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Chronic Habits: The Literature of Dissipation in the Long Eighteenth Century

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“Chronic Habits: The Literature of Dissipation in the Long Eighteenth Century”

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An abstract of
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Abstract

Chronic Habits: The Literature of Dissipation in the Long Eighteenth Century
By Corey Goergen

Chronic Habits revises the literary and cultural histories of disability and addiction by examining the prevalence of "dissipation" in the literature of the long eighteenth century. At the turn of the eighteenth century, men and women were regarded as "dissipated" if they recklessly and repeatedly outspent their income. By the Romantic period, however, "dissipation" came to refer to the behaviors that led to overspending—gambling, fashionable living, and, especially, habitual drug use. While disability studies and addiction studies focus primarily on the emergence of disability and addiction as medical problems in the nineteenth century, *Chronic Habits* reveals that those medical models can derive from the earlier moral models they are thought to replace. In sermons and medical and moral tracts, dissipation emerges in this moment as a fraught discursive site where economic, moral, and medical knowledges intersect and overlap. However, Samuel Johnson, Mary Robinson, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Maria Edgeworth, and John Keats each challenge that convergence by presenting atypical bodies and chemically induced mental states that contest both the moral paradigms imposed by their contemporaries and the new medical paradigms just coming into being. In employing literary modes to dissolve the moral and medical boundaries of dissipation, these authors find in dissipation productive ways to dissipate and re-construct the conventions of their chosen literary forms. Dissipation's tendency to enable literary innovation remains a largely unconsidered aspect of the history of eighteenth-century literature. As it crosses genres and traditional literary periods, "dissipation" becomes, for Johnson, a cure for madness and a model for profiting in the new literary marketplace; for Coleridge and Robinson, a mode of collaborative thinking and literary production; for Edgeworth, a site of proto-feminist resistance against the normalizing force of eighteenth-century medicine and the generic conventions of the novel; and for Keats, a provocative and productive model for artistic creation. By engaging with dissipation's various pleasures and dangers, these authors show us how markets, discourses, and literary genres that ostensibly produce independent subjects ultimately produce, and even require, dependent ones.

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Introduction

Miles Peter Andrews's successful play, *Dissipation: A Comedy, in five acts* (1781), responds to eighteenth-century concerns about "dissipation." Across the period, moral, medical, and religious writers identified "dissipation" as a social problem characterized by some combination of fashionable living, over-spending, and intemperate drug use.[1] Those authors express fears that those behaviors might dissipate the fortunes, minds, souls, and bodies of members of fashionable society and, moreover, that these individual dissolutions might threaten the constitution of a nation increasingly understood to be made up of independent, rational, coherent actors. Andrews's play, on the other hand, opens with a prologue that mocks the moral bent of contemporary discussions of dissipation by engaging its audience in a demand for a moral tale from the play's "headstrong bard" (39):

> In short, should he have penn'd a laughing play,
>
> And rashly thrown some idle wit away,
>
> Pray, gentlemen—I beg no hesitation—
>
> Damn him! And shew you hate all Dissipation. (45-48)

The preface demonstrates a healthy dose of gallows humor that is emblematic of a larger thread of skepticism about the dangers of dissipation running through the literary culture of the period.

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[1] For examples of moral tales and tracts, see *Memoirs of two young gentlemen. Exhibiting the most striking instances of the seduction and snares to which young people are liable* (Edinburgh: J. Reid, 1768); Percival Stockdale, *Three Discourses: Two against luxury and dissipation. One on universal benevolence* (London: W. Flexney, 1773); and Charles Pino-Duclos, *The pleasure of retirement, preferable to the joys of dissipation; exemplified in the life and adventures of the Count de B-----. Written by himself. In letters to a friend. Now first translated from the original French, by a lady* (London: J. Wilkie, 1774). Sermons abound, but representative examples include Andrew Greenfield, *The Cause and Cure of National Distress A sermon, preached in the new English church of Edinburgh, on Sunday, August 22. 1779* (Edinburgh: William Creech 1779); François de Salignac de La Mothe-Fénelon, *Advice and consolation for a person in distress and dejection of mind, with some thoughts on the remedys of dissipation* (Glasgow: R. and A. Foulis, 1750); John Andrews, *Reflections on the too prevailing spirit of dissipation and gallantry; shewing its dreadful consequences to publick freedom* (London: E. and C. Dilly, 1771); and John Wesley, "On Dissipation," *Sermons on Several Occasions*, Vol. 6 (London: New Chapel, 1788), 264-280.

Those literary texts often resist the larger culture's moral/medical response to what Johnson defines in his dictionary in largely neutral ways. Johnson's dictionary offers three definitions for "dissipate": "to scatter every way," "to scatter the attention," and "to spend a fortune." Johnson's final definition points to an early-eighteenth century focus on the dissolution of the fortune, but as Anya Taylor has argued, this notion slips by the Romantic period into descriptions of intemperate drug users.[2] These overlapping, shifting, and contradictory meanings demonstrate the ways in which thinking in the period connects substance use, physical and mental illness, and profligate spending as, to quote the Oxford English Dictionary, "waste[s] of the moral and physical powers by undue or vicious indulgence in pleasure; intemperate, dissolute, or vicious mode of living." And yet, the Oxford English Dictionary traces the etymology to the Latin "dissipāre," which can suggest both a waste and a dispersal. The suggestion of dispersal—as in seeds—hints at a potential for reclaiming "dissipation" as something that does not necessarily end with atomization, decay, or death.

If Andrews's bard is, indeed, "headstrong" in refusing to craft a play to support those fears, he was not alone. The literary culture of the late eighteenth century provided authors with opportunities to challenge this burgeoning spiritual and medical agreement about dissipation. Moreover, in employing literary modes to dissolve the moral and medical boundaries of dissipation, Samuel Johnson, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Mary Robinson, Maria Edgeworth, and John Keats find in dissipation productive ways to dissolve and re-construct the conventions of their chosen literary forms. Dissipation's tendency to enable literary innovation remains a largely

[2] Taylor argues that the predominant meaning of "dissipation" in discourses that present it as a social problem changes roughly over the course of the eighteenth century from predominately a description of the state of one's bank account to a description of intemperate drinking.[2] That shift is visible across moral and religious writings about dissipation. While the concept of "dissipation" is often presented in eighteenth-century discourses as a stable, coherent category, Taylor's historical arc demonstrates that its boundaries are always contested, shifting and, indeed, at risk of dissipating. See Taylor, especially 30-37.

unconsidered aspect of the history of eighteenth-century literature. As it crosses genres and traditional literary periods, "dissipation" becomes, for Johnson, a cure for madness and a model for profiting in the new literary marketplace; for Coleridge and Robinson, a mode of collaborative thinking and literary production; for Edgeworth, a site of proto-feminist resistance against the normalizing force of eighteenth-century medicine and the generic conventions of the novel; and for Keats, a provocative and productive model for artistic creation. By engaging with dissipation's various pleasures and dangers, these authors show us how markets, discourses, and literary genres that ostensibly produce independent subjects ultimately produce, and even require, dependent ones. In doing so, they disturb the chronic habits of thought that continue to inform contemporary conceptions of both disability and addiction not only in medicine but also in literary studies, addiction studies, and disability studies.

The History of Dissipation

One critical habit *Chronic Habits* is most interested in examining is the tendency for literary scholars to implicitly map twentieth- and twenty-first century models of disease and addiction onto the past. This tendency is perhaps most succinctly demonstrated in Taylor's argument that Romantic writers' approach to drink demonstrated a movement from a faith in "Dionysian myths" to an acceptance of "alcoholic realities" is emblematic of these chronic habits of thought that *Chronic Habits* challenges (6). The notion of "alcoholic realities" implies a faith in modern medical expertise that structures the canon in terms of who correctly anticipates future diagnostic categories. My project challenges this tendency in two ways. First, it questions the assumption that modern diagnostic categories constitute "realities." Second, it explores eighteenth-century engagements with dissipation primarily in the context of eighteenth-century discourses rather than in the context of modern notions of addiction or substance use disorder.

Thus, while *Chronic Habits* points to continuities between narratives of dissipation and addiction, those connections should not be understood as an assumption that these terms should be used interchangeably. This project pays attention to the history of addiction and disability as described by Virginia Berridge, David Courtwright, and Lennard Davis, among others, even as it suggests that a full account of "dissipation" revises that history in important ways. Thus, throughout the dissertation, I use the term "dissipation" to describe the collection of thoughts and notions about this state in the eighteenth century. Although moral and medical writers each, individually, treat the condition as stable and understood, both comparative readings across the period and, especially, the literary works of the period trouble that perception. At times medical, at times moral, at times economic, and often some combination of the three, "dissipation" as a term in this period itself soon dissipates into fragmented and disconnected meanings. "Addiction" I use primarily to describe the medical/legal ways of framing problematic drug use that rises in the Victorian period and dominates the discussion through the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This term is for me perhaps closest to what disability studies calls the social model of disability, in that it recognizes the ways that this pathologization is not merely the result of objective, neutral observation but instead rises from a complex interaction of medical knowledge, social assumptions, and unrelated choices made about the built environment. "Addiction," in short, happens when a culture decides a person's drug use is problematic and justifies that decision through an explicitly medicalized discourse, which happens whether the "solution" to the problem is medical or legal.

One key continuity between dissipation and addiction is that each diagnosis denies the subject's capacity for autonomy or rational thought. But while fictional representations of addiction in the nineteenth century and beyond largely agree with these accounts, eighteenth-

century literary engagements with dissipation often push back against the tendency for discourses of "dissipation" to re-write transcendent intoxications as compulsive habits.[3] That unresolved tension between intoxication and compulsion threatens to deconstruct David Hume's seemingly straightforward distinction between religious enthusiasm and superstition in his essay "Of Superstition and Enthusiasm" (1742). Hume pathologizes both states literally and metaphorically, writing that superstition arises from fears of "ill health, from a gloomy and melancholy disposition, or from the concurrence of all these circumstances." Enthusiasm, in contrast, comes from a "frenzy" of self-confidence by which a "fanatic madman delivers himself over, blindly, and without reserve, to the supposed illapses of the spirit, and to inspiration from above." While Hume opens by lamenting the "false" "pernicious[ness]" of both states (76), he concludes by suggesting that the individuality expressed by enthusiasm, which he likens to the elevation "arising […] from strong spirits" (77), might make him, once the initial intoxication wears off, capable of advocating for the "civil liberty" that is a key end of Enlightenment thinking (81). This slippage implies a question that Hume neither raises nor attempts to answer: if enthusiasm is like a mad intoxication and superstition is like a melancholic, habitual intemperance, is enthusiasm not as likely to produce superstition as it is to produce democratic subjects?

If Hume refuses to acknowledge this question, it in many ways provides the central instigation for James Hogg's 1822 novel *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*. Midway through the novel, a widowed mother rightly accuses Robert Wringham, the titular "justified sinner," of raping and ruining her daughter. In response, Wringham argues that he could not have drunkenly raped the young women because he only first tasted alcohol three

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[3] For an investigation of the generic similarities between the AA recovery narrative and the nineteenth-century novel, see Robyn Warhol (2002).

nights before. He then asks Gilmartin, his friend, sometimes-doppelganger, and, perhaps, the Devil, to confirm his alibi. But rather than agree with Wringham's claim, Gilmartin levels an accusation:

> of late, you have been very much addicted to intemperance. I doubt if, from the first night you tasted the delights of drunkenness, that you have ever again been in your right mind until Monday last. (175)

The claim illustrates several important details regarding the history of addiction. The phrase "addicted to intemperance" reveals that "addiction," in the early nineteenth century, did not refer exclusively or even primarily to the habitual consumption of intoxicants. Instead, it referred to dedication or devotion to anything.[4] At the same time, the phrase "addicted to intemperance" demonstrates that the idea of compulsive drug use—and its relationship to acts of violence—predates the evolution of the term "addiction."[5] In place of the medical category of "addiction" are a range of related but distinct paradigms for understanding compulsive drug use, among them "intemperance" and "dissipation."

These eighteenth-century notions rise as much from Enlightenment understandings of the mind and identity as from any medical breakthrough. The increasingly medicalized approaches of addiction in the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries do not displace so much as build on these philosophical, spiritual, and moral frames. In posing Gilmartin as a demonic doppelganger who perhaps acts in Wringham's place (or perhaps as the imaginary scapegoat in

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[4] Johnson defines the word, simply, as "The act of devoting, or giving up" or "the state of being devoted" (79). The Oxford English Dictionary's primary definition for "addiction" is "The state or condition of being dedicated or devoted *to* a thing, esp. an activity or occupation," before clarifying that it often can have a negative connotation: "adherence or attachment, esp. of an immoderate or compulsive kind." The OED notes that the meaning tied to "compulsive consumption of a drug or other substance" comes later, historically, but that that later terminology "frequently influenced" later uses in the primary sense.

[5] For large-scale histories of addiction, see Berridge (1987), especially 150-170; and Courtwright (2001), especially 166-187. For a discussion of the rhetorical function of various terms for intemperate drug use, including addiction, see White (2004).

Wringham's first-person "confession"), Hogg plays at once with the concept of "demon drink" and the idea that drugs make people not themselves. These related but competing conceptions of the effects of drugs are deployed in strategic and variously motivated ways in both eighteenth-century notions of intemperance and dissipation and in modern notions of addiction. Additionally, Gilmartin's comment that Wringham is not "in his right mind" alludes to Victorian conceptions of "double-consciousness" that foreshadows the dominant treatment paradigms for addiction treatment in the twentieth century, particularly the 12-Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and its offshoots dedicated to other chemical addictions, which define recovery as total abstinence enabled by the elevation of a new, sober identity.

The idea that one could have two minds—a "right" one and an addled one—also troubles John Locke's claim in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* that identity exists only in consciousness. Locke presents the fact that society punishes people for acts they commit while intoxicated as a counter-argument to his assertion that "personal Identity can by us be placed in nothing but consciousness" (II.XXVII.343). He responds,

> Humane Laws punish both [acts performed while drunk and acts while sleepwalking] with a Justice suitable to their way of Knowledge: Because in these cases, they cannot distinguish certainly what is real, what counterfeit; and so the ignorance in Drunkenness or Sleep is not admitted as a plea. For though punishment be annexed to personality, and personality to consciousness, and the Drunkard perhaps be not conscious of what he did; yet Humane Judicatures justly punish him; because the Fact is proved against him, but want of consciousness cannot be proved for him. But in the great Day, wherein the Secrets of all Hearts shall be laid open, it may be reasonable to think, no one shall be made to answer

> for what he knows nothing of; but shall receive his Doom, his Conscious accusing or excusing him. (II.XXVII.343-344)

Per Locke, even if Wringham committed the rape, he is not, strictly speaking, guilty so long as he honestly does not remember it. But Locke's distinction between what is provable by human courts and therefore actionable and what is not nonetheless gives Humane Law the right to punish unconscious acts. At the same time, Locke defers to divine knowledge to ensure that any mistakes made by this system are corrected in eternity. Those unjustly punished in life for unconscious acts will be rewarded in the afterlife.

Wringham's defense for his actions, however, relies on both a different relationship between divine and human law and an older understanding of the relationship between intoxication and transcendence or identity formulation. Wringham's claim to being "justified" in the Calvinist tradition demonstrates his strong faith in the continuity of his identity (and the assertion of that identity as a necessary good in the world). Convinced by his spiritual leader and father of his position among the Elect, Wringham sees his actions as, by definition, expressions of the divine will. This tension between conventional morality and transcendence comes to a head in Wringham's account of the climax of the plot: his murder of his half-brother. Here, Wringham's learned Calvinism provides resolve in the face of a crisis of conscience:

> I thought of what my great enlightened friend and patron would say to me, and again my resolution rose indignant and indissoluble save by blood. (164)

If Wringham's encounter with the ruined widow leads him to a crisis of identity brought on by drink, here he affirms his purpose through a Calvinist teaching that upholds the strength of his identity, which becomes "indissoluble." In attributing that resolution to the memory of his father's teachings, Wringham ironically suggests that his religious affirmation of free agency is

ultimately the result of an enthrallment all the more powerful for Wringham's inability to recognize it.

Despite the hazy line between transcendence and habit in eighteenth-century notions of drug use, the distinction continues to operate throughout the period in contexts that often originate with but then extend beyond questions of chemical intoxication. I take my title, *Chronic Habits*, from Maria Edgeworth's 1801 novel of manners, *Belinda*. After a brief estrangement, Belinda is willing to forgive Lady Delacour, her friend and guide to fashionable London, for believing spurious rumors because it was "an acute fit of jealousy" and not a "chronic habit of suspicion" (266). While the habit in question is behavioral rather than chemical, it is no mistake that it is attributed to Lady Delacour, who is, privately, a compulsive opium user and, publicly, "the most dissipated woman in all of London" (108). In her distinction between an acute fit and a chronic habit, Belinda defers to the common-sense morality on which Hume relies: committing one morally bad or intellectually irrational act is better than making a habit of it. Edgeworth's use of medical terminology demonstrates the slippages between medical and moral discourse in the eighteenth century. For Edgeworth, that slippage proves to be part of a larger strategy to connect Lady Delacour's supposed immorality to her physical body. In fact, the novel produces a feedback loop of dissipation, disability, and disease: Lady Delacour suffers from what she takes to be a fatal breast cancer that resulted from one of her more transgressive follies. The wound at once drains the color from her face and is painful. It therefore leads her to use large quantities of makeup and opium. As I argue in the third chapter, the differences in the ways that the medical establishment treats her dissipation and Clarence Hervey's equally self-destructive habits, reveals that gender and class shape eighteenth-century understandings of these moral/medical conditions.

If the chronic habits that concern Edgeworth aren't exclusively or even primarily centered around drugs, the roles of opium, alcohol, and bodily deformity in her depictions of dissipation speak to how diseases—chronic or otherwise—inform our thinking about drug use. In pointing to these overlaps, I draw on and contribute to developing what Roy Porter calls the "pre-history of addiction" (385). But while Porter rightly distinguishes the conception of addiction as a disease from the recognition that heavy drug use can cause other diseases, I argue that the difficulty we have distinguishing the one from the other is emblematic of the fact that disease models of intemperance or addiction are often justified in terms of corresponding diseases.[6] In short, the disease model of addiction (or dissipation) becomes an easier rhetorical sell thanks to the other diseases already associated with heavy drug use and the larger cultural tendency to associate excessive appetites with disability (McRuer, "Sexuality" 167-170). "Chronic" is a useful term here as it highlights the uncertain and often strategically permeable boundaries between addiction as a disease and addiction as a source of other diseases. In this way, "chronic" also points to another important observation I want to make. By distinguishing an action of a moment from repeated actions over time, "chronic" implies—and perhaps demands—that we understand these conditions as and in terms of "chronicles." That is to say, chronic habits are largely understood in terms of prescribed (and pre-scribed) linear narratives. The dominance of Alcoholics Anonymous's 12-Steps program in twentieth-century accounts of addiction demonstrates the persistence of this sort of narrative logic.

[6] Corresponding diseases can and do shape conceptions of addiction in part due to corresponding prejudices based on class, race, and gender. For example, descriptions of the addictive qualities of tobacco lagged behind the science until concerns about lung cancer and other diseases caused most wealthy smokers to give up the drug. As Alan Brandt demonstrates, "in a culture prone to stigmatize its poor and disfavored, changing perceptions about the 'average smoker' eased the growing attribution of addiction" (391).

The idea of chronic habits also points to a key continuity in cultural responses to substance use. The National Institute for Drug Abuse (NIDA)'s new and influential disease model of addiction defines "addiction" as a "chronic, relapsing brain disease that is characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use, despite harmful consequences." But the association of chronic disease and intoxicating drugs is not new. While researchers at NIDA explicitly present the disease model as a way to move society beyond previous models that attribute uncontrollable drug use to moral failings, some have already used their concept of a brain disease to question an addict's right to or capacity for informed consent.[7] While other scholars have worked to challenge such interpretations of the concept by suggesting that these arguments could be used to coerce addicts into risky, untested, or expensive treatments, the existence of these arguments speaks to the chronic habit—which informs everyone from Locke to Alcoholics Anonymous—to deny people whose drug use is deemed problematic the capacity for agency.[8] The narratives that support both medical intervention and legal prohibition have been described and exposed by Robyn Warhol and Eve Sedgwick. Warhol describes the formulation of addiction in discourses of AA as a dysphoric tale that necessarily ends in decay, disease, and death. In positing recovery as defined by AA as the only method of escaping this narrative, AA cultivates further narratives that support its paradigm. Dispensing with the pretext of subjectivity in the recovery narrative, Eve Sedgwick writes that once people are called addicts, their only escape from the narrative certainty of death is to jump into "that even more pathos-ridden narrative called kicking the habit" (131).

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[7] Louis C. Charland's 2002 article, "Cynthia's Dilemma: consenting to Heroin Prescription," perhaps inaugurated this argument and was published simultaneously with commentary from a number of other scholars. See, especially, Cohen (2002), Elliott (2002), Roberts (2002).

[8] See, in particular, Carter and Hall (2012), especially pp. 100-101.

As the dominance of AA demonstrates, those pathos-ridden narratives have their origin in Western Christian conceptions of confession and conversion. In this way, they overlap extensively with discourses on "dissipation." "*Dissiparis*" is a central organizing metaphor in St. Augustine's *Confessions*, a central text of Western Christian subjecthood. In the opening of Book I, Augustine describes the process of finding wholeness in the face of disintegration through the power of God: "*Et cum effunderis super nos, non tu iaces, sed erigis nos, nec tu* dissiparis*, sed colligis nos*" (I.3.6, emphasis mine). In a popular eighteenth-century translation, this becomes, "And when thou art poured out upon us, thou fallest not down, but raisest us up; thou art not *scatter'd*, but gatherest us" (I.3.4, emphasis mine).[9] In this framing, God becomes dispersed in order to re-collect the wasting and wasted. In Book 10, Augustine reveals that this gathering power carries with it a call to individual self-denial: "By *Continency* we are recollected and brought back into one Thing, from which we had been dissipated, and split upon Many things [*a quo in multa defluximus*]" (X.29.357, emphasis his). In between these moments, St. Augustine's image of scattering slides from society to his own individual body as it suffers from sin. In the face of "the *Uncleanness of my former Life*, and the *carnal Corruptions* of [his]," God "recollect[s] [him] from that Dispersion [*dispersione*] in which [he] was rent as it were Piecemeal" (II.1.37). Elsewhere, St. Augustine similarly describes his separation from God as being "tossed hither and thither, and poured out, and […] shed abroad, and boiled over by my Fornications" (II.2.38). In these instances, God becomes a balm not for society but for the prodigal son lost in the pursuit of his own pleasures. As Augustine's attention slides from society

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[9] In following references, I quote from the eighteenth-century translation and include the original Latin in brackets when appropriate or relevant.

to the individual, he blurs the distinction between individual morality and social good and between personal and public health.[10]

Even if St. Augustine provides the moral grounding for social anxieties about dissipation, he cannot disentangle the ultimate contradiction between notions of transcendence and compulsion at the heart of those anxieties. Even while upholding God as a never-dissipated liquid by which men are collected into themselves and together, St. Augustine understands that process in terms of intoxication:

> Oh! Who will give me to repose in thee! Oh! Who will grant that thou may'st come into my Heart and inebriate it; that I may forget my Evils, and embrace thee my only Good? (I.5.6, 1739)

Marty Roth argues persuasively that conceptions of religious transcendence are not only best communicated through metaphors of chemical intoxication, but they are also metaphors grounded specifically in those experiences. In imagining a God that reforms through inebriation, St. Augustine perhaps unwittingly deconstructs the binaries between sobriety and intoxication and between agency and compulsion in ways that shape similar slippages in Locke, Hume, Hogg, and the authors I take up in this dissertation.

