwillingly cause the

turns out to be an elderly Portuguese in the service of the English army, and despite the accidental nature of the incident, was summarily executed on the demand of the Chinese. De Quincey would return again to this account in his reprisal "The China Question in 1857," as if the *question* of China had not, in fact, ever been sufficiently answered. He blamed the cruelty of the Chinese for the perversion of justice, for mistaking or turning meditated malice and vengeance into arbitrary instruments of justice. It is not only, as De Quincey claims, that "[t]he Chinese laws do not change" but that this cruelty is "the very expression of their improgressive state that they cannot [change]" (189).

For the first time, then, China enters "history" (i.e., Western history). But De Quincey implies that it is through an instance of savagery and gross crime that they do: "Up to the year 1785, it is not worthwhile," according to De Quincey, to trace the little oscillations of our Canton history" (186). Rather, it is the incident in 1785, which preceded the Opium Wars by more than half a century, that put China on the map of world history and illuminated the role it would play in the future global order. More than the famous embassies of Macartney and Amherst to China (the former in 1793 and the latter in 1816), which failed to improve commercial relations between the two countries despite the gifts and tributes that were lavished up the emperor, it is the obscure accident in 1785 that, for De Quincey, made manifest the deadlock between the two civilization, the limits of diplomacy and cultural exchange, and the certainty of war as the only solution between the clash of the empires. Almost as significant as Waterloo, 1785 revealed the

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death of a Chinese, you must die. Luckily we have, since 1841, cudgeled them out of this hellish doctrine; but such *was* the doctrine up to 1840. Whilst this law prevailed—namely in 1784—an elderly Portuguese gunner, on board a Chinaman of ours lying close to Whampoa, was ordered to fire a salute in honor of the day, which happened to be on June 4, the birthday of George III" (14.366)

irreconcilable differences between the two civilizations that went beyond economic advantage and mercantile interest, and thus, revealed the futility of a diplomatic solution:[134]

[I[t is vain to dissemble [that] [e]ven without the irritations of contraband trade, and without the extension of our Eastern intercourse now opening before us, it is too certain that the humiliation and the national crime of 1785 will revolve around us (193).

In a sense what 1785 brought into view was the question of a certain race, which was for De Quincey irreducible to the economic and commercial interest British (or one that could not be satisfactorily resolved by turning race into a source of labor) but race itself as the ideological basis for war. What 1857 demonstrated, as the essential difference between the English and the Chinese, was that there were not only different races, but that the killing of one differed from the killing of the other, that death was in fact not the great equalizer that one generally supposed. While De Quincey perceived the killing of the Chinese as incidental—an accident without malice—the execution of the gunman, which he understood as "revenge" could only be read as "brutal stupidity," that is, the stupidity of animals who can neither distinguish between different kinds of death and nor the "moral difference between the purest case of misfortune terminating in a man's death and the vilest murder of premeditating malice" (187). Thus, "[u]nder the colour of avenging an imaginary murder," the Chinese are likely to "perpetrate as real and foul a murder as human annals records" (187-8). The "wickedness" of the Chinese is not

[134] "What we want with Oriental powers like China, incapable of a true civilization, semi-refined in manners and mechanical arts, but incurably savage in the moral sense, is a full explanation of our meaning under an adequate demonstration of our power. We have never obtained either the one or the other. Our two embassies were faithfully executed, but erroneously planned" (14.193). De Quincey's policy of war is accompanied rather suggestively by his cynical view of the diplomatic role that the national presents played in the two embassies, suggesting, perhaps, that the history of war between the two empires was very much implicated in the history of the gift. "As respected China the matter was worse. Amongst the presents assorted for the Celestial Emperor was actually a complex apparatus (suited to the bedchamber of an invalid) which cannot be mentioned with decorum. Oriental princes will not believe that the sovereign who is nominally the presenter of such offerings has not a personal cognizance of the affront." (194-5).