Augustine raises another concern central to my work here when he worries that his depiction of his own life of dissipation might prove more enticing to his readers than his actual call for moral and spiritual reformation. That anxiety reverberates across Western literature in ways that often cast literature itself as an intoxicating substance. Avital Ronell in her monograph *Crack Wars: Literature, Addiction, Mania* makes the argument that societies treat drugs and

[10] In his 1836 translation of the *Confessions*, E. B. Pusey uses the word "dissipation" in all four of these passages. In so doing, he emphasizes the thematic resonance of disintegration in Augustine and reveals the expansion of "dissipation" in the cultural imagination across the long eighteenth century.

literature in the same way through readings of a wide-ranging set of texts that span continents and centuries. But in the eighteenth century, this association was a commonly accepted metaphor if not a relationship accepted as literal. All the authors I discuss here blur the distinction between chemical and text. Johnson understands his writings as medicine and claims that "new realistic novel" will fill and change the "vacuous minds" of "the young, the ignorant, and the idle" (175-176). Coleridge attributes "Kubla Khan" to the mutual influences of opium and Purchas's *Pilgrimage* without saying which influence was more toxic. Mary Robinson describes familial and literary influences in terms of opium. Edgeworth's Lady Delacour strategically deploys opium in a performance so adept at creating suspense that she likens herself to Scheherazade. Keats writes in "Ode to a Nightingale" of wine that tastes like poetry and poetry that operates as wine. This tendency, too, persists into our modern moment. In calling his wildly successful 1992 album *The Chronic*, Dr. Dre plays on a slang term for marijuana coined by his frequent collaborator, Snoop Doggy Dogg. The title demonstrates the same sort of gallows humor about a favored drug in which Snoop engages by bragging about his "bubonic chronic" in the 1993 hit "Gin and Juice." As an album title, though, it suggests that the music, too, is dangerously habit-forming. These chronicles produce chronic habits of their own. In so doing, they prove economically viable for artists from Dr. Dre to Dr. Johnson.

One figure making money by building a compulsive market leads to the production of a marketplace of compulsive—perhaps dissipated—buyers. While discourses of addiction and substance use disorder often mask the fact that they ultimately turn on questions of social and personal economy, even late eighteenth-century chronicles of "dissipation" that directly suggest intemperate drug use often explicitly justify the diagnosis in economic terms. Lady Delacour's physical manifestations of dissipation mirror considerable, chronic money problems. Her

"history," which she relates over the course of two chapters early in the novel, includes a dizzying number of dead relatives to keep her and her husband in ready money. While in the completed version of the novel, Lady Delacour's seeming rehabilitation is entirely medical, Edgeworth's plan for the novel finds her doctor extracting "high fees" from her only to restore the full sum to her to allow her to "pay […] her tradesmen's debts" (482). In this initial plan, Edgeworth seemingly affirms earlier understandings of dissipation as a problem whose dangers are chiefly economic. Given the economic focus of initial anxieties about "dissipation," the anxiety about dissipation contributes to what Albert O. Hirschman has influentially identified as a concerted effort in the eighteenth century to cultivate man's "avarice" to offset and reduce the social damage done when men pursue other, less predictable passions. As Hirschman notes, this move happened in part through the development and deployment of the metaphor of "interest" to describe the income earned through saving and investing. By delaying the gratification of present appetites, economic actors could pursue their future interests.

Money and career seem to be Johnson's initial concern regarding dissipation. Despite his claim in *Rasselas: A Prince of Abyssinia* that dissipation could cure madness incurred by over-work, Samuel Johnson in *An Account of the Life of Mr. Richard Savage, Son of the Earl Rivers* asserts just such a binary opposition between Savage's dissipation and his capacity to earn a living:

> It cannot be said, that he made use of his abilities for the direction of his own conduct: an irregular and dissipated manner of life had made him the slave of every passion that happened to be excited by the presence of its object, and that slavery to his passions reciprocally produced a life irregular and dissipated. He

> was not master of his own motions, nor could promise any thing for the next day. (965)

If, as Hirschman has noted, a central benefit of economic interest is that it makes men predictable and, therefore, allows for the construction of elaborate and lucrative economic systems on the basis of those predictions, Savage's dissipation leaves him incapable of participating in those systems. Unable to control his "motions," he can "promise" nothing.

I have been discussing here the importance of time in conceptions of chronic habits from the eighteenth century to today, but Johnson demonstrates that this is not quite right. Chronic habits reveal themselves over the course of linear time, but they reveal themselves as problems specifically because they keep people from using that time productively. Johnson's poem to his friend and doctor, Robert Levet, praises his ability to offer "the power of art without the show" (16), and through those artless treatments, to have "the modest wants of every day / the toil of every day supplied" (23-24). In ending by describing the spiritual value of that economic proficiency—"And sure the Eternal Master found / The single talent well employed" (27-28)—Johnson collapses the moral and economic arguments against dissipation and for a (perhaps equally predictable and repetitive) productive labor. This dissertation speaks to how Johnson and those that follow him in imaginatively considering "dissipation" ultimately dispute and challenge this seemingly simple set of guidelines.

Dissipation and/as Disability

The convergence of moral, medical, and economic concerns in the discourse of dissipation is similar to the cultural responses to addiction throughout modernity. The story of that convergence is an essential part of the histories of disability and addiction, which too often seek to distinguish moral from medical regimes of interpretation and control. As Robin Room

notes, medical definitions of substance use disorders and addiction rely explicitly on social responses to drug use. The International Classification of Diseases, 10th revision, defines addiction in part as a chemically induced "impairment (or loss) of self-control" to the "neglect of other activities [...] or misuse of time" (qtd. In Room 44). Looking to medical definitions of addiction, Room argues that the diagnostic logic champions conceptions of "individuation and individualism" and upholds a modern conception of time "attuned to the clock" and with a sense of one's time being exchangeable for monetary value (45, 46). While eighteenth-century notions of dissipation are less focused on the economic value of one's time, they nonetheless center on similar anxieties about personal economy. No matter how debauched an eighteenth-century figure might be, they are rarely dissipated until they start failing to pay their bills.

Writing of "obsession" as a pathologized form of mental illness, Lennard Davis points to a similar set of economic considerations. *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders IV* defines a pathological compulsion or obsession as one to which the patient responds with "marked distress." Davis argues,

> If your behavior [. . .] is seen as an oddity, you will be distressed that you do it. If it is seen as [a] useful quality [. . .] then you will not be distressed. In other words, 'marked distress' is not a quality itself but rather a socially defined reaction. (18)

Disability studies points towards a "social model" that distinguishes "impairment"—physical differences in a body—from "disability—social practices or built structures that exclude people based on a particular set of impairments. These definitions of obsession and addiction are explicitly rooted in the built and social environment. As if to highlight the inability to dissociate the social from the embodied in addiction, the ICD refers to the condition as an "impairment" that is only visible through "socially defined reaction[s]." But despite this clear and explicit

operation of the social model, disability studies has been hesitant to take up addiction as a subject of analysis.

This silence is evident in Davis's decision to focus on "Obsession" in a way that largely eschews chemical addictions. He brings up alcoholism only to discuss the influence of Alcoholics Anonymous in the development of Sexaholics Anonymous. Nonetheless, he draws freely on the rhetoric of addiction. In cataloging the extent to which "To be obsessive is to be American, to be modern," Davis uses the terms interchangeably:

> [his readers] are [...] addictively thinking about sex, food, alcohol, drugs as well as acting on those addictions. People are also working at their jobs addictively and obsessively and then playing hard in an extension of their workday. Many folks are addicted to their nightly television shows, to collecting things, or to obsessing about that someone who is unattainable or lost forever. (3)

Likewise, Robert McRuer's persuasive critique of medical rehabilitation as a force of normalization in *Crip Theory* leaves the overlap of the word "rehabilitation" in its physical and chemical contexts almost entirely unexamined.[11] Perhaps most explicitly, G. T. Couser in *Signifying Bodies* only cautiously, strategically, raises the issue of addiction narratives. Couser writes, at the end of a long catalog of other disability memoirs, that "if you consider addiction a medical condition" (4), the number of such memoirs swells immeasurably. Although he follows this observation with a parenthetical admission that addiction is covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act, his subjunctive insists upon it being an open question. Couser's book does not examine any of these addiction memoirs. Addiction, then, is useful to him only insofar as it undergirds his claim that disability narratives dominate the current memoir market.

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[11] He does this even though one of his major case studies involves a figure who kicks a habit for illicit drugs to join a Texas-based Evangelical community that offers health insurance and medically sanctioned treatments for AIDS.

Given the goal of autonomy in the earliest efforts of the disability rights movement from which disability studies emerges, resistance to addiction is at least to some extent rooted in the seemingly contradictory assumptions that addiction is at once a condition of dependency and the result of a volitional act: what may now be compulsive was, at one point, a choice. The work of a wide range of scholars operating in the field of addiction studies has complicated these seemingly self-evident but ultimately contradictory truths, particularly the idea that initial drug use is a choice that each individual faces in equal measure. David Courtwright in *Forces of Habit* considers drug use from a macroeconomic perspective to argue that different socio-economic and geographic locations face different pressures and drug availabilities. Howard Kushner argues that individuals respond to drugs in different ways, and each addict chooses to use drugs in response to the complex interplays of biology, social pressures, and individual psychology. Kushner recognizes "addictions," in the plural (18), as what Griffith Edwards calls "dependence syndrome[s]" (100).[12] Moving from that position, Kushner suggests that scholars work to uncover the "cultural biology" of addiction, a call that points to addiction as simultaneously biologically grounded and socially situated.

If the initial act of volition that results in addiction keeps disability rights activists from claiming addiction as a disability, the resulting dependencies in turn dissuade addicts from producing a positive identity of their own, as disability advocates have done. While, as Tobin Siebers argues, politically-minded identity claims are often read critically as admissions of weakness or dependence, political identities come out of expressions of pride in a marginalized position. Several critics have observed that disability identity can be counter-intuitively produced

[12] With Edwards, Kushner makes a distinction between "syndromes," which are collections of signs and symptoms for which the etiology is unknown, and "diseases," which are collections of signs and symptoms with a known and well-understood cause.

in the very Deaf schools, asylums, and other institutions ostensibly meant to exclude disability from normative culture. These identity formulations provide a way of resisting what Alison Kafer has called the "curative imaginary" (27). Kafer distinguishes the "curative imaginary" as an idea from medical cure as a practice by noting the social forces that compel people towards rehabilitation. The curative imaginary derives from "an understanding of disability that not only expects and assumes intervention but also cannot imagine or comprehend anything other than intervention" (27). This method of thought writes disability, illness, and disabled people out of our imagined futures and understands the cure and/or expulsion of disability explicitly as markers of both individual and social progress.

To exclude addiction from critical or political invocations of disability on the basis of conceptions of dependency is ironically to employ the very ideology of ability that Siebers critiques. We might call this the ideology of sobriety, but this is of course not quite right: sobriety, too, is a limiting identity. Part of the ideology of ability is an unwillingness to notice and acknowledge each individual's various abilities and disabilities. It follows that the ideology of sobriety might make normative drug use (that is to say, drug use that does not visibly impact the user's economic and social responsibilities) invisible. Kafer positions her work in part as an intervention into queer studies by identifying the curative logic underneath Judith Halberstam's observation that queer time excludes "some bodies," which

> are simply considered 'expendable […] The abbreviated life span of black queers or poor drug users, say, does not inspire […] metaphysical speculation on curtailed futures, intensified presents, or reformulated histories (42).

In looking to a pathologized condition that does not inspire "metaphysical speculation" or "reformulated histories" from disability studies, *Chronic Habits* takes up Kafer's call for "a

disability studies that sees both ‘black queers’ and ‘poor drug users’ as within its purview, precisely because of their depiction as expendable” (42). “Dissipation,” a term that explicitly acknowledges that the body is impermanent and fragile, foreshadows this morally repellent and, therefore, “expendable” addict. In pointing to disability studies’ silence around this figure, it also demonstrates the ways in which the ideology of ability can inform and shape the boundaries of disability as well as those of able-bodiedness.

In this way, *Chronic Habits* contributes to an ongoing conversation about the limitations of the strict “social model” of disability. This model was an important step in re-considering the hegemony of applied approaches to bodily difference that prioritized cure, later theorists have pointed to the ways that a strict distinction between medical, moral, and social models prioritizes the needs of what Susan Wendell calls the “healthy disabled,” that is people whose disabilities are not life-threatening or painful and do not require regular medical care. Noting the relationships between chronic pain and disability and the fact that women disproportionately experience chronic pain, Wendell points to both the limitations of the social model’s resistance to medicalization for these women and calls for a fuller consideration of medicalized conditions by the disability rights movement and disability studies. Aligning herself with Wendell, Margaret Price demonstrates the problematic fit between models of humanity based on rationality and the experience of mental disability, noting that “often the very terms used to name persons with mental disability have explicitly foreclosed our status *as* persons” (298). These insights require reconsiderations of the received assumptions of disability. “Unhealthy” and invisible disabilities, in particular, question and complicate the social model of disability. Incorporating them calls for a more dynamic understanding of the relationships between the lived experience and the social construction of bodily difference. At the same time, the parallel and often overlapping histories

of disability and addiction demonstrate the value of those cultural histories in revealing the moral, medical, and social structures that justify medical classification and discrimination.

Both fields present a largely Foucauldian arc in which the need for predictable workers in industrial societies and the rise of professional medicine in the late nineteenth century produce a "medical model" of disability or addiction that displaces an earlier "moral model" that understands these conditions as a sign of moral failure or, as often, an accepted part of being human. According to Virginia Berridge, opium prohibition in the second half of the nineteenth century stems from an increasingly professionalized medical complex seeking new places in which to assert its authority. This new class of medical professionals drew on public concerns regarding opium as it pertained to class and economic production to produce the opium addict as a limiting identity category. Ostensibly treating addiction as a disease, Victorian practitioners argued that "moderation [in opium use] was impossible, addiction inevitable and moral and physical decline the result" (Berridge 198). But those medical practitioners, unable to offer a reliable treatment plan for this newly-identified condition, slid back into older discourses of moral condemnation when their practices failed. When patients recovered, it was due to expert mental intervention. When they relapsed, it was because they did not want to be cured. Such practices were made necessary by the industrial economy's need for predictable laborers; reliant on preconceived notions about race, class, and gender; and supported by burgeoning theories of social Darwinism. Courtwright takes a macro-economic approach to drug use and explains what he calls the late-nineteenth "psychoactive counterrevolution" to the economic demands of industrial labor (5).

Lennard Davis points to a similar turn in the classification of aberrant bodies in *Enforcing Normalcy*. Davis argues that "disability" in its current sense gained meaning only after

the development of statistics in 1833, which reorganized the sorting of bodies in fundamental ways. Previously, all bodies were judged against an unobtainable "ideal" rooted in classical depictions of the Gods. But with the invention of the Bell Curve, bodies began to be judged against a "normal" body, and those found to be abnormal were considered disabled, deviant, and in need of cure or eradication. Tobin Siebers implicitly challenges the suggestion that statistical science invented these categories. Pointing to the centrality of rational thought to Enlightenment conceptions of the independent subject, Siebers argues that the continued exclusion of people with disabilities from definitions of humanity demonstrates "the limitations of eighteenth-century rationalism" (92).

However valuable these grand historical narratives are for historicizing social responses to aberrant bodies, a thriving field of eighteenth-century disability studies has deepened and complicated our understanding of eighteenth-century bodies and the regimes to which they were subjected. Helen Deutsch and Felicity Nussbaum point to the eighteenth-century conception of "defect," an embodied reality given a wide range of cultural import. David M. Turner traces the ways that eighteenth-century disability influenced and was shaped by contemporary understandings of race, gender, and class. Chris Mounsey follows Deutsch's work on the relationship between disability and literary production in her monographs on Pope and Johnson to argue that the "idea of disability" in the eighteenth-century precedes the naming of it in the nineteenth century and calls for critical work that focuses on disability as an identity and experience distinct from other forms of difference and containing, within it, further subsets of meaningful differences. Mounsey argues that "variability" is a more useful analytic than "disability" because rather than create a strict binary between able and disabled, it acknowledges the range of abilities in both the historical figures we study and among the scholars working in

the field (15). In *Chronic Habits*, I similarly seek to challenge the boundaries around disability as imposed by that field even as I acknowledge the fact that my perspective is enabled by the very work that produced those boundaries.

Part of that work includes noting parallel thinking between disability studies and other fields. Scholars in the history of medicine have pushed back against strict origin stories of addiction's invention in the Victorian period. While Roy Porter acknowledges that the nineteenth century marks a key moment in the history of addiction, he also warns against under-playing eighteenth-century understandings of habitual drug use as a disease in its own right. Porter's conception of the "pre-history of addiction" challenges and complicates standard histories of addiction that locate the origin of the disease model in its supposed parallel discovery by Benjamin Rush and Thomas Trotter in the late eighteenth century. Porter suggests that this work is at once overly Foucauldian in its insistence on pointing to a moment of large-scale historical change and too rooted in the hero model of the history of science in its focus on the work of Rush and Trotter. In place of those accounts, Porter demonstrates that disease served as both a potent metaphor for and a meaningful paradigm through which medical practitioners understood problematic drug use throughout the early modern period. Robin Room complicates Porter's historical narrative in part by noting the extent to which contemporary American models of addiction as a disease are socially situated.

Alluding to the opening lines of the Declaration of Independence, Room implicitly figures the ideals that justify moral and medical strictures against "addiction" as principally American. Those American ideals build from the larger Enlightenment tradition out of which the American Revolution springs. This project points to a longer history of that discourse's influence on understandings of drug use. In short, Room roots the logic for our current diagnostic

understanding of addiction in ways of thinking traditionally associated with modernity. While Room's point that Western conceptions of addiction are very much culturally specific is an important interpretation of the discourse recovered by Porter, Porter's historical work demonstrates that the social structures and concepts that enabled the rise of disease models of addiction predate the late modernity in which he locates them occurring most forcefully. If the inability of Western Civilization to imagine humanity in ways that include disabled people demonstrates, per Siebers, "the limitations of eighteenth-century rationalism," the same is true of our inability to imagine humanity in ways that include addicts.

Because intoxication in this period often resulted from the medically sanctioned use of opium or alcohol, upset the rational mind, and produced further dependencies and medical concerns, it proves to be a particularly useful but largely unexamined case study for understanding Siebers's "theory of complex embodiment" (316). Writes Siebers,

> Disability is not a pathological condition, only analyzable via individual psychology, but a social location complexly embodied. Identities, narratives, and experiences based on disability have the status of theory because they represent locations and forms of embodiment from which the dominant ideologies of society become visible and open to criticism. (321)

Siebers employs this concept to make three important interventions. First, he asserts the presence of an "ideology of ability" that produces seemingly self-evident but often contradictory assumptions about both the fragility of the body and the permanence of the mind (316). He then uncovers that ideology at work in the writings of cultural theorists like Judith Butler and Michel Foucault who, Siebers argues, critique identity in large part by assuming the superiority of the independent, able body. Finally, he uncovers the ways in which disability studies often reinforces

the same assumptions. Disability studies offers an important and persuasive critique of the "medical model" of disability that defines disability as a problem to be cured or excluded through medical science. But Siebers notes that subsequent efforts to replace that model with a "social model" that places the problems of disability in the built environment ironically reassert the ideals of independence and autonomy in ways that make little space for people with invisible disabilities, people in need of regular medical care, and people with certain cognitive disabilities.

As Siebers suggests, disability reveals the instability of our identities and upsets the valorization of rationality upon which the Enlightenment project is based. Drug use has a similarly disruptive force and is often employed with intent by literary writers across the eighteenth century. In looking to that discourse, *Chronic Habits* suggests that for all the free agency enabled and seemingly demanded by the rise of print culture, eighteenth-century and Romantic letters was dependent on, among other things, networks of interdependent collaboration between authors who were, in Tobin Siebers's words, neither merely disabled or able but "complexly embodied." In constructing and working through these networks, these authors dissolve, at once, the diagnostic and moral definitions of "dissipation" and the literary conventions and generic structures that might otherwise support those moral/medical injunctions.

"Compose Yourself"

If Alcoholics Anonymous enforces a limited definition of "recovery" through the imposition of Western Christian conceptions of confession and conversion, the literature of dissipation challenges, at once, the supposed normalizing power of narrative and moral/medical justifications for that normalization. In this way, *Chronic Habits* reveals a literary tradition in the late eighteenth century that does not, as Lennard Davis says of the English novel, work together with medical discourse to justify the exclusion of disabled people. Instead, these texts operate

along what Helen Deutsch has called “symptomatic correspondences.” Deutsch describes the rhetorical value of the disabled body in the eighteenth century: “the unique body of the eighteenth-century author figures the ineffable and embattled substance of individuality and intention” (178). But she also notes that this association of individuality and bodily and mental difference has clear limits rooted in related notions of masculinity and agency and marked, for Deutsch, in the story of William Cowper supposedly attempting to castrate himself. While none of the authors taken up in this dissertation push these associations to the point of self-dismemberment, they do deploy dissipation in ways that challenge these limits and, with them, contemporary understandings of gender, agency, and intellectual production.

In considering that history, I do not focus on the many moments in eighteenth century literature where dissipation serves as what David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder have called “narrative prosthesis.” Mitchell and Snyder define “narrative prosthesis” as the tendency for writers to depend on disability to produce narrative. In these texts, disability serves “as a character making trope […], as a social category of deviance, [or] as a symbolic vehicle for meaning-making and cultural critique” (1). Instead, I focus on texts that consider dissipation “as an option in the narrative negotiation of disabled subjectivity” (1). Samuel Johnson, Mary Robinson, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Maria Edgeworth, and John Keats write with and about atypical bodies in chemically-altered mental states that contest the moral paradigms imposed by their contemporaries and the new medical paradigms just coming into being. In so doing, they make dissipation itself at once intoxicating and therapeutic. As these texts dissolve the boundaries put around the dissipation, they also threaten received and conventional understandings of literary marketplaces, genres, and narrative structure.

The absence of sustained considerations of "dissipation" in critical accounts of the literature of the eighteenth century speaks to the extent to which received "alcoholic realities" shape our understandings of drug use in the past. *Chronic Habits* seeks to address that silence and, in so doing, to demonstrate that literary and historical analysis that ignores the history of medicine, disability, and addiction often unwittingly applies medical knowledge available to the critic anachronistically back onto the past. That said, *Chronic Habits* does not and cannot offer a full account of the subjective experience of the dissipated in the eighteenth century. For one thing, such an archive does not exist and, if it did, it would be necessarily incomplete. In looking specifically to the literary record of eighteenth-century England, I am drawing exclusively on sources with access to the printing press. That access allows them to re-write their relationship to drugs as they see fit, a substantially important privilege not afforded to many of their contemporaries. For some, this privilege allows them to write themselves out of this dissertation. Thomas De Quincey, the famous English Opium Eater, separates his opium dependency from dissipation. He argues that "opium," as opposed to wine, "always seems to compose what has been agitated, and to concentrate what had been distracted" (92).

In *Suspiria de Profundis*, advertised as the sequel to *Confessions*, De Quincey positions the organizational properties of opium and solitude explicitly as a bulwark against "dissipation." He summarizes (and in some ways writes against) a century of anxieties about this mysterious, mercurial condition. Employing a metaphor of circular motion, De Quincey recalls Wordsworth's complaints about the habits of urban modernity in the preface to *Lyrical Ballads* by associating dissipation with modernity.[13] De Quincey argues that the "colossal pace of

[13] Wordsworth positions *Lyrical Ballads* as an antidote to the "degrading thirst after outrageous stimulation" produced by modern urban living but further encouraged in new literary forms:

> For a multitude of causes, unknown to former times, are now acting with a combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind, and, unfitting it for all voluntary exertion, to reduce it

advance" produces a "fierce condition of eternal hurry" that "is likely to defeat the grandeur which is latent in all men" (133). That effect, writes De Quincey, is commonly called "dissipation" and can only be "retarded" or "met by counter forces of corresponding magnitude" through a restoration of "meditative habits" effected by "sometimes retiring from crowds" (133). Echoing at once his famous image of the isolated library and quantity of laudanum in the *Confessions* and Wordsworth's definition of the poet in the preface, De Quincey concludes that

> No man ever will unfold the capacities of his own intellect who does not at least checker his life with solitude. How much solitude, so much power. Or, if not true in that rigor of expression, to this formula undoubtedly it is that the wise rule of life must approximate. (134)

In positioning opium as a potential countervailing force to the vortexes of modernity, De Quincey's work becomes an easy case study for the ways in which the tools of composition can shape conceptions of sobriety. But his ability to do so persuasively demonstrates that while dissipation is closely associated with intemperate drug use, it is in many ways different from the medical condition of addiction as codified and defined by nineteenth- and twentieth-century medical practitioners and researchers.

De Quincey demonstrates how the right to compose one's self can shape conceptions of drug use. As Susan Zieger notes, the distinction De Quincey and even Samuel Taylor Coleridge can make between productive opium highs and destructive drug-induced compulsion stems in no

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> to a state of almost savage torpor. The most effective of these causes are the great national events which are daily taking place, and the increasing accumulation of men in cities, where the uniformity of their occupations produces a craving for extraordinary incident, which the rapid communication of intelligence hourly gratifies. To this tendency of life and manners the literature and theatrical exhibitions of the country have conformed themselves. The invaluable works of our elder writers, I had almost said the works of Shakespeare and Milton, are driven into neglect by frantic novels, sickly and stupid German Tragedies, and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse. (599)

small part from gender privilege. Maria Edgeworth seemingly denies that power to Lady Delacour. Despite her insistent and enthralling self-mythologization (two full chapters are given over to her relation of her "History"), Lady Delacour is not ultimately given the chance to compose herself, despite Belinda's admonishment, amid a fit, that she do precisely that: "Compose yourself, my dear *friend*" (204). The bulk of the novel's first two volumes is given over to efforts to re-compose Lady Delacour by treating what is understood to be a cancerous breast. When she—after much insistence—submits to observation and instruction from Dr. X—, he reveals the wound to be superficial and made to persist in part by her opium habit. In giving up the drug, she is cured. In saving Lady Delacour from literal decomposition, Dr. X— re-composes her as a testament to his moral/medical authority in ways that the novel itself seemingly affirms.

Belinda's response to Lady Delacour's fit might serve as a short hand for both the general advice offered to problem drug users across the last 3 centuries and the ways in which that advice is produced. At the same time, the fact that Dr. X— demands sobriety from Lady Delacour while arguing to the equally dissipated Clarence Hervey that he should give up fashionable living to fulfill his genius demonstrates the extent to which the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century conceptions of drinking and genius were gendered. In having Belinda offer Lady Delacour such a direct instruction to compose the self, Edgeworth directly engages conceptions of gender from within the related discourse on the relationship between intoxication and identity. Anne Mellor considers Edgeworth's work as legible through her influential category of "feminine romanticism." Mellor observes that Romanticism has long built its understanding of the period on the work of the six, canonical male poets. In so doing, the field has long considered as "Romanticism" a canon that is more accurately described as "masculine

Romanticism." Masculine Romantic writers oppose empirical constructions of identity as a bundle of memories or habits by formulating an "oppositional construction of subjectivity" in which the "autonomous and self-conscious 'I' […] exists independently of the Other" (6). In contrast, writers in the tradition of feminine Romanticism (chief among them, Wollstonecraft and Edgeworth) draw on their experience of gender in the period to produce a body of writing that is at once more comfortable with a decentralized identity and a collaborative way of being akin to what Carol Gilligan has called an "ethic of care" (74). This Romanticism, according to Mellor, is rooted not in the expression of the central "I"/"eye" but in an acceptance of "alterity," temporality, and difference that stems from experience with domestic labor, which develops an insistence "on the primacy of the family or the community and their attendant practical responsibilities" (3). As I argue across this dissertation, "dissipation" provides both male and female writers of the period with opportunities to develop and explore this interdependent alterity and to transgress against the gender essentialism that seems to inform it.

Mellor places Wollstonecraft's defense of "the rational capacity and equality of women" at the center of this movement (33). But disability studies scholars have drawn on readings of Wollstonecraft that focus on the *Vindication* and interpret its defense of "rational capacity and equality" as finally complicit with exclusions it supposedly sets out to overcome. In particular, Cora Kaplan argues that in advancing her case for women's right to education on their capacity for rational thought, Wollstonecraft implicitly employs an oppositional structure akin to that of masculine Romanticism. In so doing, Wollstonecraft reinforces the ideologies of ability that, Siebers notes, leaves disabled people out of Enlightenment conceptions of humanity even today. In asserting that Wollstonecraft's advocacy for "a marriage of *rational love*, rather than of erotic passion or sexual desire" is spoken "on behalf of *all* women, not just the most talented" (34,

emphasis Mellor's), Mellor follows Wollstonecraft in overlooking those with cognitive and mental disabilities that make rational education difficult or impossible to obtain.

Chronic Habits takes up Rosemarie Garland-Thomson's observation that "integrating disability as a category of analysis and a system of representation deepens, expands, and challenges feminist theory" (335). In moving from Samuel Johnson's ambivalent defense of a dissipation that enables productivity through Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Mary Robinson, and Maria Edgeworth's examinations of potentially productive feminine dependencies and dissipations, contributes to our understanding of a disabled Romanticism that develops mutually alongside what Mellor calls feminine and masculine Romanticism. The ways in which cultural assumptions about disability and gender intersect to shape our understandings of the canon emerges in the critical history of John Keats. While Mellor tentatively associates Keats with feminine Romanticism, much ink was spilled in the post-war period to establish Keats's successful escape from what Lionel Trilling calls the "appetitive inclinations" of his mother (19). That escape is a key element of what Trilling sees as Keats's ability to re-make himself as "a man, and as a certain kind of man, a hero" (4). *Chronic Habits* challenges at once the implication that one must be a "man" to be heroic, the assumption that heroism derives from a rejection of explicitly feminized appetites, and the conception that literary production depends upon heroism in the traditional sense in the first place.

I explore Trilling's explicitly gendered defense of Keats as part of a larger impulse to critically rehabilitate Keats in chapter 4, but his work to save the poet from his supposedly inherited appetites is instructive here, given the ways in which St. Augustine's definition of the self against dissipating appetites filters through Rousseau and Wordsworth to produce the genre of life writing. In several episodes in *The Prelude*, Wordsworth marks his development explicitly

against what he implies is the lack of development of drinkers, including the "dissolute" of London and his Cambridge classmates, who profane Milton by drinking wine in his room. Fittingly, given the economic origins of "dissipation," Anya Taylor reads Wordsworth's expression of self against these intoxicated figures as part of Wordsworth's water-drinking careerism. While Coleridge's intoxications produce texts that prove, themselves, to be enthralling, Wordsworth's sober labor sustains a longer career. But Mellor, in noting the prominence of *The Prelude* in theorizing life writing, suggests that the genre as defined in that field as a narrative construction of a coherent self is a set of generic conventions that carry over masculine ideas that hold that the self is stable and coherent or, at least, can reach a stable coherence.

As Mellor notes in citing Paul De Man, the extent to which *The Prelude* actually supports such a reading remains an open question. Nonetheless, the critical record of *The Prelude* largely understands it as a "crisis autobiography" that draws on St. Augustine and, in Mellor's words, narrates "the construction of the individual who owns his own body, his own mind, his own labor, and who is free to use that body and labor as he chooses " (147).[14] *Chronic Habits* points to the ways in which dissipation can dissolve the narrative structures that support such a figure while excluding and confining others. In so doing, *Chronic Habits* deepens the sometimes-flattened picture of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century thinking that can arise in scholarship focused on our present moment. My chapters trace across the eighteenth-century literary imagination an engaged effort to think about "dissipation" and argue that this conversation proved fruitful not only in re-composing drug use but also in re-imagining the modes of literary

[14] Mellor cites M. H. Abrams in associating the text with the "crisis autobiography" and Herbert Lindenberger in suggesting that the text narrates a series of separations from the past that leads to momentary senses of "wholeness and well-being" (145).

production. From Samuel Johnson's ability to profit from his understanding of the ways that dependency moves economic markets for both chemicals and literature to John Keats's efforts to remain intoxicated, poetically, without fully succumbing to the desire, expressed in "Ode to a Nightingale," to "fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget" (21), these authors disturb the chronic habits of thought that seem to produce independent subjects both in their moment and today. In revealing those figures as reliant on a web of dependents, these authors compose a model of dissipation that does, in the late eighteenth century, much of the cultural work disability rights activists will call for in the twentieth.

My first chapter, "'Some Sweet Oblivious Antidote': Dr. Johnson's Palliative Care," demonstrates the extent to which dissipation haunts Samuel Johnson's writing as both disease and cure. More specifically, Johnson's ambivalent relation to dissipation deeply informs his influential meditations on literary production in *The Life of Richard Savage* and *Rasselas, A Prince of Abyssinia*. Drawing on Helen Deutsch's argument that eighteenth-century writers cultivate "symptomatic correspondences" with their audiences by claiming masculine forms of disability, I read Johnson's moral writings as "therapeutic correspondences." Johnson presents his work explicitly as "antidote[s]" for his readers' mental and moral ills, but also suggests that their effect is chiefly "palliative." Because they do not offer a "radical cure," these textual interventions prove habit-forming. Thus, Johnson's emergence as the first successful professional writer results in no small part from his cultivation of literary dependencies among his readers.

If Johnson succeeds by generating new dependencies in his readers, the authors examined in my second chapter explicitly work through the fundamental incompatibility of conceptions of independence and the realities of an increasingly interdependent modernity. "Romantic Co-

Dependencies: Coleridge and Robinson's 'Forced Unconscious Sympathy'" demonstrates that the poetic relationship between Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Mary Robinson is also a collaborative working-through of the chemical and interpersonal dependencies upon which the Romantic "I" is built. They broach this issue together in their verse dialogues, but it has ramifications across both of their corpuses. Together, Coleridge and Robinson anticipate feminist disability philosopher Eva Feder Kittay's "interdependency critique" of social justice movements rooted in the concept of independence, which Kittay argues extend the benefits of equality only to marginalized people most capable of mimicking the stereotypical behavior of the privileged. Coleridge's fragment, *Christabel*, is ultimately stifled in part by the fundamental irreconcilability of his conception of poetic achievement and his lived experience of dependencies. Robinson resolves these problems in her novel *Walsingham* (1797), her poem "Golfre" (1800), and her political tract *Letter to the Women of England* (1800), which together advance a model of interdependence and collaboration based on her experiences in the sickroom.

Maria Edgeworth imaginatively explores opium's potential to fashion female independence within and against the networks of dependencies that entangle Robinson and Coleridge. My third chapter, "'Grotesque Mixture[s]': Feminine Dissipation in Edgeworth's *Belinda*," reveals how opium-induced dissipation in Edgeworth's *Belinda* at once enables and metaphorically reiterates its characters' proto-feminist/-crip resistance to the twinned powers of conventional medicine and narrative convention. Specifically, Lady Delacour and Harriet Freke deploy dissipation as a uniquely queer/crip form of what Tobin Siebers has called the "disability masquerade." In challenges normative conceptions of futurity, which demand dependencies along traditional gendered hierarchies and within traditional generic conventions, those performances reveal the central role of disability and dissipation in doing the cultural work of the

masquerade ball, which Terry Castle has identified as a central site of carnivalesque challenges to traditional gender scripts. These performances at once reveal and unsettle the twinned efforts of medicine and narrative convention to rehabilitate and reform noncompliant bodies and minds.

"Romantic Withdrawal: Critical Rehabilitation and Keatsian Dissipation," my final chapter, argues that disability and dissipation have long shaped the very terms through which Keats's poetry is read. Twentieth-century critics, in part responding to Victorian dismissals of Keats as addicted to pleasure, actively compose out of Keats's flights of appetite a sober or recovered poet who, in turn, affirms their own inquiries as sober and productive. This chapter builds on both Orrin Wang's *Romantic Sobriety* and Alison Kafer and Robert McRuer's work on crip theory to argue that the Keats we know today is in part the product of a series of critical rehabilitations. In place of that model, I argue that Keats's famous conception of Negative Capability ultimately affirms a productive ability to dissipate the self into new, countervailing intoxicants. Across his corpus, Keats submits to the pleasures of dissipation without succumbing to the desire, expressed in "Ode to a Nightingale," to "dissolve" entirely. In this way, his mode of production has less in common with the twentieth-century models of addiction recovery deployed by his critics and much more in common with early-nineteenth century treatment paradigms for alcohol withdrawals, in which patients were prescribed enough opium to, as the saying goes, sleep it off.

In recent years, neuroscience has suggested a physical etiology for addiction as a brain disease. In light of arguments building from that physical evidence that those diagnosed with addiction lack the capacity for or the right to informed consent, neuroethicists have turned to the terms of eighteenth century moral philosophy to wrestle with the ethical implications of a new brain disease model of addiction informed by neuroscience. My project demonstrates that the

terms of that debate have been contested grounds since its inception. Present but invisible because diffuse, eighteenth-century notions of the dissipated/-ing self serve as the unacknowledged foundation for supposedly empirical accounts of addiction both at the end of the nineteenth century and today. *Chronic Habits* argues that eighteenth-century literary engagements with disability and medicine are worth investigating not only because they offer new ways of thinking about today's treatment paradigms, but also because today's treatment paradigms are built in part upon eighteenth-century literary engagements.

CHAPTER 1: "Some Sweet Oblivious Antidote": The Doctor in/on Pain

> When Dr. Brocklesby paid [Johnson] his morning visit, he seemed very low and desponding, and he said, 'I have been as a dying man all night.' He then emphatically broke out in the words of Shakespeare: —
>
> 'Can'st thou not minster to a mind diseas'd;
> Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow;
> Raze out the written troubles of the brain;
> And with some sweet oblivious antidote,
> Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff,
> Which weighs upon the heart?'
>
> To which Dr. Brocklesby readily answered, from the same great poet: —
>
> '--------therein the patient
> Must administer to himself.' (Boswell 1379)

In this anecdote from late in James Boswell's *The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D* (1791), Samuel Johnson filters a request for painkillers through *Macbeth*'s sleepwalking scene. But while Johnson requests, explicitly, a drug that will obliviate his memory at this moment, a week later, after being convinced that he would not recover from his illness, he rejects intoxication in favor of sober awareness. In order to "render up [his] soul to God unclouded," he refuses all "inebriating sustenance" and accepts food only to prevent delirium (1390). These anecdotes contribute to Boswell's effort to structure the *Life* around Johnson's life-long, twinned fears of death and encroaching madness. They also reflect several interconnected but contradictory conceptions of mental health, medicinal drug use, and literature in the eighteenth century. The first acknowledges that forgetting—even drug-induced forgetting—is a valuable and sometimes necessary recourse in the face of mental and physical pain. The second valorizes sobriety as a method of producing a coherent self capable of standing up to divine judgment. Perhaps with Locke's distinction between man's and God's capacity to judge deeds performed while drunk in mind, Johnson wants to meet eternity with the capacity of marking the distinction.[1] To pick up

[1] See Introduction, 7-8.

on Johnson's reference to *Macbeth*, Lady Macbeth's descent into madness might be understandable given her guilt, but the first Thane of Cawdor's honorable meeting of his execution remains the aspirational ideal.

While Dr. Brocklesby lacks a chemical intervention capable of producing the oblivion Johnson desires, he nonetheless provides some relief by expressing his failure in an accurate continuation of the scene. According to Boswell, "Johnson expressed himself much satisfied with the application" (1379).[2] That satisfaction adds a further complicating irony to the anecdote. In expressing his inability to offer medical relief, Brocklesby makes the literary, itself, therapeutic. In lieu of a drug, he offers a satisfactory dosage of Shakespeare, and, in so doing, provides the comfort Johnson expects. In serving as a prescription, this collaborative performance of the text raises questions about the extent to which both interpersonal communication and medicinal applications might be *scripted*.[3] This slip from chemical painkillers into dramatic recitation raises dangerous questions about free agency, compulsion, and influence. Drugs challenge Enlightenment boundaries of identity, but their effects wear off with time and can be avoided altogether by way of abstinence. How does one detox from Shakespeare? More to the point, how does one prepare to face the I Am unclouded by the influence of the Word? This chapter argues that Johnson's understanding of the similarities between texts and drugs challenged contemporary moral discourses on intemperance and enabled his emergence as the first successful professional writer in the new literary marketplace of the eighteenth century.

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[2] Example sentences in Johnson's *Dictionary* point to a medical meaning for "application," describing pain "mitigated" by "the application of emollients" and "a new application, by which blood might be staunched."
[3] Given Boswell's story of the day following the Macbeth incident, when Johnson picks out and calls attention to a misquotation when Brocklesby quotes a passage of Juvenal, we might say that, at least for Johnson, these applications are strictly scripted.

This reading challenges critical tendencies to examine Johnson's understanding of mental health and intemperance in terms of diagnostic categories of twentieth-century medicine. Writing of Johnson's attitudes towards drinking, Christopher Hibbert calls him "equivocal" in that he acknowledges both benefits and dangers of drinking. Attempting to resolve that ambivalence, Robin R. Crouch suggests that Johnson anticipates twentieth-century disease models of addiction such as those put forth by Alcoholics Anonymous by distinguishing between regular and habitual usage. Crouch argues that Johnson's personal experiences witnessing the effects of habitual drug use on his friends and his wife, Tetty, allowed Johnson to understand the dangers of intemperate drinking.[4] Crouch's work builds explicitly on Thomas Gilmore's brief consideration of Johnson and Boswell in *Equivocal Spirits*, in which Gilmore figures Boswell as a modern addict and Johnson as a post-modern one. For Gilmore, Johnson anticipates the negative attitudes towards drinking exhibited by writers of the late twentieth century. As Roy Porter has demonstrated, however, Johnson is not alone in his period in holding these opinions about compulsive drug use and/as disease. Porter draws on a wide range of sources to argue that a disease concept of addiction did exist in the eighteenth century rooted primarily in the associationist tradition. In bookending his study with seemingly contradictory quotations from Johnson, however, Porter demonstrates that while Johnson's popularity may have allowed him to serve as an important bridge between eighteenth- and twentieth-century conceptions of addiction as a medical problem, he did not invent or prefigure it so much as he reflected a set of operative opinions of the day in a legible way.

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[4] Tetty's dependence on alcohol likely developed during their marriage. Johnson's friend and sometimes doctor, Robert Levet, attributes her death to an opium overdose. David Garrick is perhaps even harsher in his assessment of Tetty, calling her "a little painted Poppet; full of Affectation and rural Airs of Elegance, […] swelled cheeks of a florid red, produced by thick painting, and increased by liberal use of cordials" (qtd. in Bate 237).

At the same time, while Tetty's descent is legible to twentieth-century observers as a proto-addiction narrative, Johnson's friend and sometimes doctor Robert Levet's account of her descent offers a more capacious set of relevant circumstances to explain her death. He tells Thrale that "she was always drunk & reading Romances in her Bed, where She killed herself by taking Opium" (qtd. in Bate 237). Given Johnson's friends' often-stated distaste for Tetty, we should take this and other accounts of her death with a grain of salt in considering Tetty's life. Levet's easy slippage from drinking to reading in constructing that account tells us much about eighteenth century attitudes about chemical and textual influences. Since both anxieties are rooted in the associationist model of the mind, it makes sense that distinctions between chemical and textual influence are less firm than they might be in the present.[5] Johnson, who in *The Rambler* No. 4 discussed the new realistic novel's potential to shape young minds, sees these influences as both a danger and an opportunity. As he once wrote, "The only end of writing is to enable readers better to enjoy life, or better to endure it" (536). Texts, then, might treat not only the social body but the individual reader's body and mind. Johnson's more famous statement on writing—"No man but a blockhead ever wrote, except for money" (Boswell 731)—complicates Johnson's charitable efforts to provide care. Johnson, as many critics observe, in many ways best exemplifies the course of the author attempting to make a living in the free literary marketplace, a challenge many approached by attempting to shape an ideal readership with their writings.[6]

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[5] Of course, as Eve Sedgwick has demonstrated, the boundary between chemical addictions and behavioral addictions is not stable today. As neuroscience and cognitive studies increasingly pursues models of addiction rooted in the brain's reward circuitry, these distinctions will likely continue to blur.

[6] In recent years, the best expression of the traditional view of print culture transforming the meaning of writing and the profession of writing comes from Alvin Kernan's *Printing Technology, Letters, & Samuel Johnson*. Kernan links Johnson's self-fashioning on Grub Street to the Romantic conception of the individual genius. Romantic self-fashioning emerges in Kernan's account as the logical end-point of Johnson's participation in "the social mutation of writers from an earlier role as gentlemen-amateurs to a new authorial self based on the realistic print and its conditions of mechanical reproduction" (6). At the turn of the twenty-first century, several critics produced book-length challenges to this view. Adrian Johns's *The Nature of the Book*, which figures the "fixity" of print culture "not as an inherent quality, but as a transitive one" (19). Following Johns, David McKitterick and Mark E.

This chapter argues in part that the overlap between chemical and textual habits provides a method by which Johnson profits from his literary treatments.

In so doing, it recognizes that Johnson understands habitual drug use not as a distinct category of human pathology but as one of several parallel and overlapping systems of habitual human action produced by the associationist mind. The overlap between drug use and other behaviors comes most sharply into the foreground in two of Johnson's major works: *An Account of The Life of Mr. Richard Savage* (1744) and *The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia* (1759), which, taken together, demonstrate Johnson's ultimate inability to treat the modern mind. If we were interested in finding anyone living in the eighteenth century who might be accurately termed an addict, we could hardly do better than Richard Savage. But in Johnson's telling of his life, intemperance operates alongside a larger set of character flaws and social and economic forces that combine to make Savage's life a failure. Chief among them are Savage's misguided sense of personal liberty and refusal to commit to the needs of any of the literary markets available to him. For Johnson, both of these traits contribute to Savage's general "dissipation," a condition that is for Johnson at once moral, medical, economic, and social. But Johnson's framing of Savage's mistakes raises key questions about the potential for moral instruction that Johnson fails to answer. Similarly, Rasselas's entry into the world begins with his own failed efforts to reform a group of rakes. What follows is Rasselas's own failure to take actionable information from the various lessons he learns. If the *Life* demonstrates the dangers of dissipation without offering a satisfactory method of avoiding them, *Rasselas* presents

Wildermuth have investigated the complexities and anxieties produced by the democratization of information production and consumption enabled by the new print culture. For other important investigations of Johnson's writing as a response to or engagement with the systems of patronage or the free literary market, see Cannon (1994), Woodmansee (1994), Griffin (1996), and Hammond (1997).

dissipation as a cure for its equally dangerous opposite—an intense focus on one choice of life that is perhaps closer to contemporary conceptions of addiction than Savage's dissipation.