simply wanton, but "thoroughly degenerate" in that they turn murder into a law, a "wicked nation" that perpetrates crime precisely as laws. The Chinese are, in other words, thoroughly incapable of just laws, and thus, civilization. Similarly, De Quincey's anecdotal accounts of the man who "decapitated" nearly two hundred British subjects, "white, brown, and black, but all subjects of Great Britain," and "all confessedly and necessarily unoffending," who were shipwrecked on the shore of China from the *Nerbudda* Indiaman and his story of "cowardly officer" who had "poisoned one thousand British troops stationed in the island of Chusan" in order to show the inherent cruelty—elevated to the status of national crime—behind the "brutal inhospitality" of the Chinese ("The China Question in 1857," 350; n.365).

"China" appears in De Quincey's opium texts as something of a "hypothetical," to borrow from Eric Hayot's title, which refers to the sustained appearance of China as a "generic philosopheme" for the question of who or what counts as a subject of sympathy—a question that Hayot shows to be imbricated in the broader discussion of China's role in Western history and its place in the discourse of sympathy and suffering (8).[135] Chinese cruelty is not simply foreign to the West, but a conceptual limit that helps (somewhat counter-intuitively) in the articulation of Western sovereignty, providing the West with the occasion for its civilizing missions, allowing China to be brought under its moral compass. In turn, the missions themselves—caught up in the relationship of exchange and trade between China and the West—contributed to the production of what Hayot calls "an international economy of

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[135] For Hayot, "'China' has been most consistently characterized as a limit or potential limit, a horizon neither of otherness nor of similarity, but rather of the very distinction between otherness and similarity, and thus, because what is at stake in the era of modernity in the West is the dream of the universalization of culture, as a horizon of the very idea of horizons, a horizon, that is, that marks the limit of the universal as a transcendental field. 'China' has been, in short, not just one name for the line that delimits inside from outside, one form of the concept of totality, but rather a form of all forms of totality, a figure against which other forms of totality have been measured" (8).

sympathy," a trade in which *compassion* and *the suffering of humanity* are the very commodity that are being consumed by the form of literatures of sympathy and sentiment.

The question remains of how or to what extent De Quincey's opium writings (which include the war writings and *Confessions*) participate in the same compassion trade outlined by Hayot? Indeed, De Quincey's opium writings seem to point to the same moral quandary, to rehearse the same conflict of sympathy and violence offered as solutions to the opium question. The account of the Chinese revenge on the English gunner is, after all, included in an essay that appears as a response to Imperial Commissioner Lin's resolution described by De Quincey as the "awkward attempt" by "Sundry of the Chinese" at "cutting sundry British throats, and have their own cut instead,—a result for which *we* heartily grieve, as the poor victims were no willing parties to this outrage upon our rights" (my emphasis). Here, De Quincey describes the cruelty of Chinese law and its indiscriminate violence applied to "sundry British throats": a capital punishment for a non-capital crime, a penalty that does not punish the transgressor, but the collateral damages—innocent Chinese taken down in the volleys between England and China.

At the same time, when De Quincey was writing, the debate on capital punishment had been gaining momentum in Europe. The abolition of the death penalty put forward in Beccaria's *On Crimes and Punishment* found sympathetic advocates in Voltaire, Bentham, Victor Hugo, and Hazlitt, and penal reform was itself extolled as a revolutionary means of reconstructing the state and arcane laws. But while the abolition of the death penalty generated a transnational and sympathetic movement that cut across national differences, the debates themselves became an inverted instrument in works such as De Quincey, through which differences between East and West and their civilizations were implied and

elaborated. Disdain for the instruments of tyranny and compassion for the innocent Chinese caught up in the confrontation of civilizations—noble positions in themselves—become a way of codifying Chinese cruelty and situating its significance exclusively in relation to the moral and historical achievement to the West: while England had (albeit) recently reformed its Bloody Code, the Middle Kingdom remained caught in savage laws.

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