In these texts, Johnson explores the metaphorical and literal overlaps between the written word and drugs that inform his definitions and examples for the word "opiate" in the *Dictionary*. He defines it literally as "A medicine that causes sleep," but illustrates that definition with a metaphorical application from Richard Bentley:

> They chose atheism as an *opiate*, to still those frightening apprehensions of hell, by inducing a dullness and lethargy of mind, rather than to make use of that native and salutary medicine, a hearty repentance.[7]

In understanding a text, an ideology, or the ritualistic repetition of verse or doxology as a mind-altering substance with potentially medicinal value, Johnson looks back the therapeutic applications of classical philosophy.[8] In this sense, he prefigures Avital Ronell's argument that

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[7] The sermon from which Johnson takes this passage demonstrates the ways in which moral, medical, and economic concerns overlapped in eighteenth-century conversations about intemperate drug use. Bentley presses the argument that atheism amounts to an unreasonable focus on present desires, but then dramatizes those desires in terms of disease and personal economy. The atheist chooses "glut of voluptuousness in this life" at the expense of "all pretences [sic] to future happiness" (33). The metaphor of eating suggested by "glut" slips throughout the sermon into the literal. The atheist is both figuratively enslaved by his taste for false religion and literally enslaved by his various earthly appetites. Throughout, Bentley figures this misguided liberty as a transmittable disease of the mind. It is, variously, described as "the most deplorable stupidity of mind" (13-14), an "infection" (24), and a "*pestilence that walketh by day*" (23, emphasis Bentley's). Bentley's spiritual cure solves, at once, literal and figurative disease and personal economy through temperance and labor: "for what can be more availing to a man's health, or to his credit, or security […], than charity and meekness, than sobriety and temperance, than honesty and diligence […]?" (19). In opposing this pathological "glutting" with "credit," Bentley participates in new systems of thought, influentially described by Albert O. Hirschman, which counseled that cultivating man's avarice might offset and reduce the social damage done when men pursue other, less predictable passions.

[8] For a discussion of the therapeutic ends of classical philosophy, see Martha C. Nussbaum's *The Therapy of Desire* (2009). Both W. K. Wimsatt and John Wiltshire take up Johnson's metaphorical "physic of the mind." According to Wiltshire, in figuring "moral vice" as illness, Johnson demonstrates a "habitual" reliance on illness metaphors that figures his textual "physic" as at once helpful and "punitive" (151). In attempting to distance himself from the Stoicks, who offer opiates, not cure, for necessary human suffering (159), Johnson nonetheless takes up their metaphorics in a way that links Johnson to Seneca in that both see their purpose as assuaging the general human condition of pain. Through this "inherited comparison between moral philosophy and medical counsel," Johnson's medical "conceit" "becomes an essential way of expressing his conception that human emotional life is largely a matter of suffering and that therefore the moralist who addresses its illnesses or diseases becomes, perforce, a kind of physician" (163). While Wiltshire is correct in ascribing to "physic" a sense of purgatives and vomit, my argument suggests that in presenting "palliative care," Johnson seeks to ease and assuage, too, despite his famous disagreements with the stoics.

books function—and are treated —as drugs in that the legality of each is debated in terms of therapeutic value to the individual and the social body. While Johnson allows Bentley in the dictionary to critique atheism's inability to offer a "salutary medicine," his own textual interventions fail by the same standard. Instead of permanent cure, they offer palliative relief that, in requiring repeated doses, creates literary dependencies by which Johnson profits. As such, what Lennard Davis figures as Johnson's contribution to the democratization of mental illness is to some extent a predictable outcome of Johnson's approach to the new democratic literary marketplace. Conversely, his success in the new democratic literary marketplace is due in no small part to his contribution to the democratization of mental illness.

"Ideal Opiates," Modern Dissipations

Johnson perhaps expresses the potential overlaps between the markets for drugs and literary writing most explicitly in his verse tribute to his friend and doctor, Robert Levet. Johnson expresses professional envy for Levet based on his ability to prescribe drugs that explicitly work in ways that writing cannot:

> When fainting Nature called for aid,
> And hovering Death prepared the blow,
> His vigorous remedy displayed
> The power of art without the show. (13-16)

That power to prescribe, in turn, offers Levet a humble but consistent economic productivity—"The modest wants of every day / The toil of every day supplied" (23-24)—that Johnson codes through an allusion to the parable of the talents as moral—"And sure the Eternal Master found / The single talent well employed" (27-28). In the literary market, proper treatment, reimbursement, and moral restitution prove far more difficult. Johnson imperfectly navigates

these issues in the *Life*. But while Johnson's Savage makes several bad decisions in and around the tavern which leave him nearly executed and, later, with multiple stints in debtors' prison, what emerges in this text is not an image of a proto-addict but one of a man stuck in a web of intersecting cycles of associationist mental development. In particular, his cycle of chemical and social dependencies in the tavern proves irreconcilable with a series of economic dependencies in the literary market. Savage's failure to navigate these cycles to his advantage leaves him for Johnson not addicted, but "dissipated." Johnson uses his moral judgement of Savage's dissipated failures as a negative example that provides a moral justification for his text's place in the literary market, but the *Life* ultimately reveals the futility of literary treatment.

Savage's life, even in friend Samuel Johnson's telling, is plagued by his inability to put off his immediate desires—chief among those, a desire for drink—to pursue longer-term ones. Although he claimed to be the son and heir of the 4th Earl of Rivers and Lady Macclesfield, his claims were never substantiated, and he never received their support. After nearly being executed for the death of a patron of a tavern in a drunken brawl, he was saved by a royal pardon and brought into the patronage of Lord Tyrconnel, who supported him in part to contribute to his literary development and in part to keep him from publicly claiming his supposed birthright. A falling out with Tyrconnel (in part due to debts produced by Savage in taverns and paid back by pawning Tyrconnel's books and inviting his debtors to ransack Tyrconnel's wine cellar) left him to the mercy of the literary marketplace. His greatest success, *The Bastard*, was structured around his claim to Lady Macclesfield's fortune. While it proved successful, it was sold to a publisher for far less than it turned out to be worth. For the duration of his short life, Savage alternately attempted to take money raised by friends out of charity and in subscription for a

promised collected volume and in debt, even winding up in Newgate for a period. He died in prison.

But however well Savage's life might fit the structure of an after-school special, the word "addiction" never appears in text. Roy Porter rightly notes that tracing the history of a medical condition requires searching for analogous conceptual categories rather than linguistic echoes, but the word that most clearly describes the condition of Johnson's Savage—"dissipation"—offers a far more capacious sense of the factors that contributed to Savage's failures than the medical model of addiction. Of Savage, Johnson writes,

> It cannot be said, that he made use of his abilities for the direction of his own conduct: an irregular and dissipated manner of life had made him the slave of every passion that happened to be excited by the presence of its object, and that slavery to his passions reciprocally produced a life irregular and dissipated. He was not master of his own motions, nor could promise any thing for the next day. (965)

What might appear to be a tautology here—Savage's "irregular and dissipated manner of life" "produced a life irregular and dissipated"—is in fact a carefully constructed feedback loop of habits rooted in associationist models of the mind.[9] Savage's dissipation breeds still more and greater levels of dissipation. In bringing all the disparate registers of the word "dissipation"

[9] For Thomas Reinert, Savage's inability to maintain personal relationships—combined with his penchant for mangling and blotting out his own works—charges Johnson's Savage with the "language of 'exhaustion'" (115). Contrary to John Dussinger, who argues that Johnson's Savage operates on the logic of Boethius's wheel of fortune, Reinert argues that Johnson's Savage is trapped in "a kind of entropy: a 'fall' into the absence of a pattern" that forces Johnson to confront the unresolvable space between individual experience and general moral application (115). Reinert suggests that the interpersonal tumult of the city undoes Johnson's efforts to produce coherent universal rules of human behavior out of particular examples. But dissipation provides a shape to Savage's entropy in that it at once figures the starting point—a vacuity of mind—and its end result—a habitual and "reciprocal" focusing in on the "irregular[ity] and dissipat[ion]" that enabled the fall. Savage's "exhaustion," then, might not be a wheel of fortune, but it is a feedback loop.

together in this description, Johnson offers us a hint at how the pre- and over-determined narrative of addiction is related to the seemingly open-ended and unpredictable nature of dissipation. Johnson's sense of Savage's predictable unpredictability flattens dissipation out into something like the narrative of addiction. In framing this discussion in the language of slavery, Johnson suggests that the problem of addiction originates in the Enlightenment figure of the free-acting agent.

While none of these definitions is explicitly medical, "dissipation" in that latter sense features heavily in Johnson's informal descriptions of his and his friends' mental dis-ease. Elizabeth Gross's monograph on Johnson's investigations into his mental health, *This Invisible Riot of Mind*, opens on a series of letters and journal entries in which Johnson circles around dissipation as a particular problem of mental health. Gross takes as her epigraphs an excerpt from a letter in which Johnson explains to Boswell the source of his mental anguish:

> This dissipation of thought, of which you complain, is nothing more than the vacillation of a mind suspended between different motives, and changing its direction as any motive gains or loses strength. (qtd. in Gross 3)

Gross connects this 1763 letter to a journal entry from April of the next year in which Johnson worries that his "dissipation has spread into wilder negligence," which in turn produces "a kind of strange oblivion" and leaves him in a state wherein he "know[s] not what has become of the last year, and perceive[s] that incidents and intelligence pass over me without leaving any impression" (qtd. in Gross 3). Here, dissipation is a state of inaction in which the mind redoubles into further nothingness. The effect is in a sense intoxicating, but the effects compound over time until memory fades away altogether. Given the importance of memory in Johnson's understanding of free agency, the stakes here extend beyond comfort. As Gross suggests,

dissipation produces and is produced by vacuity, a state of mind that Johnson often pairs with vanity as the central, vacillating problems of human existence.

In this sense, the young Savage becomes victim to the associationist properties of his own mind. An empty mind—a "vacuous" one—Johnson suggests, is liable to be filled up through the habitual taking up of some activity or mode of thinking. This process in and of itself is a neutral one. Vacuity is both an opportunity for production and a dangerous space for the mind to be in. It is for this reason that Johnson famously figures "the young, the ignorant, and the idle" as the most susceptible to the charms of the new realistic novel (176). Those readers' minds are

> unfurnished with ideas, and therefore easily susceptible of impressions; not fixed by principles, and therefore easily following the current of fancy; not informed by experience, and consequently open to every false suggestion and partial account. (176)

Johnson's thinking on vacuity hinges on the same logic that Porter suggests informs eighteenth century disease models of chemical addiction.[10] Habits cultivated in youth shape the minds of adults, cutting off other cognitive possibilities. Johnson's concern for "impressions" seems drawn directly from Locke, which is fitting as this associationist logic is where chemical habits and textual habits intersect most forcefully in the eighteenth century. In short, both books and drugs can re-shape the mind.

Porter's work, however, warns against under-playing eighteenth century understandings of habitual drug use as a disease in its own right.[11] Johnson's ambivalence towards drink

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[10] Porter suggests that the sharpest distinction between the disease model of drug use in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries is a shift in the mechanism from an earlier "associationist psychology of habituation, integrated with psychology of the delusory power of imagination, whose wishful thinking begets obsessions designed to keep present reality at bay" to later models of "dypsomania" and "monomania" (392).
[11] See Introduction, 10.

bookends Porter's extensive citations of medical tracts, which lay out the general tenets of what Rush and Trotter would be credited with discovering. When Johnson (possibly apocryphally) tells David Garrick that the greatest pleasure in life is "fucking; and the second was drinking" (qtd. in Porter 386), he demonstrates both the jocular masculinity signaled by heavy drinking in the eighteenth century and the period's general acceptance of the pleasure provided by drink.[12] When he tells Hannah Moore, "I can't touch a little, child, therefore I never touch it. Abstinence is as easy to me, as temperance would be difficult" (qtd. In Porter 392), he echoes the general cultural acceptance of a disease model of addiction advanced by Georgian physicians. As such, Porter also implicitly resists similar hero narratives that figure Johnson as one who possesses a prescient understanding of mental health, generally, or of addiction, specifically.[13]

Robin Room challenges Porter's historical account of the disease model by pointing out that these disease models are always in part socially constructed and situated. Room's intervention is instructive here. "Dissipation" in the *Life* functions in part to mark the economic aspects of Savage's habitual shortcomings. Savage at a young age befriended those who

> At once rewarded and enjoyed his abilities, by treating him at taverns, and habituated him to pleasures which he could not afford to enjoy, and which he was not able to deny himself, though he purchased the luxury of a single night by the anguish of cold and hunger for a week. (884)

In later editions, "habituated" becomes "habituating," which transforms the meaning of the sentence in a telling way. In the first sense, Savage's fall into habituation parallels his friends having "rewarded and enjoyed his abilities." In this version, Johnson present three distinct—if related—effects of his friends' influence. In the second version, however, habituation is

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[12] Quoted in Hibbert 1971, *The Personal History of Samuel Johnson* London: 1968
[13] See Irwin, 1972, and Gross, 1992.

subordinated, alongside "treating him at taverns," as two methods by which his friends rewarded his talents. In this sense, the pleasures of the tavern exist both inside of and outside of the circular structures of influential friendship and economy. It is no longer one element of the relationship. It is now a necessary and constant threat of that relationship. Regardless, it is worth noting that none of Savage's pleasures are natural. They are cultivated through relationships with friends who are more able to afford them. Johnson's criticism, then, is not rooted in Savage's indulgence in an immoral or unhealthy pleasure, but in the fact that his indulgence in them is too expensive.

In figuring Savage's paying for momentary pleasures—"the luxury of a single night"—with future pains—"the anguish of cold and hunger for a week," Johnson reveals that his understanding of Savage's behavior rests in part on Locke's understanding of human behavior as inspired by the desire for pleasure and the fear of pain. As Claudia Johnson notes, in this system, free agency is determined by one's ability to weigh future pleasures and pains equally against present ones and thereby arrive at the rationally correct choice. In this sense, the necessary and habitual privileging of present pleasures is a sort of enslavement. Savage pays for present pleasures with future pains. Unable to consider futurity, Savage makes decisions without the full breadth of potential passions and pains in mind. Even in this Lockean figuring, though, Savage's future pains are economically contingent. A richer person might engage in similar levels of indulgence while still holding enough money back to afford comfortable lodgings for the following week. At the same time, the importance Johnson places on Savage's inability to pay his bills re-contextualizes Johnson's claim that Savage "was not master of his own motions, nor could promise any thing for the next day." Of issue here is not merely that Savage could not be counted on in a social sense. What matters is that Savage could not be held to account. As Albert

O. Hirschman has demonstrated, the eighteenth century saw a concerted effort to cultivate avarice as a virtuous passion by which man's other passions might be controlled or held in check. As Hirschman notes, this move happened in part through the development and deployment of the metaphor of "interest" to describe the income earned through saving and investing. By delaying the gratification of present appetites, economic actors could pursue their future interests. This shift, as described by Hirschman, offers economic benefits to both individuals who adhere to it and to the society at large: in pursuing his future interests (whether spiritual or economic), man becomes predictable. The individual predictability of other men becomes an advantage for all: each man's "course of action becomes [...] transparent and predictable almost as though he were a wholly virtuous person" (50).

In this sense, Johnson's understanding of dissipation carries with it the social and economic contingencies that Room's work maps back onto strictly medical models of addiction. For Johnson, Savage's dissipation is in many ways ultimately a problem of his failure to properly define philosophical terms. Savage, in short, does not understand what liberty is. As such, he figures his dependencies in the tavern as expressions of liberty against his interpersonal dependencies on his patron, Lord Tyrconnel. While Johnson will later bristle against his own patron in the *Dictionary*, here he figures the patronage of Lord Tyrconnel as having produced "the golden part of Mr. Savage's life" (886). In addition to economic support, Tyrconnel offers Savage moral and intellectual instruction, offering Savage his library and "often exhort[ing] him to regulate his method of life, and not to spend all his nights in taverns" (897). Taken correctly, this influence might set Savage up to achieve grand literary ambitions and, with it, permanent hold on the cultural and economic capital Tyrconnel makes possible. However, the moral intentions of Tyrconnel's support made the relationship untenable. Savage "could never patiently

bear" "censure of his conduct," and "was [...] inclined to resent such expectations, as tending to infringe his liberty, of which he was very jealous, when it was necessary to the gratification of his passions" (898). For Johnson, Savage demonstrates here a misplaced understanding of liberty. He wants the freedom to choose in every capacity, but as Johnson suggests, all choices produce, down the line, habitual repetitions. Succumbing to Tyrconnel's advice might enable Savage as a writer and—thus—as an economic agent; instead, he rejects future aspirations for the seeming freedom to enjoy the present.

The dispute led, increasingly, to Savage's indulgences at once outstripping Tyrconnel's instruction and outspending his economic support: "it was the constant practice of Mr. Savage to enter a tavern with any company that proposed it, drink the most expensive wines with great profusion, and when the reckoning was demanded, to be without money" (896). That Savage would raid Tyrconnel's wine cellar to pay off his angry new friends added economic injury to insult, and when Savage begins to pawn Tyrconnel's books, the relationship breaks off altogether, seemingly leaving Savage to choose his own way through the free literary market. But while Savage's freedom from Tyrconnel enables the production of his most successful work, *The Bastard*, its success does nothing to boost his bottom line and much to ruin his ability to produce more saleable texts. Johnson acknowledges *The Bastard* as "the only production of which he could justly boast a general reception" (907), but he complains of Savage's disadvantageous handling of the copyright, which he sold

> for a very trivial sum to a bookseller, who, though the success was so uncommon that five impressions were sold, of which many were undoubtedly very numerous, had not generosity sufficient to admit the unhappy writer to any part of the profit. (907)

Savage's failure is ultimately not one of literary merit but of economic know-how: his inability to properly gauge—or exact—the true value of his text leaves him inadequately paid for his labor. This failure is at once of a kind with his tavern profligacy and exacerbates the problems that come with his taste for expensive wines. Savage is bad at both making and spending money.

But if the success of *The Bastard* did not change Savage's economic situation, it did change him as a writer. *The Bastard* becomes for Johnson's Savage evidence that the market, not his approach to it, is the problem. When future works failed to achieve the same success, he contented himself with "the applause of men of judgement" while being "somewhat disposed to exclude all those from the character of men of judgement who did not applaud him" (907). When he did fail, Johnson claims, "the blame was laid rather on any person than the author" (908). Thomas Reinert offers a slightly different account of Savage's failure to make a living from his scandalous claims of parentage that nonetheless resonates here: Savage simply repeated the tale ad nauseam until it no longer influenced its listeners or readers. Reinert connects this habit to Savage's inability to maintain friendships. In short, readers developed a tolerance for his tale; Savage, in turn, proved unwilling to adjust the dosage.

A similar refusal to submit his misguided sense of liberty to the demands of his market shapes Savage's time in Newgate prison, where he was held because of an £8 debt. The episode, like most of the accounts in the *Life*, is built around various conceptions of liberty. Writes Johnson, "By his removal to Newgate, he obtained at least a freedom from suspense, and rest from the disturbing vicissitudes of hope and disappointment" (955). In a letter, Savage himself figures himself in Newgate as something of a reversal of Milton's Satan, who felt his mental imprisonment most acutely when physically freed from Hell. While Savage's "person is in confinement," his "mind can expatiate […] with all the freedom imaginable" (qtd. in Johnson

956). That freedom produces an explicit reversal of the dissipation enacted by physical freedom ("I am now all collected in myself" [956].), a reconstitution enacted by his capacity for "pursuing the amusement of my poetical studies uninterrupted and agreeable to my mind" (qtd. in Johnson 956). Forcibly removed from one circuit of dissipating pleasures, Savage is seemingly able to redouble his efforts in an opposing habitual circuit of self-building. Unable to turn himself into a beast to stave off the pain of being a man, Savage is forced to write his humanity into being.

But that seemingly positive act of free agency proves too freeing. The output stemming from this new-found intellectual clarity was the verse satire, *London and Bristol Delineated*, which Johnson sees as an effort to bite any hand—private or public—that might possibly offer to feed him:

> Such was his imprudence, and such his obstinate adherence to his own resolutions, however absurd. A prisoner! Supported by charity! and, whatever insults he might have received during the latter part of his stay at Bristol, once caressed, esteemed, and presented with a liberal collection, he could forget on a sudden his danger and his obligations, to gratify the petulance of his wit, or the eagerness of his resentment, and publish a satire by which he might reasonably expect that he should alienate those who then supported him, and provoke those whom he could neither resist nor escape. (960)

As Clarence Tracy notes, Johnson's exclamatory tone here is unique. He is beside himself in response to Savage's refusal to quiet his petulant wit even in the face of destitution. Although Savage is rescued from his chemical dependencies, he remains guided by immediate pleasures in ways that once again preclude him from cultivating either interpersonal relationships or an authorial persona by which he might make a living. When physically barred from the taverns by

imprisonment, he is suddenly able to wake the intellectual faculties by which he might produce literature, but he can only devote it to the "petulance of his wit," which provokes his audience, when he might instead seek to please them.

In critiquing Savage for writing a self that does not sell, Johnson exposes a key contradiction at the heart of his own conception of free agency. That agency is never truly free from the cultural and economic structures in which it is situated. But Johnson nonetheless leans into this framing. He rejects outright Savage's own efforts to frame his fall from patronage as a potentially fortunate one. In a later letter from which Johnson quotes, Savage writes that he hopes to find a sum to live on "without any dependence on those little creatures which we are pleased to call the Great" (940). But when a later scheme by friends to raise money for Savage by subscription to support his moving from London to Wales comes with a similar set of moral restrictions,

> [Savage] now began very sensibly to feel the miseries of dependence: Those by whom he was to be supported, began to prescribe to him with an air of authority, which he knew not how decently to resent, nor patiently to bear; and he soon discovered, from the conduct of most of his subscribers, that he was yet in the hands of "little creatures." (942)

As Johnson notes (and Savage fails to realize), neither the open literary market nor the subscription scheme offer freedom: both merely multiply out the number of claimants binding Savage's behavior and writing.[14] Here, then, Johnson dramatizes through Savage the failed promise of the move to the free market, which exerts an authority all the more stringent because it is so diffuse (perhaps we should say, "dissipated").

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[14] Although Johnson never names him, John H. Middendorf in the Yale UP edition identifies Alexander Pope as the ringleader of this group.

In this way, Johnson anticipates Lennard Davis's understanding of obsession as pathologized based on cultural context. The *DSM IV* defines a pathological compulsion or obsession as one to which the patient responds with "marked distress" (18). Davis observes that this distinction makes the signs and symptoms of obsession "a socially defined reaction" (18). Davis's observation that modern culture accepts obsessive research into obsession as not pathological suggests that the socially situated distinction between "useful" and "odd" is in no small part market-driven (18). While an equivalence of twentieth century diagnostic categorization and Johnson's moral response to Savage is short-sighted, Johnson's easy leap from Savage's spending in the tavern to his diminished earning potential in the literary market demonstrates in him an awareness similar to Davis's of the wide network of factors that produce pathologies. As Porter notes, the masculine power associated with heavy drinking assures us that there is nothing odd about Savage's behavior in and of itself. Johnson's problem is instead that Savage "appeared to think himself born to be supported by others, and dispensed from all necessity of providing for himself" (965). Short of proof of his claim to the Macclesfield title, Savage must habituate himself to the needs of a patron, his charitable friends, or the literary marketplace if he is to achieve the economic freedom to indulge his present desires. Conversely, if he wants the creative freedom to reject the instructions of those audiences that might support him, he needs to limit his indulgences. In refusing either constraint, Savage produces an untenable trade deficit between Grubb Street and the tavern.

This long parade of Savage's failures perhaps leads us to question Johnson's supposed rationale for producing this text. If the "truth" is this negative, how much worse could the fictionalized version of Savage's life be? Johnson's *Life* answers this question by imposing a moral value on Savage's life. In telling it, Johnson claims, he hopes to dissuade his readers from

making Savage's mistakes. And those mistakes, Johnson suggests, are ultimately rooted in Savage's penchant for self-delusion. Savage, through "arts" of denial, "was always able to live at peace with himself" (908). That peace, in always functioning, ultimately leads to stagnation:

> He proceeded throughout his life to tread the same steps on the same circle; always applauding his past conduct, or at least forgetting it, to amuse himself with phantoms of happiness, which were dancing before him; and willingly turned his eyes from the light of reason, when it would have discovered the illusion, and shown him, what he never wished to see, his real state. (909)

Savage, in obscuring the "light of reason" with a series of self-supporting "illusion[s]," then, is very much the figure of "disturbed imagination" that Locke and Johnson hold up as the source of mental illness.[15] This occurs, it would seem, because rather than respond to failure with heroic self-examination—like Gross's Johnson—Johnson's Savage retreats into masking illusions.

Connecting this discourse of diseased imagination directly to drugs, Johnson explicitly figures these interior mental functions as "pleasing intoxicants" and "ideal opiates" (908, 909). Here, again, Johnson perhaps starts to sound a bit like the postmodern addict of Gilmore or Crouch. Crouch makes a distinction between "self-esteem," which Johnson suggests is artificially inflated by both drugs and self-denial, and "self-respect," which is required by AA discourse and impossible in the face of problem drinking:

> self-respect is a matter of not committing indignities against oneself. If a man has self-respect, he will not allow himself to become dependent on alcohol. It is a sign

[15] Elizabeth Gross connects Johnson's conception of mental illness to that of Locke, who figures mental illness as a problem of habitual indulgence in false beliefs. Argues Gross, "Pre-eminently on Locke's authority, Johnson blazes trails of the mental landscape to seek the underlying internal mechanism and the chains of causality running by irresistible association" (23).

> of a lack of self-respect—I.e., respect for one's own person—to become drunk. (23)

However, Johnson figures Savage's condition as not an individual pathology but a universal state. Those "ideal opiates" may be dangerous, but they are also of great use. They are "arts which every man practises [*sic*] in some degree, and to which too much of the little tranquillity [*sic*] of life is to be ascribed" (908). In acknowledging a generalized ability to self-delude productively, Johnson marks a tenuous division between Savage's permanently failed imagination and the productive failure of an otherwise operative imagination. Savage's mental circuit is distinct because it is entirely self-contained and closed. He ends, necessarily, where he began: self-denial ensures that dissipation begets still further dissipation.

Johnson notes in the conclusion of the *Life* that even this closed circuit is not a unique condition of Savage's. Those who escape Savage's fate benefit from circumstances as much as from personal abilities:

> Those are no proper judges of his conduct, who have slumbered away their time on the down of plenty; nor will a wise man presume to say, "Had I been in Savage's condition, I should have lived, or written better than Savage." [...] This relation will not be wholly without its use, if those, […] who in confidence of superior capacities or attainments disregard the common maxims of life, shall be reminded that nothing will supply the want of prudence. (968)

The moralizing asks readers to consider themselves in Savage's position and Savage's in their own. The comparison reveals that Savage's condition trumps Savage's constitution in explaining his mistakes; another body and mind in the same space would do no better. The turn puts Johnson's sense of the universal out of the particular up against notions of free agency: if

universal rules of human nature are ultimately derivable from one model, how can anyone actively work to escape Savage's circuit of self-delusion?

Drawing on a history of close critical attention to this passage, Reinert suggests that this moral turn undoes Johnson's purported moral purpose for the text by juxtaposing Savage's conflicting generic roles as representative of a general human condition—no one in his condition could have done differently—and as an exemplary cautionary tale about the value of prudence. Just as Savage can value goodness without being good, the reader of the *Life* can "grasp the rule and accept its authority" but "cannot be sure to apply it" (Reinert 94). And, indeed, while Savage's *Life* seems to serve as a useful negative example, it also, from another perspective, demonstrates the futility of teaching just such lessons. A reader inclined to take interest in Savage's exploits might also be, like Savage, "inclined to resent" Johnson's own Tyrconnel-like efforts to "censure." This capacity for reader revolt leaves Johnson, the author, with a difficult contradiction: if the *Life of Savage* produces a negative example by which its readers might improve themselves, Savage's life—and death—demonstrates the futility of such efforts in the face of a man's immediate passions.

Despite this clear contradiction within Johnson's moral justification for the text, his hope for the application of his rule remains the goal of and justification for the *Life* throughout the text. In that consistency, Johnson seems to suggest that his text may not permanently solve the problems it raises but instead temporarily assuage the pain of recognizing that contradiction. In discussing Savage's failure to make a living from *The Bastard*, Johnson moves into a bit of theorizing on his form:

> It were doubtless to be wished, that truth and reason were universally prevalent; that every thing were esteemed according to its real value; and that men would

> secure themselves from being disappointed in their endeavors after happiness, by placing it only in virtue, which is always to be obtained; but if adventitious and foreign pleasures must be pursued, it would be perhaps of some benefit, since that pursuit must frequently be fruitless, if the practice of Savage could be taught, that folly might be an antidote to folly, and one fallacy be obviated by another. (908)

Here Johnson positions Savage's life as a metaphorical intoxicant: an "antidote" to the "folly" of denial. And, indeed, at least apocryphally, the text itself proved to have a corporeal effect on those who ingested it. Picking up *Savage* years after its publication upon his return to England, Joshua Reynolds, Boswell claims, "began to read it while he was standing with his arm leaning against a chimney piece. It seized his attention so strongly, that, not being able to lay down the book till he had finished it, when he attempted to move, he found his arm totally benumbed" (121). The text of the *Life*, then, seeks to overpower the reader's will and leave his mind transformed for the better by way of Savage's seemingly enticing but ultimately negative example. Thereby, Johnson claims to treat in his readers Savage's "afflictions which might be easily removed" by way of externally imposed modes of self-improvement. But the qualifiers that make such an "antidote" necessary are curious in that they intermingle the moral, the mental, and the economic: the difficulty in asserting "real value" is a monetary problem as much as it is one of truth and reason. This is particularly true of a digression that comes so soon after Johnson's discussion of Savage's shortsighted failure to ensure that he received the "real value" when selling the manuscript of *The Bastard*. Savage, then, in wasting his talent both by selling it too cheaply and failing to engage it in ways that the market will reward, becomes for Johnson the opposite of Levet, whose talent is "simple" but "well-employed." Johnson's moral application of Savage's life seeks to position himself as another good servant, employing his talent at once to

the good of society and to his own economic ends, but the complexities of Savage and Johnson's own moral condition complicate that effort.

But then, perhaps Savage makes too good a case for his self-destructive way of life. Even Boswell, hoping to save Johnson's reputation from his early-life friendship with Savage, admits that Savage, "habituated" as he was "to the dissipation and licentiousness of the town" (119), could not help but rub off on Johnson in turn. While Johnson's "good principles remained steady," he "did not entirely preserve [his] conduct" (119). Led "imperceptibly" "into some indulgences which occasioned much distress to his virtuous mind" (119), Boswell's Johnson found himself temporarily under Savage's influence. Perhaps in the *Life*, he protests a bit too much.

Therapeutic Correspondences: Johnson's Palliative Philosophy

Despite Johnson's warning against Savage's over-application of the "ideal opiate" of self-denial, he consistently maintained the value of forgetting reality through chemical or other means. One anecdote has him rebuking a woman for wondering of heavy drinkers, "what pleasure men can take in making beasts of themselves?" Responds Johnson, "*I* wonder, Madam […] that you have not penetration to see the strong inducement to this excess; for he who makes a *beast* of himself gets rid of the pain of being a man" (Birkbeck Hill 2:333). Crouch attributes this anecdote to Johnson's general sense of the pain of self-consciousness. But at the same time, one need not read too far into Johnson's work or his life to be confronted with the various, particular forms of mental and physical pains with which Johnson was intimately familiar. In addition to bouts of melancholia and madness, Johnson had facial scarring because of scrofula and exhibited a series of seemingly compulsive tics, vocalizations, and repeated actions

consistent with symptoms of conditions we now call Tourette's Syndrome and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder.

Helen Deutsch rightly notes the ways in which the perceived uniqueness of these behaviors enables Johnson—like other writers in the period—to figure himself as an individual author. At the same time, the potential for slippage from the "pain of being a man," in the general sense of humanity, to the "pain of being a man," in the sense of Johnson's individual mental and physical pains, points to Lennard Davis's observation that Johnson contributes to a democratization of mental illness that occurs across the eighteenth century. In this way, Johnson's—like Savage's—experiences of mental illness become models for Johnson's readers; the rhetorical closure of his texts attempt, in turn, to assuage that pain. We might say, then, that as Johnson's work participates in what Deutsch calls "symptomatic correspondences," it also advances a series of *therapeutic* correspondences aimed, like hard drinking, at "getting rid of the pain of being a man." In *Rasselas*, Johnson figures these universal pains as "a new species of affliction" for which the text offers palliative relief, but no permanent solutions. In failing to cure the pain the text addresses, however, Johnson perhaps inadvertently produces dependencies that ensure both Johnson's market success and his place in the canon.

Deutsch notes that the parallels and contradictions between Johnson's disabilities and his literary output call into question traditional Enlightenment conceptions of free agency and identity.[16] In so doing, Deutsch claims Johnson as part of her larger project of describing the extent to which the eighteenth-century canon is made up exclusively of figures with disabilities.

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[16] Deutsch suggests that Johnson actively participates in the construction of his disabled body as a form of producing his authority as an author. Johnson's positioning of his body makes him at once subject and object in ways that contest not only that binary distinction but also related oppositions of agency and compulsion. Johnson's "distinctive style of writing and speaking," marked by nothing so much as its "certainty," and his body's "apparently compulsive movements, mutterings, and rituals that in different ways to different viewers compromised agency itself" (178). Ultimately, suggests Deutsch, "Johnson's physical particularity turned authorship into a performance, an enactment of agency by a body in motion that made monstrosity exemplary" (178).

In her long essay, "Symptomatic Correspondences: the Author's Case in Eighteenth Century England," Deutsch argues that "the unique body of the eighteenth-century author figures the ineffable and embattled substance of individuality and intention" (178). Writing elsewhere, Deutsch notes that this positioning brought with it both benefits and dangers. While "the disabled body thus comes to serve as both proof of singular authenticity and vehicle of exemplary subjectivity" (2), it became at the same time "the limit case of individuality itself" (4), where

> identification and difference intersect marked the limits of eighteenth-century 'sympathy,' a paradoxical discourse of sociability and potentially pathological individual sensibility that haunts Western society to this day. (4)

This sense of Johnson haunting society—which Deutsch elsewhere takes up as a sort of repeated, mutually constitutive communion—will be taken up in the conclusion of this chapter. For now, suffice it to say that Johnson's disability marks him as a sympathetic individual even as it threatens to undermine his claim to rational personhood. The inversion of this relationship is operative as well: Johnson's sympathetic self-positioning encourages imitations of his seemingly exemplary mental state.

The sympathetic correspondences produced by Johnson's seemingly individualizing disability in Deutsch runs alongside the way Davis positions Johnson as a useful case study in understanding how obsession comes in the twentieth century to serve as "a taxonomy of modern consciousness" (59). Tracing the etymology of "obsession" to pre-modern notions of demonic control over humans, Davis suggests that Johnson is a figure through which "demonic" madness, characterized by its particularity, becomes visible as "a demotic form of madness that anyone can acquire" (59).[17] Importantly, he does so in particular in *Rasselas*, which Davis likens to

[17] As Room notes, a similar shift from models of demonic intervention to one of a general condition marks the rise of addiction as a medical paradigm, a transition seen, most explicitly, in temperance discussions of demon drink. Of

medical texts of the day in considering singular focus as the cause of nervous disorders. For Davis, when Imlac famously asserts that "Perhaps, if we speak with rigorous exactness, no human mind is in its right state" (qtd. in Davis 63), he produces a space for all of Johnson's readership to claim a disease that was once limited to those touched by Satan but will, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, affect perhaps two thirds of the population.

And yet, if Johnson expands the concept of mental illness, he also seeks to produce a treatment paradigm for it. Likewise, while Deutsch's work provides a necessary correction to eighteenth century studies, which typically under- or over-determines the relationships between a writer's work and his or her bodily ability, it also threatens to subsume the physical experience of impairment to its social situation as disability. That is to say, while it is important to note the rhetorical value of Johnson's physical body and unstable mind in producing his place in the canon and the challenges those impairments pose for Enlightenment conceptions of rational agency, it is also worth noting his extended periods of enforced sobriety and the padlock he entrusted to Hester Thrale in the event that he become a danger to himself or others. In short, in embodying the limit case for individuality marked by disability, Johnson considered not only the opportunities provided by that position but also the dangers, pains, and discomforts that attend to being positioned at that limit.

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course, the flip side of demonic possession is divine transcendence, which as Marty Roth suggests, perhaps has its origins in experiences of chemical intoxication. Despite these significant linguistic and historical overlaps, Davis mostly stays away from chemical addiction in *Obsession*, bringing it up only to discuss Alcoholics Anonymous's role in the construction of Sexaholics Anonymous. Following a general pattern with Disability Studies, more broadly, however, addiction is useful when Davis attempts to build a coalition of people with disabilities. To that end, an easy linguistic overlap between obsession and addiction informs his account of the dominance of obsession in our current moment. In cataloging the extent to which "To be obsessive is to be American, to be modern," Davis uses the terms interchangeably:

> [his readers] are [...] addictively thinking about sex, food, alcohol, drugs as well as acting on those addictions. People are also working at their jobs addictively and obsessively and then playing hard in an extension of their workday. Many folks are addicted to their nightly television shows, to collecting things, or to obsessing about that someone who is unattainable or lost forever. (3)

The threat of both inflicting and sustaining pain appears throughout Johnson's writing, but is addressed perhaps most explicitly in *The Rambler* No. 32. The essay seems to be a consideration of the limitations of stoicism, but it becomes instead an extended consideration of pain as a necessary component of human existence. Stoicism fails as a philosophy for Johnson because it does not consider the realities of the body. Stoics become in Johnson's reading zealots to disembodied reason: Zeno's "wild enthusiastic virtue pretended to an exemption from the sensibilities of unenlightened mortals" (186). The fever of enthusiastic intoxication is broken, Johnson notes, by "a weaker pupil of Zeno" who "is recorded to have confessed in the anguish of the gout that 'he now found pain to be an evil'" (186). Johnson here may be invoking the tale of Dionysius the Renegade, who, following a bout of intense eye pain rejected stoicism and embraced Hedonism. This extreme philosophical about-face denies the possibility of a middle ground with respect to the body: one either denies its existence altogether or succumbs wholly to it. In this sense, we might consider Dionysius as the first recorded prescription drug addict. In any case, Dionysius's fall exposes stoicism's inability to account for embodied experience.

Johnson's turn to the body here bears some valuable similarities to Tobin Siebers' critique of contemporary theory in *Disability Theory*. Citing Foucault and Butler in particular, Tobin Siebers notes that theory tends to imagine a body as a purely textual (and able-bodied) object. In so doing, theory proves unable to account for the lived experience of pain:

> Pain is not a friend to humanity. It is not a secret resource for political change. It is not a well of delight for the individual. Theories that encourage these interpretations are not only unrealistic about pain; they contribute to the ideology of ability, marginalizing people with disabilities and making their stories of suffering and victimization both politically impotent and difficult to believe. (64)

Though aimed specifically at other schools, this critique also implicitly pushes back against versions of disability studies that critique medical models in ways that primarily benefit those with so-called healthy disabilities, that is, mostly physical impairments that come with no immediate medical needs or extensive physical or mental pain. Johnson—whose Imlac perhaps never sounds more like his author than when he famously concludes, "Human life is everywhere a state in which much is to be endured, and little to be enjoyed" (355)—ostensibly opposes those models by acknowledging and treating that pain in his writing. In so doing, he demands a reconsideration of philosophical precepts that cannot or do not account for it.

Given the insistent warnings against dissipation in the *Life*, it should come as no surprise to learn that the flight to hedonism in response to failed stoicism offers no true solution for Johnson. Seemingly flummoxed, Johnson admits, "if pain be not an evil, there seems no instruction requisite how it may be borne" (187). The best Johnson can offer, then, is not a "radical" "cure" but a "Palliative" one (187):

> Infelicity is involved in corporeal nature, and interwoven with our being; [...]: the armies of pain send their arrows against us on every side, the choice is only between those which are more or less sharp, or tinged with poison of greater or less malignity, and the strongest armour which reason can supply will only blunt their points, but cannot repel them. (187)

Johnson here acknowledges pain and variability as a necessarily common trait of humanity. But though these problems be universal, they remain problems. Reason, in this metaphor, becomes then at once an armour and, implicitly, something like a painkiller. But like all painkillers, it by definition will eventually wear off. As the essay continues, it enacts the promise of this palliative care, offering prescriptive advice that asserts itself as a merely temporary "blunting armour" for

the various pains its reader might face. His general course of treatment is at once moral and aimed at improving personal productivity: pain should be met not with "indolence" but instead with "labour, and exercises of diligence" (188). Johnson wrote *The Rambler* essays in the midst of what W. J. Bate considers his most productive period as an author. Given Bate's suggestion that he was spurred forward in this period by the deaths of his wife and mother, we might suggest that Johnson learns this rule by experience and that *Rasselas*, famously written in haste to cover the debts related to Johnson's mother's funeral, is the greatest expression of that lesson.

If Johnson seems to fall into an overcoming narrative, he goes on to acknowledge and address pain that supersedes the therapeutic power of labor. At times, pain "requires some indulgence, and every extravagance but impiety may be easily forgiven" (189). To that end, Johnson figures a system wherein divine intervention saves us from unmanageable pain. In the face of great pain,

> the vital frame is quickly broken, or the union between soul and body is for a time suspended by insensibility, and we soon cease to feel our maladies when they once become too violent to be borne. (189)

The theory provides comfort in the face of fear of future pain: we are designed ("the body and mind are so proportioned") to ensure that we are insensible of pain we cannot bear. Pain here is clearly not an actionable or potentially valuable experience, and, therefore, the divine has ensured we will avoid it. The turn to design points Johnson towards his conclusion, which asks his readers to consider the state of their Christian souls, through which they might best produce the moral and physical power to bear their pain or ensure an eternal reward at pain's end.

The rhetorical power of this turn, however, is limited by Johnson's grammatical framing. His concepts are tucked behind constructions like "I believe" and "I think." (189), which build

doubt and uncertainty into Johnson's own treatment paradigm. In addition to echoing the contradictions in the moral conclusion of the *Life*, this rhetorical hedging extends into Johnson's concluding turn to piety in this essay:

> The chief security against the fruitless anguish of impatience must arise from frequent reflection on the wisdom and goodness of the God of nature [...]. A settled conviction of the tendency of every thing to our good, and of the possibility of turning miseries into happiness, by receiving them rightly, will incline us to *bless the name of the Lord, whether he gives or takes away*. (189, Johnson's emphasis)

The auxiliary verb "must" couches the claim in a lack of other available options as to the source of our "chief security." Johnson is not certain that divine providence will help us bear pain. There is simply no other possible solution for a problem that, he admits, offers "no instruction requisite how it may be borne" (187). Similarly, he notes that even a mind most capable of receiving a holy anodyne might not actually be able to do so: "a settled conviction" does not enable one to "bless the name of the Lord." It merely "will incline us to" do so. In "incline," there is the echo of a hinging doubt. The believer may be more likely to keep the thought of eternity in the foreground, but that is hardly a guarantee. The pain that turned Dionysius from Zeno to wine might do the same for even the most pious of sufferers.

This doubt may be a failure of philosophy or faith, but that failure contains a portion of Johnson's solution to the problem of the literary market. These contingent, speculative, hedged ideas remain in print, and thereby offer themselves up as anodynes for their reader even as they admit to their inadequacies as treatment. Johnson's incomplete exploration of the interrelated workings of the mind, the body, and God to relieve suffering offers relief for both healthy

readers, who find a theory with which to fortify their mind against the fear of future pain, and to the reader who has succumbed to pain, who finds a justification for any indulgence—save "impiety"—taken to assuage that pain. But Johnson's hedging nonetheless suggests that these arguments are insufficient in convincing even himself. Much of the writing from Johnson's moral decade returns to the Christian faith central to the conclusion of *The Rambler* No. 32. The conclusion to "The Vanity of Human Wishes" famously asks its reader to seek comfort in the promise of a Christian afterlife in the face of human failure. In a sense, even the preface to Johnson's *Dictionary*, in rejecting the likely complaints of the work's immediate critics in favor of thinking of both legacy and the loved ones who died while he produced it, hinges on this sort of logic. Perhaps most explicitly, *Rasselas* will figure this turn as a shift in thinking from the "choice of life" to the "choice of eternity." But the way that turn functions in *Rasselas*, where it sits in a concluding chapter titled "The Conclusion, in which Nothing is Concluded," demonstrates that the repetition of the turn is a function of its failure to provide permanent comfort. When the effects of these texts wear off—and they will wear off—they leave readers in need of another dose.

Perhaps the most explicit and conclusive criticism of the stated moral purpose of the *Life* comes from *Rasselas*. As the heir to Abyssinia, Rasselas lives in the Happy Valley, an Edenic space located at the legendary source of the Nile, where all his wants are attended by plentiful flora, fauna, and servants. But Rasselas falls into the realization that this existence is incomplete. He, famously, struggles with a "desire for something to desire," a problem that the Moral Tale positions as, at once, a philosophical, a medical, and a moral problem. His solution—suggested by his philosopher/teacher Imlac—is to explore the world in search of the "*choice of life*" (364). Upon escaping the valley and learning the language of the realm, Rasselas explicitly invokes

Milton as he steps out into the world, vowing, "I have the world before me; I will review it at leisure: surely happiness is somewhere to be found" (364). The end of their quest, however, is famously unsatisfactory. In that final chapter, the party resolves to return to Abyssinia once the waters of the Nile recede enough to allow them safe passage home.

The Nile as an organizational motif has received a good deal of attention from critics. Phyllis Gaba figures the journey up the Nile as a movement by Rasselas out of a conception of time rooted in succession to one rooted in duration. The turn is, at once, a fall into self-consciousness and into modernity. The cyclical flooding of the Nile, in turn, serves as a reminder of the ultimate persistence of succession despite the artificial imposition of linearity enabled by the perspective produced by the human life span. Similarly, Earl Wasserman figures the ultimate circularity of the text as Johnson's effort to subvert narrative expectations of self-fashioning inaugurated by Milton in *Paradise Lost* and cemented by the rise of the novel. For Wasserman, the insistent failure of the choice of life forces Johnson's reader to take seriously the choice of eternity: coherency comes out of a shifting of aim, of desire, and of timelines. But the flooding of the Nile as a figure spills out beyond critical bounds imposed upon it. *Rasselas*'s circular structure—made up, in turn, of equally circular episodes—not only challenges conventional understandings of time and progression, but also contests conventional definitions of the self. *Rasselas* takes up and extends Johnson's conception of palliative philosophy and thereby completes a larger circuit of desire by positioning dissipation—the source of Savage's failures—as the cure to the existential problems posed by the moral tale's various characters.

This is not to say that *Rasselas* validates Savage's way of living. In fact, the first choice of life Rasselas considers and rejects upon escaping the Happy Valley may well be a representation of Savage's choice. Rasselas falls in with "young men whose only business is to

gratify their desires, and whose time is all spent in a succession of enjoyments" (364). The experience quickly teaches Rasselas the error of pursuing purely present enjoyments, but not before he gains enough affection for these men to desire to impart upon them his own Lockean lesson. Johnson's narrator ironically paraphrases Rasselas's speech in the third person. It is at once extensive and focused, suggesting that "Perpetual levity must end in ignorance; and intemperance, though it may fire the spirits for an hour, will make life short or miserable" (365). The pursuit of "the enchantments of fancy" and "phantoms of delight" in youth will be of no use to them "in maturer age," when there will be "no comforts but the esteem of wise men, and the means of doing good" (365). Edging towards something that sounds like a medical concept of addiction, Rasselas implores his new friends to "stop, while to stop is in our power," and thereby survive to old age with something more to show for it than "the maladies which riot has produced" (365). Here, Rasselas figures the problems of dissipation as at once medical and moral: sober living produces wisdom; dissipated living, "maladies." Thus, Johnson positions Rasselas in the same role as the narrator of the *Life*, expending effort to persuade people of the errors of their dissipation.

But more than anything, Rasselas's speech demonstrates the futility of such a lesson. It ends in a colossal failure. When Rasselas finishes his impassioned speech, the rioters "stared a while in silence one upon another, and, at last, drove him away by a general chorus of continued laughter" (365). While the narrator justifies Rasselas's perspective, he also acknowledges that "The consciousness that his sentiments were just, and his intentions kind, was scarcely sufficient to support him against the horror of derision" (365). Rasselas may have been correct, but what use is the truth with no way to make it attractive? What good is the medicine without the spoonful of sugar to make it go down? It is a question perhaps as fit for Johnson as for his

character. Rasselas's failure here echoes Johnson's own in the contemporary critical assessment of *Rasselas*, which, as James L. Clifford records, met with mixed reviews from those who complained that its tone was too philosophical for its novelistic framing and that it was simply too long and monotonous.[18]

In expanding out from one of Rasselas's many episodic narrative circuits to its larger, overriding one, we can make visible the ways in which the medical and moral intersect in considering habitual behaviors beyond alcohol consumption. Rasselas finds himself in the tavern in search of a way to appease his "desire for something to desire." Johnson's careful framing of Rasselas's narrative-inducing dissatisfaction in the Happy Valley offers support to a wide range of diagnostic/interpretive categories, but he most tellingly calls it "a new species of affliction" (340). "Affliction," as defined by Johnson's dictionary, carries with it both specific shades of religious anguish or of a religious curse and a more modern sense of mental pain. But the narrator also explicitly medicalizes the state in describing Imlac's own course of action in response to it. Imlac, "imagining that he had now made himself acquainted with his disease of mind, was in hope of curing it by counsel" (339). Imlac's position here, then, parallels Johnson's in the *Life* and *The Rambler* in ways that position Rasselas as the everyman and the cure to his condition as a submission to an external influence that threatens the boundaries of the self.

While the narrator considers it a "new" affliction, then, Rasselas's driftless condition in the Happy Valley bears striking similarities to the "dissipation of thought" that Johnson describes to Boswell as "nothing more than the vacillation of a mind suspended between

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[18] Writing for the *Monthly Review*, Owen Ruffhead complains that Johnson's "style is so tumid and pompous that he sometimes deals in *sesquipedalian*, such as *excogitation, exaggeratory,* &c. with other hard compounds, which it is difficult to pronounce" (qtd. in Clifford 215). The *Critical Review* praises the moral purpose of the work but notes that "No plot, incident, character, or contrivance, is here used to beguile the imagination. The narrative might have been comprised in ten lines" (qtd. in Clifford 214). For more, see Clifford, 1979 (p. 212-217).

different motives, and changing its direction as any motive gains or loses strength." Rasselas, like Savage and Boswell, flits from pleasure to pleasure with little thought of futurity. In short, Rasselas in determining that he desires something to desire, plays the Johnson to his own Boswell, diagnosing his potentially obliviating dissipation even without employing that term. Notably, though, Rasselas's condition differs from Savage and Boswell's in that Rasselas, as the Prince of Abyssinia, has no economic limits to his ability to fulfill his pleasures. In this sense, then, Rasselas's displeasure with the fulfillment of only present passions at once distinguishes him from Savage (in that Savage never recognized the problem of his state) and expands the scope of the problems of dissipation: no longer purely an economic failing, dissipation becomes at once an individual pathology—a "disease of mind"—and a larger, existential problem.

Fittingly, then, in describing his condition, Rasselas considers the potential relationships between his specific condition and the general condition of man to posit both as symptoms of Enlightenment thinking. While he feels his dissatisfaction individually, he argues by inference that his experience is exemplary of the human condition. His pathology becomes a new just-so explanation for man's distinction from beast. In an apostrophe to the animals of Happy Valley, he directly moves from the personal to the universal:

> Ye [...] are happy, and need not envy me that walk thus among you, burdened with myself; nor do I, ye gentle beings, envy your felicity; for it is not the felicity of man. I have many distresses from which ye are free; I fear pain when I do not feel it; I sometimes shrink at evils recollected, and sometimes start at evils anticipated: surely the equity of providence has balanced peculiar sufferings with peculiar enjoyments. (338)

Rasselas's theorizing recalls Johnson's defense of the therapeutic value of drinking to beastliness and unites several interconnected Enlightenment debates of interest to our discussion here. First, in establishing memory and a sense of futurity as the distinguishing characteristics of humanity, he affirms a new conception of linear time described by Gaba as central to the structure of the text. At the same time, positioning those capacities for self-awareness as the origin point of his mental pain—that "new species of affliction"—Rasselas also dramatizes this newly democratized mental illness as a *felix culpa*.[19] If the desire to escape the Happy Valley is best understood as a fall in the sense of Genesis or Milton, *Rasselas* figures mental dis-ease as central to the state of self-consciousness. Fittingly, then, the problems of this affliction prove multivalent and fluid enough to afflict everyone, no matter where they choose to fix their habitation. Imlac tells Rasselas, "if you had seen the miseries of the world, you would know how to value your present state" (340). Rasselas's quest to see those miseries confirms their existence.

Just as Johnson in the *Life* could not be sure his readers would comply with his moral prescriptions, Imlac finds that description of the miseries of the world serves only to encourage Rasselas to go out to witness them. This response suggests that the repeated narration of Rasselas's circular episodes of disappointed hope prove insufficient to curing the desire to experience them. Moreover, as Imlac's narration of his own history demonstrates, even first-hand experience of these miseries is no guarantee of one's ability to accurately assess or

[19] Rasselas's apostrophe to the beasts of the Happy Valley also frames that eventual realization as rooted, like Johnson's assessment of Savage's behavior, in Lockean conceptions of liberty and mental illness. Here, Lockean liberty proves as debilitating as it might in other situations be enabling. Indeed, the double-bind of the problems of imagination even threatens to stifle the narrative, which needs Rasselas and his party to escape the Happy Valley but cannot offer his imagination such an unqualified success. The failure of the flying machine serves in part to limit or qualify his eventual, more pedestrian success in escaping. Watching the machine, along with its inventor, tumble immediately into the lake leaves Rasselas's "imagination" [...] at a stand" and himself with "no prospect of entering the world" (346). The depiction of this failure—and its result—puts Rasselas in a bind: imagination is necessary to both Rasselas's medical treatment and the progression of the narrative. At the same time, it threatens to replace this affliction with an even greater madness.

understand them. When Rasselas asks Imlac to reveal his history, he gives Imlac an opportunity to produce a persuasive cautionary tale about the dangers of habitual behavior. But Imlac, it seems, is unaware of precisely what sort of story his history tells. It is a tale of addiction about which Imlac seems variously quite self-conscious and deeply in denial. At school, Imlac rejects his father's dictate that he "should have no other education than such as might qualify [him] for commerce" (348). Instead, he "found the delight of knowledge, and felt the pleasure of intelligence and the pride of invention" (348). Initially, the turn seems progressive: at school, Imlac both shirks the influence of his father and, like Robinson Crusoe, seeks to make his own way as a rational subject. At the same time, he makes a choice to dedicate his faculties to a particular field and, thereby, saves himself from aimless dissipation and oblivion that at times threaten Johnson and Boswell and that undermined Savage's many talents.

However, Imlac's story goes on to trouble this narrative by suggesting that the choice of life is potentially as obliviating as refusing that choice. Imlac's choice of life—which should help him escape the dissipation that threatened Johnson and Boswell—proves equally dangerous to Imlac's rational agency as the tavern did for Savage. Choice quickly becomes compulsion: "every hour taught [him] something new" and he therefore "lived in a continual course of gratifications" (348). The language of consumption here at once extends and problematizes the Miltonic undertones of Rasselas's coming escape while also uniting Imlac's thirst for knowledge with the less noble thirsts of the rakes Rasselas will later encounter. Imlac eats from the fruit of knowledge, but in doing so he cuts off his freedom to choose where to lay his habitation.

What follows is a further fall into the habitual need to gratify Imlac's appetites that is, in turn, mapped onto geographical movement. Just as Imlac begins to develop a tolerance for the offerings of the university—"as I advanced towards manhood, I lost much of the reverence with

which I had been used to look on my instructors; because, when the lesson ended, I did not find them wiser or better than common men" (348)—he is called home to participate in a sort of dramatization of the parable of the talents. Imlac's father gives him "ten thousand pieces of gold" "to waste or improve" as a trader (348). Given the diminishing returns offered by the university, it might seem logical for Imlac to consider a career change. Instead, he doubles down on his thirst for knowledge. Feeling "an unextinguishable curiosity kindle in [his] mind" (349), Imlac returns his father's small business loan and books a boat out of Abyssinia to points unknown. Emphasizing the Miltonic implications of the move, Imlac frames the decision as an effort to "gratify my prominent desire, and by drinking at the fountain of knowledge, to quench the thirst of curiosity" (349). Here, the echoes of the Garden of Eden ensure that Imlac's tale foreshadows Rasselas's efforts to find himself by escaping the Edenic space of the Happy Valley. The figure of the over-bearing father connects that Creation myth to the generic arc of the early English novel. These intertexts trouble the distinction between liberty and compulsion, but however obvious this discrepancy might be to Johnson's readers, it is unclear to Imac. He summarizes his movements through the world in quest of knowledge without passing judgement on them. He leaves Agra "when there was no more to be learned" and leaves the particularly sociable Persians after taking from them knowledge of "human nature" (351). Knowledge becomes a non-renewable resource that Imlac greedily consumes, but Imlac seems unconcerned with his inability to be satiated.

When Imlac does become dissatisfied with this way of moving, he is concerned less with supply scarcity and more with his own ability to self-actualize. Turning his talents to poetry, he consumes "all the poets of Persia and Arabia" before realizing that "no man was ever great by imitation" (351). Imlac rationalizes his anxiety of influence by reconfiguring it as a problem of

successive time: ancient poets define the ideal form and thereby ensure that their followers can at best imitate them. In seeking to deviate from imitation, Imlac finds new sustenance in marking "nature" and "life" (351). He "saw everything with a new purpose"; his "sphere of attention was suddenly magnified" (352). Influence is an inescapable problem, but Imlac in turning to new subjects at once side steps that problem and finds a new fix to support his habit. Given the precedents offered in Imlac's history, however, we must assume that this fountain will also eventually run dry.

Imlac demonstrates no such self-awareness. Famously, he carves out the poet's duty in an extended bit of literary theorizing. It is not the poet's duty to "number the streaks of the tulips" (353). Instead, he should represent timeless generalities and universals, divorced from not only individual examples but also "present laws and opinions" (353). Imlac seemingly echoes Johnson's larger project of moral biography in the *Life*, but as he goes on he transforms the poet into a naturalist, a proto-psychologist, a philosopher, a polyglot, and a scientist. Anticipating, in a sense, Percy Shelley, Imlac demands,

> [The poet] must write as the interpreter of nature, and the legislator of mankind, and consider himself as presiding over the thoughts and manners of future generations; as a being superior to time and place. (353)

Imlac here implicitly figures himself as the sort of self-actualized figure that Milton ostensibly presents and Johnson seemingly rejects. He steps out of the confines of space and time—both successional and temporal—to pass judgement and assert laws.

Of course, this reading is undermined by the text's wholesale rejection of Imlac's ideas. The narrator dismisses them, tellingly, as an "enthusiastic fit" while Rasselas merely cries, "Enough!" (353). While Rasselas's cry carries the comic weight of the scene, the narrator's

accusation of enthusiasm is perhaps more telling. It reformulates Imlac's narrative progression: no longer a linear movement towards achievement, it is a series of circular self-delusions akin to demonic possession or divine insight. It is, in short, an intoxication. But as the rest of *Rasselas* will demonstrate, Rasselas's comic interruption of Imlac's enthusiastic fit proves, perhaps, just as important. In moving Imlac on from his valorization of his profession, Rasselas ensures that the narrative moves forward.

As such, Rasselas enacts by instinct the cure Imlac will offer the mad astronomer, whose story takes up much of the text's final third. Introduced in chapter 40 as "a Man of Learning," the Astronomer is the seeming opposite of the young rioters in that he chooses and pursues a profession to its necessary end at the expense of interpersonal relationships. Through his dedication, he becomes, Imlac claims, a man of exemplary achievement: "few can attain this man's knowledge, and few practise [*sic*] his virtues" (405). His seeming happiness, however, is revealed to be not the result of his skills and abilities but of a deep, powerful delusion produced by his work. Caught in the singular, solitary study of the stars, the astronomer thinks he has ability to move heavenly bodies and to affect the weather. The Astronomer's fate suggests that the cure to dissipation is as dangerous as the disease itself. In this sense, Johnson figures the dangers of the "ideal opiates" of eighteenth century habit to turn into something remarkably like the crisis of obsession Davis figures as a characteristic feature of late capitalism. If the deferral of the choice of self leads to an obliviating dissipation, the choice of self can lead to an equally obliviating, if perpendicular, obsession.

At the same time, the story of the Astronomer perhaps most clearly dramatizes Davis's sense of Johnson's role in democratizing obsession. According to Imlac, the Astronomer's abilities might be exemplary, but his delusions are all too representative of the human condition.

While the Astronomer's achievements are singular, his failings are not. Claims Imlac, "all may suffer his calamity. Of the uncertainties of our present state, the most dreadful and alarming is the uncertain continuance of reason" (405). The superlatives here—a marked difference from Johnson's hedging language around his turns to eternity—make it at the same time difficult to read this passage without thinking of the padlock and secret Johnson entrusts to Thrale. In this instance, then, Johnson is at least willing to allow Imlac to generalize based on his own experience and observations. Speaking of the prevalence of "disorders of intellect," Imlac famously notes that "perhaps, if we speak with rigorous exactness, no human mind is in its right state" (405). Davis cites this passage in describing the democratization of obsession, and, indeed, the moment echoes faintly the conflicted moral turn at the end of the *Life* in that it at once rejects the Astronomer's view of the world as necessarily false and validates it as a perspective to which anyone might be subjected.

It is also worth noting that in generalizing the disorder, Imlac explicitly avoids normalizing it. It remains a problem to be addressed rather than a state to be accepted. His diagnosis rests on a set of seemingly clear, hierarchical distinctions between the rational and the irrational. The Astronomer's fate is the result of the tyranny of "airy notions" over "the limits of sober probability" (405-406). The disordered imagination allows an "[indulgence] in the power of fiction" that festers in solitude into "some particular train of ideas" that "fixes the attention" to the rejection of "all other intellectual gratifications" (406). Gross rightly connects *Rasselas*'s treatment of imagination to Johnson's larger investigation into mental health. But its origin point is still ultimately the supposedly rational pursuits that presumably engaged the Astronomer in his study of the stars in the first place. As such, this figuring of the Astronomer threatens to undo itself: Imlac puts the Astronomer into a habitual feedback loop of fantasy that is troubling in part

because it cuts off his access to reason and to knowledge. In figuring that now-closed-off space of the brain as a site of other "intellectual gratifications" (406), Imlac positions the Astronomer's condition through the same rhetorical turns that metaphorically frame his own addiction to knowledge and that literally explain the rakes' trading of future health and wisdom for present pleasures. In so doing, he re-affirms the possibility that making a choice in life is as dangerous to mental health as refusing the choice altogether and closes off rationality and truth as the path out of madness and delusion.

What emerges as the cure, instead, then, is dissipation—the very state that a choice of life is meant to help us escape. In a moment of lucidity, the Astronomer attributes his new bouts of clarity to Imlac's efforts to engage him in friendly social interactions:

> When I have been for a few days lost in pleasing dissipation, I am always tempted to think that my inquiries have ended in error, and that I have suffered much, and suffered it in vain. (411)

The Astronomer inverts Johnson's diagnosis of Boswell. Here, the Astronomer is made to see the errors of his own habitual pursuit of an impossible delusion by way of the very dissipation that threatened Johnson and Boswell with oblivion. He is, then, made to escape the dangerous cycle of his own obsessions by entering the dangerous cycle of dissipation.[20]

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[20] Similar tensions play themselves out in *The Rambler* No. 89, which navigates in essay form the troubles of isolated study dramatized by the Astronomer. Drawing explicitly on Locke, Johnson in this essay considers the problems of both vacuity and the vain pursuits of scholastic achievement, noting that "It is certain, that, with or without our consent, many of the few moments allotted us will slide imperceptibly away, and that the mind will break, from confinement to its stated task, into sudden excursions" (105). Johnson terms the mind's susceptibility to desires a "captivity" inherent to one's identity: "In order to regain liberty, he must find the means of flying from himself; he must, in opposition to the Stoick precept, teach his desires to fix upon external things; he must adopt the joys and the pains of others, and excite in his mind the want of social pleasures and amiable communication" (107). The solitude required for study, then, becomes a "frigid and narcotick [sic] infection" best contested by interaction with a carefully chosen coterie of "well chosen companions" (107-108). What may seem like indolence—dissipation, even—should improve the work of the solitary scholar: "The loose sparkles of thoughtless wit may give new light to the mind, and the gay contention for paradoxical positions rectify the opinions" (108). The turn reiterates Imlac's treatment plan for the Astronomer, positioning a bit of dissipation as not only relief for the isolated imagination but also a potential source of intellectual stimulation. Johnson's mixed metaphor, however, reveals just

Of course, the turn also asks him to turn from the astral to the interpersonal. This is, as Wasserman notes, a classical turn particularly in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Wasserman suggests that Johnson juxtaposes the Astronomer's turn with a solitary old man to demonstrate explicitly "that […] neither solitary study nor social engagement terminates in worldly happiness" and implicitly "that the proper study of mankind is man, not the unknowable things of God" and "that the affairs of mankind are not an end in themselves and lead only to the 'choice of eternity'" (24). For Wasserman, Johnson thereby produces a conclusive divine truth out of the text's continual rejection of formal narrative conventions and the pedestrian truths they purport to reveal. However, the Astronomer also makes clear that there is nothing conclusive about his cure. By "divid[ing] his hours by a succession of amusements" (412), the Astronomer gradually improves his grasp of reality, but those gains are temporary. In solitude, his "inveterate persuasion rushes upon [his] soul, and [his] thoughts are chained down by some irresistible violence," only to be once again "disentangled by the prince's conversation" (412). The temporary relief of eternity and companionship, then, succeed only in transforming the Astronomer from a delusional recluse to something like Coleridge's Ancient Mariner, always on edge in anticipation of the return of his agony. In this sense, Johnson's cure differs from moral/medical calls to moderation or temperance. In a seeming anticipation of one of AA's most-oft repeated truisms, the Astronomer is always in recovery.

In a stark difference from the discourse of AA, which understands addiction as individual pathology, the world of *Rasselas* takes seriously Imlac's suggestion that "no human mind is in its right state." The work's final paragraphs demonstrate that each of its characters is always already

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how incomplete this solution remains. To contest the narcotics of solitary study, he prescribes the "loose sparkles of thoughtless wit" from others. While loose sparkles might give new light to a mind, they also threaten to consume it in a sort of uncontrollable wildfire of influence.

subject to "inveterate persuasions" of a kind with those that divorced the Astronomer from reality. Even before he begins to rehabilitate the Astronomer, Imlac gives a dissertation on the dangers of imagination that inspires Pekuah to stop pretending to be queen, the princess to give up her dreams of a pastoral existence, and Rasselas to leave off his thoughts of becoming the sovereign. This, of course, neither the first nor the last time that the party's imagination was proven wrong by either example or by argument.[21] In the "Conclusion, in Which Nothing Is Concluded," the party takes up these and similar dreams once again. While Pekuah and Nekayah at least shift their ambitions to religious and educational pursuits, Rasselas puts himself immediately back onto the throne:

> The prince desired a little kingdom, in which he might administer justice in his own person, and see all the parts of government with his own eyes; but he could never fix the limits of his dominion, and was always adding to the number of his subjects. (418)

Days after vowing to give up his dreams of sovereign power, he returns to his fantasy of ruling an ever-expanding empire. The figure, of course, is even more worrying given his position somewhere near the top of the line of succession. There is a hint of a change in Rasselas's joining the rest of the party in "well kn[owing] that none [of these wishes] could be obtained" (418), but the difference here is in the speed with which he checks his vanity. He cannot, in the end, escape it entirely. Despite all evidence, Rasselas cannot help but imagine himself making the correct choice of life.

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[21] Watching the flying machine that was to enable Rasselas's escape from the Happy Valley, along with its inventor, tumble immediately into the lake on its inaugural test flight leaves Rasselas's "imagination […] at a stand" and, therefore, Rasselas is left with "no prospect of entering the world" (346).

That failure is likewise coded in *Rasselas*'s final chapter, which figures its inconclusively as a saleable feature. In an epistolary argument with Elizabeth Carter as to the merits of *Rasselas*, Hester Mulso complains of what she perceived to be the work's nihilism: in *Rasselas*, "human life is a scene of unmixed wretchedness, and [...] all states and conditions of it are equally miserable" (qtd. in Clifford 216). Taken as a "maxim," this thesis "would extinguish hope, and consequently industry, make prudence ridiculous, and, in short, dispose men to lie down in sloth and despondency" (qtd. in Clifford 216). That is to say, for Mulso, Johnson's argument seems poised to inspire the very dissipation he so often attempts to combat. In a sense, I am arguing that this is precisely the case. This suggestion raises a logical follow up question—to what end?—that Mulso answers in a follow-up letter to Carter. Burned by *Rasselas*, Mulso vows not to turn elsewhere in the print market for an alternative view of the world or for a different cure but to wait, instead, on a rumored continuation:

> I have since heard that he proposes going on with the story, in another volume, in which I hope he will give us antidotes for all the poisonous inferences deducible from the story as it stands at present. (qtd. in Clifford 217)

Mulso desires to return to the source of the dis-ease for its cure. She is, it would seem, hooked. And all the more so for Johnson's failure to provide a radical cure with *Rasselas*. In this sense, Johnson's failure produces the product most amenable to the new market for literary writing. It produces a demand that outstrips logic and need and, therefore, always leaves its user in need of another fix.

Conclusion: Overdosing on Johnson

While Mulso never gets a continuation of *Rasselas*, the years after Johnson's death found the market flooded with Johnsoniana. As recompense for the "antidote" she never gets, she is

offered plenty of *anecdotes* that serve a similar function. The influence of these texts was such that Boswell could claim in the advertisement to the second edition of the *Life of Johnson* to have "*Johnsonised* the land" (8). In my conclusion, I briefly sketch the extent to which the land, having been Johnsonised, continues to cultivate and nurture addictions to the Doctor's corpus.

Laurence Lipking suggests, fittingly, that Johnson's long afterlife as subject of lives, collections, and literary studies—in which we arguably still find ourselves—is a testament to Johnson's ability to mold his readers in his own image (25). Pushing back against reader-response understandings of readers of eighteenth century texts being surprised by sin, Lipking suggests that Johnson is unique in his adherence to truth: "Rather than seduce his readers, he tries to dispel all illusions, leaving all us poor sinners naked. Worse yet, he calmly persuades us to strip ourselves" (22). As a result, "the writing erases itself to diffuse through the reader" (23). That erasure produces in Lipking's reading a greater sense of tangible influence:

> The reader that Johnson molds, therefore, will carry him everywhere and attend to his tutelage even after the particular works that convey it have been forgotten. The text is consumed and passes, the lesson continues. (23)

The metaphors of consumption do not originate with Lipking. Deutsch catalogs highlights from the cottage industry of broadsides, prints, and pamphlets that emerges alongside the Johnsoniana to satirize Johnson's many biographers as anatomists who cut Johnson into pieces in scatological perversions of the Eucharist. To consider the effects of consuming literary text, Deutsch draws on Arthur Murphy's anecdote about Johnson habitually repeating a particular set of lines from Shakespeare and Milton to combat his recurring fears of death and the afterlife. In the *Life of Gray*, Neil Hertz notes, Johnson singles out stanzas that echo these totemic lines as evidence of Gray's poetic originality. In forgetting the echoes of lines he knew by heart, Hertz suggests,

Johnson reveals that his repetitions amount to a Eucharistic experience in which the ritual of "taking [the lines] into his mouth" replaces the rhetorical weight of the words themselves and, thereby, evacuates the linguistic expressions themselves of that power (179).[22] Drawing on Paul de Man's "Autobiography as De-Facement," Deutsch suggests that efforts to memorialize Johnson ultimately have a similar effect: in writing Johnson, authors of Johnsoniana at once imperfectly recreate his body and reciprocally efface themselves. In a sense, Deutsch, by way of her own communion with de Man and Hertz, maps literary studies onto prosopopoeia in a way that makes each a sort of obliviating addiction.

For Johnson, a certain amount of forgetting is essential to productive human behavior. The same is true of Johnson criticism. Lipking's sense of Johnson's influence echoes Earl Wasserman's claim that *Rasselas*'s "endless, directionless oscillation between opposites, neither of which is either sufficient or stable […] subvert[s] the comforting formal designs of alternatives the reader has been educated to anticipate" and thereby "reorder[s] the structure of his thought" (12). Martin Wechselblatt notes that the text's repetition of the theme also educates the reader "in the technique of subversion itself" (46). As he observes, Wechselblatt's argument aligns him with contemporary readers of *Rasselas*, who "tended to view the predictable pattern with which Rasselas continually 'subverts' all positions as rather monotonous" (46). For Wechselblatt, then, Johnson's reader develops a tolerance to the text's generic disappointments. But in building on Wasserman's argument to arrive back at a point that sits easily alongside the observations of Rasselas's earliest critical readers, Wechselblatt threatens to put the forgetting

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[22] Argues Hertz, "[Johnson] is […] communing with Literature, taking it into his mouth" (179). Those repetitions, however, result not in "the strengthening of the memory," but in "the obliteration of the signifiers, the forgetting of those lines as poetry" (179).

and remembering of literary criticism on a circular track little different from that on which Johnson locates Savage at his most dissipated.

Even these cycles of critical debate are counterintuitively enabled by Johnson's ability to constantly shock us out of efforts to fall into complacent imitation, as he does to Boswell in Piozzi's account of an episode that also appears in Boswell's *Life*:

> It was however unlucky for those who delighted to echo Johnson's sentiments, that he would not endure form them today, what perhaps he had yesterday, by his own manner of treating the subject, made them fond of repeating; and I fancy Mr. B—— has not forgotten, that though his friend one evening in gay humour talked in praise of wine as one of the blessings permitted by heaven, when used with moderation, to lighten the load of life, and give men strength to endure it; yet when in consequence of such talk *he* thought fit to make a Bacchanalian discourse in its favour, Mr. Johnson contradicted him somewhat roughly as I remember; and when to assure himself of conquest he added these words, You must allow me, Sir, at least that it produces truth; *in vino veritas*, you know, Sir—"that (replied Mr. Johnson) would be useless to a man who knew he was not a liar when he was sober." (201-202)

Thrale's telling of this anecdote—which also appears in Boswell's *Life*—includes an introductory moral about the risks and limitations of imitation. That framing suggests that this anecdote tells us more about Thrale and Boswell's competition in the marketplace than it does about Johnson's or Boswell's attitude on public drinking. Thrale cagily portrays her rival in the new and growing genre of Johnsoniana as not merely a sycophant, but—worse—a failed sycophant, who in

echoing his object of worship's opinions back to him succeeds in nothing so much as in driving Johnson to the other side of the debate.

Taken merely as an anecdote that tells us something about Johnson, it points to a feature of his character noted by both Thrale and Boswell: his willingness to defend positions he does not hold for the sake of a public argument. Wechselblatt argues that this anecdote allows Johnson to maintain his individual authority in the face of efforts to imitate it. Such flexibility contributes to what William Hamilton calls the "chasm, which not only nothing can fill up, but which nothing has a tendency to fill up" left by Johnson's death (qtd. in Wechselblatt 28). Readers and critics produce coherent Samuel Johnsons out of curations of his works and life which are each "folded back into the Samuel Johnson […] who disappears once again" (28). In this sense, Johnson's efforts to produce a coherent therapeutic text succeeds in sustaining an audience by failing to provide actionable therapeutic advice. As further generations approach the unsatisfactory Johnson as readers and critics, moreover, they make further space in the cavern for further debilitating hopes and productive disappointments. Communing with Johnson, then, amounts to participating in a cottage industry. If it is an obsession or an addiction, it is, in Davis's terms, an "operative" one.

Adam Rounce, like Wechselblatt interested in the material conditions of the burgeoning literary marketplace, notes that Johnson's large and at times contradictory corpus was at least in part an effect of the "pressing material needs" that "inspire[d] his composition" (109). Unlike Imlac, who was able to forego present monetary gain in the hope of the respect of posterity, Johnson often wrote under economic pressures as great as those that put Savage into Newgate. But if Johnson and Imlac differ in that Imlac is a "creative artist making art" and Johnson an "artisan attempting to make money" (108), Rounce's assessment of Imlac's dedication to his

craft is also true of Johnson. “Why does Imlac stay on the job?” Rounce asks, and answers: “he has no choice: it is his vocation” (108). In carving out space for my own investigation, I might quibble and suggest that it is his addiction. But as Eve Sedgwick points out, the slippage of the pathology of addiction in late capitalism to describe behavior like exercise and work, which should mark one’s capacity for rational decision making, threatens to deconstruct the concepts of addiction and agency. To quibble about Johnson’s understanding of the concept in the eighteenth is to ignore the fact that he was in some respects already well aware that the distinction between vocation and addiction is one that is often without a difference.

CHAPTER 2: "Forced Unconscious Sympathy": Coleridge and Robinson's Romantic Co-Dependencies

"She lay, while dictating, with her eyes closed, apparently in the stupor which opium frequently produces, repeating like a person talking in her sleep. This affecting performance, produced in circumstances so singular, does no less credit to the genius than to the heart of the author.

On the ensuing morning Mrs. Robinson had only a confused idea of what had past [*sic*], nor could be convinced of the fact till the manuscript was produced. She declared, that she had been dreaming of mad Jemmy throughout the night, but was perfectly unconscious of having been awake while she composed the poem, or the circumstances narrated by her daughter." -Maria Elizabeth Robinson, in *Memoirs of the Late Mrs. Robinson, Written by Herself* (1800)

The extensive poetic dialogue between Mary Robinson and Samuel Taylor Coleridge has been much-remarked upon. Robinson's 1800 volume *Lyrical Tales* was heavily influenced by *Lyrical Ballads*, to the extent that Dorothy Wordsworth expressed annoyance in letters and journals while William Wordsworth briefly considered changing the title of the volume for the second edition. But as later critics have demonstrated, Robinson and Coleridge experienced a mutually beneficial series of poetic dialogues in the final years of her life. Much critical attention has been paid to Robinson's "To the Poet Coleridge" (1800), which was written and published after Robinson either heard a draft of "Kubla Khan" (comp. 1797-1798, published 1816) or received it in manuscript. Coleridge likewise wrote several poems inspired by Robinson, including "The Apotheosis, or the Snow-Drop" (1798) "Alcaeus to Sappho" (1800), and "A Stranger Minstrel" (1800). Susan Luther opens a larger conversation about the relationship by re-assessing older critical accounts of the dialogue that dismissed Robinson's interest in Coleridge as self-interested or Coleridge's interest in Robinson as erotic. Following Luther, Daniel Robinson argues that "To the Poet Coleridge" demonstrates a recognition of thematic unity and metrical innovations of "Kubla Khan" that critics would take nearly a century to catch up to. Tim

Fulford, similarly, argues that revisions to the published version of "Kubla Khan" borrow from Robinson's poem.

But while critics often note that Coleridge's account of opium-inspired composition in the preface to "Kubla Khan" resembles Maria Elizabeth Robinson's earlier account of the composition of her mother's "The Maniac" (1793), the shared biographical detail of opium often replaces critical work in the accounts of these poems.[1] Critics have, thus, said little about a key difference in these accounts. Robinson's vision exists thanks to the work of her daughter, who both takes the dictation and writes this account of the poem's genesis in Robinson's *Memoirs*.[2] Coleridge, on the other hand, wakes and writes his vision down in "lonely" solitude (102). While Robinson's vision is preserved by her daughter, the entrance of another person—the "person from Porlock" (102)—does irreparable damage to Coleridge's memory and the poem remains a fragment. In this difference, "Kubla Khan" and "The Maniac" engage in two seemingly distinct narratives of intoxication that, as Johnson demonstrates, are each at work in eighteenth-century conceptions of dissipation: transcendence and dependence. Coleridge's "flashing eyes" and "floating hair" are the mark of a transcendent visionary (50). His performances of intoxication and disability here and elsewhere produce a singular claim for genius that directly challenges the perceived limits of eighteenth-century conceptions of mental illness as a sign of intellectual insight.[3] While Robinson's poem makes a similar case for the value of mad Jemmy's speech, the

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[1] Disability plays an (often unmarked) part of this critical tradition. Eugene Stelzig suggests that Robinson's invalidism at once gave her reason to seek a public poetic attachment to Coleridge and caused Coleridge anxiety once that attachment was made. Martin J. Levy speculates that Coleridge gave Robinson a manuscript copy of "Kubla Khan" because of their shared use of opium as a painkiller. He also speculates that Robinson uses opium for both physical and emotional relief: "It was this which led her not just to use the drug as an analgesic but also as a tranquillizer in order to keep unpleasant thoughts and memories at bay" (160).

[2] Robinson died before completing her *Memoirs*. The voice that finishes them (which offers this anecdote about "The Maniac" as an example of Robinson's quick wit with improvisational verse) is typically understood to be her daughter, Maria Elizabeth.

[3] See Goergen (2016).

poem's unconscious production seemingly marks its author, in contrast to Coleridge, as entirely dependent (on her daughter's aid as much as on any chemical). A twentieth-century observer might be reminded of the discourse of co-dependency, which understands relationships of dependency that can arise out of substance use as, themselves, addictions. Through such a framework, Maria Elizabeth Robinson's efforts to turn her mother's half-conscious dictation into verse published under her mother's name become a method of enabling her mother's drug use at the expense of her own role in this creative act.

But as Susan Zieger has observed, distinctions between productive intoxication and compulsive dependencies are throughout history explicitly understood along traditional gender lines. Coleridge's account of "Kubla Khan" benefits from the assumption that men might be liberated by drugs that produce dependence in women.[4] Indeed, Robinson's brushes with dissipation were understood along gendered lines. After putting off a promising acting career to enter a disastrous marriage that left her and her young daughter in debtor's prison, she returned to the stage and finally appeared to much acclaim. After Robinson's performances attracted the attentions of the Prince of Wales, she engaged in a public and scandalous affair with the future King George IV, for which she was ultimately paid far less than he promised her. The affair left her the subject of scurrilous and misogynist satires. She in some ways took advantage of this notoriety, becoming something of a celebrity and participating in the Della Cruscan craze for erotic verse. At the same time, moral condemnation and accusations of wasteful spending continued to pursue her to the point that much of her posthumously published *Memoirs* sets out to defend her by emphasizing both her economic success as a writer and her capacity for sympathy. The account of the composition of "The Maniac" is a part of this project, as her

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[4] Susan Zieger notes that Coleridge's drug use, in particular, is often read positively because of his gender. See, also, Ettorre (1997) and Keane (1992).

daughter positions the poem as evidence of Robinson's laudable capacity for sympathy and intellectual capacity, arguing that it "does no less credit to the genius than to the heart of the author." While it was primary undertaken by Robinson's daughter, that turn is nonetheless enabled and justified by what Anne Mellor has argued is Robinson's primary characteristic as a public figure: a capacity for re-defining the self in ways that at once anticipate John Keats's conception of the "cameleon poet" and demonstrate in Robinson a "postmodern subjectivity" that is rooted in her understanding of and exploitation of the same gender scripts that deny her Coleridge's expression of self (298).

If Robinson and her daughter are proto-co-dependents, so too are Coleridge's would-be visionary and the Abyssinian maid, whose song Coleridge's speaker depends upon in his fantasy of transcendent vision. And, indeed, close readings of "The Maniac" and "Kubla Khan" complicate any effort to understand their differences in terms of a strict gender binary. This happens in no small part thanks to the imposition of disability on both poems. Coleridge's potentially transcendent communion with the Abyssinian maid would leave him cut off from his would-be audience, who will "close their eyes in holy dread" (52). Coleridge's visionary becomes a Cassandra, indistinguishable, in the eyes of his imagined public, from Johnson's mad astronomer. Both Robinson's poem and the account of its collaborative composition, on the other hand, each seek to communicate and understand. Robinson's speaker hopes to hear the maniac while her daughter hears the poet. In this way, the poem performs slightly revised versions of the "pleasing dissipation" that serves as a temporary cure to the mad astronomer's delusions. But in so doing, Robinson creates—and her daughter highlights—a poem that serves as a testament to her abilities as much as to identifying and examining mad Jemmy's humanity. Thus, if Robinson

gives to her subject where Coleridge takes, her daughter is not above claiming credit for her mother.

In a sense, Mellor's reading of Robinson contributes to Mellor's larger project of interrogating the gender biases at work in traditional definitions of Romanticism. Mellor argues that while masculine Romantic writers assume an "oppositional construction of subjectivity" in which the "autonomous and self-conscious 'I' […] exists independently of the Other" (6), Feminine Romantics

> typically endorsed a commitment to a construction of subjectivity based on alterity, and based their moral systems on what Carol Gilligan has recently taught us to call an ethic of care which insists on the primacy of the family or the community and their attendant practical responsibilities. (3)

If the critical account of Romanticism has been more likely to attribute its (ultimately masculine) attributes to male poets like Coleridge, several critics, chief among them Tim Fulford and Richard Holmes, working after Mellor have noted the ways in which Coleridge, too, complicates traditional understandings of gender.

By building on the fundamental role of disability in many of these scenes of care, I argue in this chapter that experiences of disability and intoxication, too, contribute to the construction of a Romantic "subjectivity based on alterity." My purpose here is not to displace gender as a site of analysis but, instead, to follow Rosemarie Garland-Thomson's charge that "integrating disability as a category of analysis and a system of representation [into feminist studies] deepens, expands, and challenges feminist theory" (335). Specifically, I seek to expand Mellor's analysis of the ethic of care in Romanticism by incorporating Eva Feder Kittay's work, which makes the case for Gilligan's "ethic of care" as a productive way to engage with the experience of disability

as well as gender. In advancing what she terms a "dependency critique" of social justice movements in the twentieth century, Kittay argues that a focus on the ideal of "independence" in social justice movements effectively extends the benefits of those fights to people most capable of acting like the privileged group. Kittay points out that this has a negative impact on both people with disabilities—who often require dependency labor and care work to achieve independent living—and women and people of color—who are disproportionately responsible for doing that difficult and often under-compensated care work. In place of such a system, Kittay reimagines society in terms of networks of ever-present and ever-shifting "interdependencies."

Across their careers, Coleridge and Robinson take up the complex entanglements of both chemical and interpersonal dependencies as they operate professionally and personally. In so doing, they at once anticipate and challenge the set of assumptions that will produce "co-dependency" as a method of pathologizing and stigmatizing both certain kinds of drug use and familial care work. While these concerns often emerge in the pair's poetic dialogue, they also reverberate across both authors' careers. One finds in Coleridge and Robinson a shared recognition that "the genius" and "the heart" are necessarily entangled. Those entanglements often trouble concepts of transcendence or independence even in poems that seem to claim transcendence as the privilege of the bounded self and enthrallment as the fate of the dissipated. In engaging with independence and dependency in relation to questions of productivity, Coleridge and Robinson raise—and respond to—questions of intoxication, influence, and care labor like those that will shape the late-twentieth-century diagnostic category of co-dependency. Their dialogic—perhaps we should say interdependent—but ultimately diverging approaches to dependencies in "Kubla Khan" and "The Maniac" are characteristic of their approach to these questions across their careers. While Coleridge, like Robinson, recognizes that independence in

the Enlightenment sense necessarily creates dependencies in others, he remains nonetheless committed to achieving that impossible ideal and is thereby stifled by the contradictions inherent to that ambition. Robinson, on the other hand, eventually arrives at a model of collaborative creative production inspired by her own experiences in the sickroom.

I make this argument in three parts. First, I consider how "dependency" operates in eighteenth-century debates about gender in ways that foreground both Coleridge's and Robinson's work and the twentieth-century concept of co-dependency. To do so, I start by looking to Mary Wollstonecraft's disagreement with Rousseau, expressed in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, about the development of women's minds. In untangling the roles of habit and "addiction" in that debate, I provide historical grounding for both Coleridge's and Robinson's engagements in this conversation. Both Robinson, in her novel *Walsingham* (1797), and Coleridge, in his verse response to that novel, take up dissipation and disability as they relate to independence in ways that trouble Wollstonecraft and Rousseau's seeming agreement in making a distinction between independent, rational thought and habitual slavery. In so doing, they likewise complicate Kittay's claim, drawing on Carole Pateman, that the problem of independence in twentieth- and twenty-first-century contexts stems from Mary Wollstonecraft's conceptions of gender equality. In the second part, I take up Coleridge's unfinished gothic verse "Christabel" (comp. 1797, 1800, pub. 1816) as a text primarily about the ways that patriarchal authority transforms charitable care into self-serving co-dependencies. Coleridge's refusal to complete the work, I suggest, stems from his inability to resolve the critique of patriarchal systems of inheritance and the effects of his own intellectual production on his family. Finally, I argue that while Robinson acknowledges the danger interdependencies pose to individual identity throughout her work, she moves past Coleridge's blockage in the very same genre that

stumps him. Her gothic verse tale "Golfre, a Gothic Swiss Tale" (1800) offers an (admittedly violent) way out of the structures of inherited wealth that transforms familial care into something like co-dependency. In her late prose work, *Letter to the Women of England* (1800), Robinson refines that vision, building from her own experiences in the sickroom a model of interdependent collaboration.

Co-Dependency and the Enlightenment

In considering the role of dependency, broadly construed, in the works of Coleridge and Robinson, this chapter takes up and builds on the tradition of reading Robinson's and Coleridge's mutual influence in terms of gender. Susan Luther contests earlier accounts, from E. L. Griggs among others, of Coleridge's fascination with Robinson as stemming primarily from an erotic attention to the famous "Perdita" who once so charmed the Prince of Wales. Luther reads in their verse dialogue the "uncertain passage between public and private space, the erotics of relation as well as of literary criticism and aesthetic judgment" (395). Following Luther, several critics further considers this dialogue in terms of gender.[5] I follow from her observation of the semi-permeable boundaries between experience and text and between interpersonal and literary relationships, but wish to consider disability, intoxication, and habitual drug use as at once subjects of and occasions for those literary interactions. Throughout the final decade of the eighteenth century, Robinson and Coleridge considered the ways that influences incurred by chemicals, poetry, and familial care re-shaped both their own and their family members' sense of bodily and mental autonomy. Often drawing on their own experiences as givers and receivers of care, Coleridge and Robinson write poetry and prose that reveal the ways in which

[5] The relationship between Coleridge and Robinson has long been known and detailed, getting mention in latter editions of Robinson's *Memoirs*. Lisa Vargo (1995) writes on the political implications and motivations at work in the relationship. Essays from Stelzig (2004), Hayley (2005), Fulford (1999), and Cross (2009) draw from and build on Luther's work.

Enlightenment conceptions of independence, gender, and care developed alongside and (at times) in direct engagement with considerations of drug use, intemperance, and dissipation.[6] In so doing, they expose the ways in which the Romantic genius is, in many ways, dependent.

My understanding of dependency is indebted to Nancy Fraser and Linda Gordon, who lay out the history of "independence" as a concept. Although typically understood as philosophical states, Fraser and Gordon demonstrate that independence and dependence are legible as primarily economic descriptors. The concept of "independence" emerges in a pre-industrial society, in which the vast majority of the population was understood to be "dependent" on a few "independents," who were so termed because they owned enough property to live without labor.[7] Given the patriarchal construction of this culture, independence was almost exclusively the domain of men. The philosophical concept of independence becomes a myth that obscures the patriarch's dependence on his dependents (familial or otherwise). Put differently, eighteenth-century conceptions of masculine independence often relied on feminine care work re-written, ironically, as itself a form of dependence. Those conceptions continue to shape discourses on dependency and co-dependency today in that both rely on the marginalization of addicts,

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[6] Both poets had extensive experience as both givers and receivers of care. In addition to raising her daughter, Robinson spent the final 18 years of her life partially paralyzed, perhaps due to a miscarriage. For an account of Coleridge's experiences as a caregiver (and a brief account of the effects of those experiences on his poetry), see Holmes, *Coleridge: Early Visions*.

[7] Fraser and Gordon read "dependence" through three major epochs. In this moment, "dependence" is the natural state for most people, including the wives and children of independent men. The industrial revolution brought on a semantic shift in which white male wage workers figured their independence through labor that earned a "family wage." Although radical in its own right, the movement resulted in a stigmatization of dependency. That semantic shift had negative consequences for three classes of people left out of this new wage-based independence: "paupers" (who could not earn such a living), "slaves" (people of color who were necessarily left out of these labor markets), and women (who remained dependent on fathers or husbands). In policing the boundaries around their newly-produced independence, white male workers stigmatized members of the marginalized groups. In the third epoch, Fraser and Gordon write, white women employed this tactic as they entered the workforce in larger numbers. The result was the further stigmatization of marginalized groups, particularly single mothers, who became "welfare dependents" stigmatized for their inability to achieve economic independence through either their own labor or that of a husband. In the 1980s, moral panics about drug dependencies compounded with this long historical thread to further stigmatize by pathologizing all forms of dependency.

disabled people, and care workers (the latter primarily women) to produce conceptions of independence.

Fraser and Gordon trace the pathologizations attached to notions of "dependency" in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries to this original concept. That continuity suggests for Fraser and Gordon that narratives and myths about welfare recipients and "crack babies" in the 1980s are in many ways justified by this pre-modern concept of the economically independent subject. A similar set of assumptions contribute to the production of the pathologized category of the "co-dependent." Discussions of addiction and its effect on families in the late twentieth century often carried over the gendered power differentials inherent to both traditional conceptions of independence and heteronormative marriage. Peter Steinglass, et al., in *The Alcoholic Family* frames the complexities of the effects of alcohol use with two Old Testament "case studies" that they figure as widely diverging: Noah cursing Ham's descendants for the crime of exposing his drunkenness to his brothers and Lot's daughters use of alcohol in seducing him into incest to preserve his line. Steinglass describes these narratives as texts with opposing morals: Ham demonstrates the capacity for alcohol to destroy a family, but "the significant point of Lot's story is that intoxication is used to solve a family problem" (5). From a different perspective, we might say that the significant point of both stories is that the families revolve around patriarchal structures that values adherence to the father's will and the continuation of his name above all other considerations. In Steinglass's readings of these stories, Ham can be cast out because Noah's other sons will continue his line, but Lot's daughters deceive him into incest because there is no other way to preserve his. Both narratives normalize adherence to the needs and interests of the "independent" family member even as they demonstrate the ways in which those figures are necessarily dependent on others to preserve that illusion. Robinson and Coleridge

engage with these patriarchal structures of dependency and independence in part to critique them. Robinson and Coleridge raise the possibility that "independence" is neither obtainable nor beneficial on the individual or societal level and that, if anything, it reinforces a dangerous political conservativism.

The relationship between these conversations and dissipation are most clear in Mary Robinson's 1797 novel *Walsingham*. That novel takes up questions of economic, social, and familial independence and dependence in ways that point directly to the ways that drug use and disability emerge from (but also contest) those social structures. Like much of her late writing, *Walsingham* engaged extensively with Jacobin thought. As William D. Brewer notes in the introduction to *Walsingham* in the Pickering & Chatto edition of Robinson's works, Walsingham knows his Rousseau, his Voltaire, and his Godwin. Moreover, he rarely hesitates to parrot and defend them to the aristocracy in ways that demonstrate for Brewer Robinson's "defiant mood […] at the height of what Charles James Fox called Pitt's 'reign of terror'" (ix-x). But before getting to Walsingham's—and Robinson's—Jacobin tendencies, Brewer opens his introduction with the observation that Robinson was "penniless, ill, semi-paralysed and heartbroken" when she wrote the novel (ix). This detail opens the introduction and is left largely to hang implicitly over the analysis that follows. Although Brewer returns to Robinson's monetary situation elsewhere in the introduction, her illness and disability are largely unexamined. Brewer returns to the subject more extensively in a 2016 piece to argue that Robinson understood disability as a social construction while her daughter used the "continuation" of the *Memoirs* to figure Robinson's disability as a spur to literary productivity. For Robinson, Brewer argues, ability was understood in terms of productivity rather than a body that could be interpreted as healthy or able.

I would go further to suggest that Robinson explicitly connects Walsingham's insistent Jacobinism to his experience of socially and economically constructed forms of dependency as well as experiences of physical illness, disability, and caregiving. In *Walsingham*, Robinson demonstrates not only an awareness of the capacity for a disabled subjectivity but also a recognition of the subjectivity of the formal and informal care labor that enables such a subjectivity. The novel is the account of Walsingham's life. Dispossessed as a child of his uncle's estate by the birth of a male heir, Sir Sidney, Walsingham finds himself stymied at every turn by his cousin. For reasons unknown to Walsingham, Sir Sidney ensures that Walsingham's romantic and economic pursuits fail. In the novel's final pages, Lady Aubrey, Sir Sidney's mother, reveals to Walsingham that Sir Sidney is not her son but, in fact, her daughter, taught to pose as a man to protect her right to a rational education and the family estate. The revelation turns her seemingly villainous impositions on Walsingham into romantic gestures, and the novel ends with the promise of a marriage that will secure access to the family fortune for both Walsingham and Sidney.

Significantly, Robinson explicitly figures the stakes of the novel in terms of dependence and dissipation. Even before the death of Sir Sidney's father, the family's economic situation is shaped by Lady Audrey's incessant, dissipated spending. According to Walsingham, "her house was the temple of intrigue; and her companions the votaries of dissipation" (15). Like Johnson, Robinson frames dissipation in terms of circular rather than forward motion. When Lady Aubrey dangerously circles "the vortex of the gaming table" (15), she threatens her husband's fortune (and with it, the fate of the next generation): "the fortune which Sir Edward's mother had hoarded with indefatigable parsimony was scarcely sufficient to supply the prodigality of her successor" (15). But Lady Aubrey ignores Sir Edward's requests to move to the country until she

comes down with the small pox, which in a sort of *contrapasso* takes away her beauty and, with it, the pleasures of city living. Rather than learn her lesson, however, Lady Aubrey continues to be wasteful in the country, where she devotes resources to improvements and to the pleasures of her favorite—first, Walsingham and, when he is born, Sir Sidney. That fall out of his aunt's favor is, in Walsingham's telling, the origin of his problems. Sir Sidney's birth thrusts him into "the miseries of dependence" (24). No longer the "little sovereign" of his uncle's Glenowen estate (21), Walsingham is instructed to please his new cousin who will "provide for [Walsingham]" "if [he] prove[s] worthy" (25). The instructions make clear that Walsingham's economic wellbeing is entirely dependent upon his ability to make himself useful to his new cousin. But in so doing, they also betray the reality that the "little sovereign" is in a very real sense dependent upon those he presides over.

But if Walsingham suffers as a child because of current economic systems, the novel provides him no opportunity as an adult to break from those systems. Critics point to William Godwin's *Caleb Williams* as the novel's most obvious precursor, but this novel replaces Godwin's trial-turned-reconciliation with a marriage plot that ultimately restores a status quo that produced much of the novel's conflict. Before the revelation of Sir Sidney's deceit, Walsingham is driven to despair and rage by his seeming rival. Identified both in his narration and the subtitle as "the pupil of nature," Walsingham marks the ways in which sensibility can prove destructive. He is rash, violent, and at times suicidal. These traits come to an extreme and horrifying head when Walsingham rapes Amanda after mistaking her for his beloved Isabella, whom he wrongly believes is living as Sir Sidney's mistress. While the novel tries to justify or at least diminish the horror of this action, it nonetheless reveals the inherent violence of the systems that the novel's conclusion ultimately does not subvert. After all, Walsingham's account of his childhood depicts

marriage not as a cure for but a site for the transmission of physical and moral ailments. In Walsingham's account, Lady Aubrey's fashionable dissipation not only brings on her smallpox but also causes her husband's drinking habit. In "devoting every vacant minute to the bottle," Sir Aubrey falls into a physically visible "decline" that is only partially counteracted by the family's move to the country (16).

The association of physical illness with habitual misbehavior has its roots in eighteenth-century discourses on human development. It comes to the foreground especially in the dialogue between Rousseau and Mary Wollstonecraft. In *Emilius and Sophia* (1763), Rousseau imagines women's minds in strict associationist terms that make them, at once, in danger of developing destructive habits and capable of developing productive ones.[8] As Wollstonecraft suggests, such a system denies a woman's ability to act as an independent rational actor. Instead, it figures women's actions as dictated by habitual compulsions. Because women are "addicted to everything to extremes," Rousseau recommends "but little liberty" to prevent them from "indulg[ing] themselves excessively in what is allowed to them" (4.5.31). Rousseau calls for a program of "habitual restraint" by which women will learn to submit to their husbands' (often imperfect) authority (108). For Rousseau, women are not rational actors; they act predictably based on the mental associations to which they have been habituated. If they are naturally inclined towards the passions, they can—indeed, they must—be weaned onto more productive mental associations.

In Mary Wollstonecraft's Response to Rousseau in the *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), she quotes Rousseau's arguments about feminine "addiction[s]" to reject them. By making the case for women's capacity for rationality, however, she reiterates Rousseau's

[8] Quotations and citations come from William Kenrick's 1763 translation, from which Mary Wollstonecraft quotes in the *Vindication*.

model of women's minds as subject to the whims of cultivated habits. In this discourse, ideas about habitual dissipation overlap and intersect with Wollstonecraft's larger organizational motif of women's life as slavery. [9] She acknowledges that the passions, unaddressed, can produce a "habitual slavery to first impressions" (145). She rejects Rousseau's call for "habitual restraint," however, as a slavery of its own—a "blind obedience" that does not allow women the capacity to choose moral behavior (108). These habitual submissions—to either external authority or her own passions—have for Wollstonecraft a tangible, physical impact on a woman's body. Discussing one woman in particular, Wollstonecraft claims, "I have seen this weak sophisticated being neglect all the duties of life, yet recline with self-complacency on a sofa, and boast of her want of appetite as a proof of delicacy" (63). To correct a situation in which women are literally disabled and dissipated by habitually learned behavior, Wollstonecraft proposes rational education as a form of countervailing habit-production that offers women the rationality by which they might temper the human propensity to indulge the passions and, when necessary, even contest their husbands' tyranny. Even as she co-opts the language of abolitionists, Wollstonecraft's calls for women's independence are made against the back drop of disabled women who must, we assume, remain dependents. Rhetorically, Wollstonecraft's argument slips from hypothetical disability ("blind obedience") to actual bodily decay. That slippage allows her to posit disabled women as the actual and figurative opposite of the habitually rational woman she hopes to create through rational education.[10]

[9] Moira Ferguson (1992) argues that Wollstonecraft's repeated invocations of slavery derive from an intellectual engagement with the African/Caribbean slave trade. Carol Howard (2004) has contested this account. Either way, it is important to note that Wollstonecraft's conception of enthrallment points at once to physical human bondage and associationism.

[10] Cora Kaplan similarly argues that Wollstonecraft writes the value of independent woman against the backdrop of disabled women (2000). As Kaplan's own summary of the vexed history of Wollstonecraft's reception suggests (2006), Wollstonecraft's engagement with affect and sensibility is fraught in both her public writings and her private life and in the reaction to both. The question of disability and Wollstonecraft's place in the history of ideas and feminism warrants further consideration beyond the scope of this chapter. Suffice it to say, here, that

Mellor, in her introduction to the Longman Cultural Edition of the *Vindication* suggests that Wollstonecraft refers here to what "we would now recognize as anorex[ia] or bulimi[a]" (11).[11] This easy trans-historical diagnosis speaks to the long shadow cast by Wollstonecraft's dilemma by affirming Wollstonecraft's assumption that rational subjecthood is inherently healthy. Put simply, while Wollstonecraft's legacy extends beyond this argument for rational education rooted in opposition to disability, the focus she places on independence cultivated through rational education can and often does lead logically to the exclusion of disabled people. This takes shape in the logic of co-dependency, which goes beyond Wollstonecraft's claim that preparing women for certain forms of marriage can produce physical disability to argue that heterosexual relationships are inherently disabling. As described in Anne Wilson Schaef's influential *Co-Dependency, Misunderstood, Mistreated*, "co-dependency" describes the condition experienced by close professional, friendly, or (primarily) familial relationships with chemical addicts. The formulation of "co-dependency," as a number of feminist critics have noted, draws on and contributes to a set of cultural assumptions by which women are blamed for their husbands' drug use. Schaef, however, goes further, disagreeing with Steinglass, et al, by refusing to accept the traditional logic of the family as inherently healthy. Instead, co-dependency for Schaef derives as much from family structures as from the introduction of substance abuse to those systems:

> The Ideal American Marriage is based upon mutual dependence: neither partner can function without the other. The lives of the married couple are totally

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Wollstonecraft's conception of the rational woman against the backdrop of intellectual, mental, and physical disability played into the hands of reactionaries who mined her personal life for evidence of her own madness.

[11] Both in other parts of the *Vindication* and elsewhere in her writing and biography, Wollstonecraft demonstrates a more complicated and capacious consideration of sentimentality, emotion, and mental disability that deserves further consideration. For my purposes here, I am looking at a particular way in which Wollstonecraft was and continues to be read, particularly in discourses around dependency.

> intertwined, and much is sacrificed for the illusion of security (control and sameness). The assumption made is that each partner is made totally dependent upon the other, neither will leave and both will have security. After a while in this kind of arrangement, neither *can* leave because neither can function without the other. This is addiction! (35)

Schaef tries to justify her expansive (and ever-expanding) disease category by figuring the disease as, itself, the result of systemic oppression. Schaef argues that it is ultimately "inherent in the system in which we live" (21). She argues, "In our attempts within the women's movement to understand and therefore free women, we have looked under many stones and found many addictions" (11). Going further, she suggests that "sexism, racism, ageism, and homophobia are outgrowths of an addictive society" (36). In figuring marriage as addiction, Schaef develops her larger project of connecting the social drive towards addiction as connected to (and, in fact, the origin of) all forms of social injustice. At the same time, however, her insistence on defining this state as pathology necessarily figures the healthy, independent thinker against the dependents who remain unable (or unwilling) to engage in treatment.

In this way, she defines her disease, essentially, as a rejection of independence in the Enlightenment tradition. Schaef argues that co-dependent people lack boundaries (they "literally do not know where they end and others begin" [45]), emphasize impression management to the detriment of their own subjecthood (they are "totally dependent on others for their very right to exist" [49]), and refuse to trust their own perception. The figure Schaef describes here bears much in common with Wollstonecraft's image of women literally wasting away in their efforts to conform to an externally imposed feminine regimen. Fittingly, then, Schaef not only figures co-dependency as a "disease in its own right" (6), but also argues that it produces other pathologies:

> We now know that co-dependence results in such physical complications as gastrointestinal problems, ulcers, high blood pressure, and even cancer. Indeed, the co-dependent will often die sooner than the chemically dependent person. (6)

In this way, she doubles down on Wollstonecraft's suggestion that the independent woman is healthy and able-bodied. But she also uses that logic to diagnose seemingly healthy people who, for reasons of choice or necessity, wind up doing work—such as caregiving—that is not typically understood to be the domain of independent subjects.

In taking up the language of feminist thought, Schaef equates the co-dependent woman with the unliberated woman. But rather than de-emphasizing medical intervention and focusing on harmful and exclusionary social structures, Schaef seeks to solve systemic inequities through individual treatment. In so doing, she reimagines consciousness raising as a medical process in line with the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, which according to Schaef offer "a set of tools to bring about a change from an *addictive system* to a *living process system*, which is a system we all know but have been trained out of" (26, emphasis Schaef's). Like Rousseau, Schaef figures both the problem and its solution in terms of habitual repetitions. The effect of this figuration is harmful in at least three ways. First, it threatens to pathologize women in care relationships as, themselves, disabled. Second, it makes it impossible to imagine a space in which a disabled woman could be considered independent. Finally, it denies the possibility that people might actively choose careers in care labor.

In her successful performance of masculinity in private and public spaces—including formal schooling—Sir Sidney seemingly affirms Wollstonecraft's position. After taking some time to learn femininity, Sir Sidney re-emerges as Walsingham's mate and the exemplar of both masculine and feminine virtues. And yet the spectre of the vortex of dissipation does not

disappear from the novel's denouement. In a moment between reading of Isabella' engagement and hearing Lady Aubrey's revelation, Walsingham allows Sir Sidney to take "the phial of medicine which stood on [Walsingham's] table" (475). This phial is later revealed to have been the laudanum Walsingham purchased with suicidal intent. Walsingham claims he did not realize which phial Sidney drinks and is thus surprised, after hearing Lady Aubrey's confession, to find Sidney "dying" (479). But given that Walsingham knowingly supervised the administration of laudanum to Sidney from this very vial mere chapters earlier, his claim that he did not know what was in the phial in this instance stretches credibility. And while Walsingham frames this revelation with regret, his actual words, "I had destroyed the amiable Sidney" (479), would be equally fitting in a vengeful account.

I point this out not to accuse Walsingham of knowingly attempting murder so much as to point to the novel's refusal even in its conclusion to offer satisfactory distinctions between care and harm or romantic love and homosocial rivalry. Sidney recovers, but the novel refuses to explain how. Walsingham offers a vague account in the passive voice: "The poison of the pernicious drug was counteracted" (480). Lady Aubrey claims for Sidney the accomplishments of both sexes. She was "educated in masculine habits but every affection of her heart is beautifully feminine; heroic though tender; and constant, though almost hopeless" (477-478). But the dangers of *Walsingham*'s sickrooms, which match and echo the dangers of fashionable and public society, serve as a reminder that those un-gendered attributes become, under the right circumstances, threatening in their own right.

By blurring the distinction between harm and care, the novel's conclusion reaffirms the sentiment of the poem that Walsingham uses to mark his childhood fall into dependency, "Ode to the Snow-drop." The poem is about the first flower of spring, which withers and is supplanted by

the more hearty and decorous flowers to come. But in Robinson/Walsingham's account, the snow-drop's life cycle is characterized by a lack of filial attention. Rather than attend to her first-born, "Spring shall all her gems unfold, / And revel 'midst her buds of gold" (29-30). What attention the snow-drop does receive comes instead from the sun. The sun's rays nourish those later gems of spring, but they destroy the snow-drop:

> On thee the sunny beam
> No touch of genial warmth bestows;
> Except to thaw the icy stream
> Whose little current purls along,
> The fair and glossy charms among,
> And whelms thee as it flows. (13-18)

The adjective "genial" here works in multiple and sometimes contradictory ways, invoking gentle weather (provided by the sun), the feelings of sympathy, and the standard workings of the mind (which Coleridge will later, picking up on Milton, term in *Dejection: An Ode* his "genial spirits"). But at the same time, it points back to the word's original sense in connection with marriage and procreation. The sun's "genial warmth" becomes in this instance parental care that unwittingly undoes the flower it should support with sun light and the water of thawing snow and ice (another substance that should nurture). Like Hamlet, the snow-drop suffers from having been too much in the sun.

As both the narrator and the victim of dissipation of those to whom he is to be dependent, Walsingham is the most obvious stand-in for Mary Robinson, particularly given her self-representation in the *Memoir*. His shift in the novel from the victim of inadequate care (the snow-drop) to the giver of dangerous care (in the episode with the phial of opium), too, rings true

to Robinson's movement from wife suffering because of her husband's debts to author writing to support her family. But she is also legible in Sir Sidney's androgyny and in Lady Aubrey's efforts to re-apply her dissipating energies towards the good of her child and the mixed results that come from that shift. These questions recur in Robinson's work in ways that I will return to in the final portion of the chapter, but for now I want to turn my attention to how Coleridge's considerations of these topics arise in large part from Robinson's influence.

Coleridge published a response to "Snow-drop" under a pen name. Appearing in *The Morning Post* on 3 January 1798, "The Apotheosis, or The Snow-Drop" addresses the flower directly, drawing on classical conceptions of poetic immortality to assure it that Robinson's verse has made a place for it in eternity. In so doing, he explicitly carves out space there for Robinson herself and, implicitly, for the bard who places her there. Echoing Robinson's associations of dissipation, drug use, and care, Coleridge's "Pierian climes" are full of laurels that serve simultaneously intoxicating and restorative purposes (20). In this place, "A heavenly Lethe steals" in to "fit the soul to re-endure / It's [*sic*] earthly martyrdom" (40, 47-48). In this way, then, Robinson's verse becomes a painkiller for the snow-drop. But if the poem seeks to ease the flower's pain, its focus on Robinson's role in effecting that cure raises important questions about the interrelated natures of care and poetic influence. This intoxicated sleep offers the snow-drop the strength to endure spring's "whelming thaw" (3), but Coleridge employs an image of a harp "Uphung by golden chains" to suggest that this restorative sleep also produces "music […] half-perceiv'd" that becomes for Robinson the raw materials of new verse (57, 61). In applying it to Robinson, Coleridge turns this central Romantic image of poetic inspiration into a figure for a mise en abyme of influence. Influenced by these half-heard melodies, Robinson produces "potent sorceries of song" and "witching rhymes" (6, 18). In so doing, she serves the harp function not

only for the snow-drop but also, presumably, for Coleridge, whose assertion of Robinson's poetic merit necessarily affirms his own as well. In calling that therapeutic influence "witching rhymes" and "potent sorceries," Coleridge expresses concern about his attraction to Robinson's powers and their influences in ways that complicate his own thinking about dependency. Throughout his work, Coleridge's invocations of dependency, intoxication, and care express unresolved fear and anxiety about the effects of those relationships.

"Have Pity on my Poor Distress": Care in "Christabel"

Coleridge expresses his ambivalence about care in both his published work and in his private writings and correspondence. In two concurrent notebook entries from late 1800, during a time when Hartley was ill, Coleridge records dreams in which Hartley's illness becomes a supernatural force and a feminine supernatural poses a threat to his own bodily and mental stability. On November 27, he writes, "Hartley taken ill, white as a sheet—the snow-Mountains almost covered with a *fog*, yet here & there & every where clear spots of bright yellow Sunshine" (Note 846). On the next evening, Coleridge records a dream of a supernatural woman who mounts a rather corporeal attack on Coleridge's own body:

> Friday Night, Nov. 28, 1800, or rather Saturday Morning—a most frightful Dream of a Woman whose features were blended with darkness catching hold of my right eye & attempting to pull it out—I caught hold of her arm fast-a horrid feel— […] when ~~my~~ I awoke, my right eyelid swelled— (Note 848)

Jo Taylor connects these entries through their shared supernatural imagery. The connection suggests for Taylor that "STC's awareness of Hartley's illness informs his own consciousness of his physical ailments" (82). Even more, the juxtaposition of Hartley's ghastly appearance with this feminine ghost that causes Coleridge physical pain suggests a fear that familial connection

produces pain. Taylor's reading of the dreams suggests for Coleridge a similar set of concerns as those expressed by Robinson and even Wollstonecraft: caring for Hartley does not merely remind Coleridge of his own bodily instability by way of analogy; it directly threatens it.

These notebook entries provide a very different account of fatherhood than that expressed in his more well-known poem "Frost at Midnight." There, Coleridge spins from a narrative account of fatherly care for his child a model of fatherhood that offers his child mental and physical independence. In his own childhood, Coleridge was "pent" by his urban surroundings and an oppressive education (52). Hartley, in contrast, will be free to "wander like a breeze" and thereby, presumably, become capable of stirring at will the strings of his own Aeolian harp (54). There are hints here of the associationist mind at work in Rousseau and Wollstonecraft. But as these notebook entries about Hartley suggest, the mind's plasticity can incur as many dangers as opportunities. The fact that similar metaphors of witchery recur throughout Coleridge's efforts to think through the effects of Mary Robinson's influence on his verse demonstrates that these are, for Coleridge, related concerns. Coleridge's reliance on a similar set of metaphors in discussing authorial influence and familial connection perhaps receives its fullest airing in Coleridge's gothic fragment, "Christabel." Throughout "Christabel," images of supernatural forces, femininized monsters, disability, and intoxication intermingle to express overlapping fears about the incompatibility of independence, familial connections, and networks of poetic influence.

For all its gothic conventions, the plot of the first part of "Christabel" is legible as an account of caregiving: Christabel finds Geraldine in distress, physically helps her walk to a castle, and gives her a "cordial wine" that restores some of her strength. These scenes of care arguably anticipate the tendency of Coleridge's critics to read both the poem's characters and the

poem itself as the source and site of a contagious disease.[12] But they also in some ways affirm those critics' fears by suggesting that sites of caregiving might also be sites of infection or intoxication. The first part of "Christabel," composed in 1797, expresses a twinned desire for and fear of caregiving that resonates with twentieth-century models of co-dependency. Part II, composed in 1800 around the time of Hartley's illness, recontextualizes these concerns as problems inherent in the structures of patriarchal authority, which creates and enforces a myth of masculine independence through a vast network of familial dependencies. In this way, the "Christabel" fragment makes explicit the implied concerns in the conclusion of Walsingham. "Christabel" suggests that patriarchal authority does not merely produce co-dependency among its subjects: it demands it.

This argument draws in part on Holmes's observations about the importance of care and caregiving in Coleridge's life and writings. Holmes traces those experiences to the various depictions of illness and care in Coleridge's verse:

> For Coleridge, the act of nursing or being nursed, and the intimacy of the sickroom, eventually became an emblem of true love and understanding. Sickroom incidents are frequent in his life, and gradually begin to pass into his poetry as a major theme. (15n)

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[12] For an account of the contemporary reception to *Christabel* that figured it, its genre, and its author as both pathology and effeminate (and, ultimately, a pathologically effeminate text), see Swann (1985). In exposing the gendered terms along which critics attacked *Christabel*, however, Swann carries over the metaphors of disease and disability: Coleridge's male readers react "hysterically" to the ways that *Christabel* dramatized "a range of problematically invested literary relations" (398). Those metaphors recur in *Christabel* criticism. Charles Tomlinson (1956) describes Geraldine's influence on Christabel as, at once, a force that disintegrates "personality" and "the will" and as "incipient disease" (106). He suggests that the poem dramatizes "the sick undermining the healthy" (112). Paul Manguson (1974) argues that Geraldine's transformation from "beautiful woman" to "hideous hag" "parallels Christabel's awareness of the evil that she herself has produced" (94-95). Anya Taylor (2002) moves the contagion out into Coleridge's readers, arguing that the poem's "lulling, almost lobotomized repetition" can "drive readers 'mad'" and "does to listeners what Geraldine does to Christabel: leaves them anxious and ungrounded" (707).

Holmes makes a connection between Coleridge's penchant for care giving and his late-life opium dependency:

> Psychologically this suggests something about his "dependent" personality (of which dependency on opium was only one manifestation). For all his intellectual brilliance and daring, Coleridge was often drawn to this twilight state, in which the distinction between adult and child could be magically suspended, responsibilities waived, and physical tenderness be freely exchanged without sexual guilt. (15n)

Like Holmes, I recognize the many ways that Coleridge's lived experience of the sickroom informs his poetry. However, I depart from Holmes's psychological reading of this tendency as of a kind with a dependent personality that opposes or contrasts with "his intellectual brilliance and daring" (15).

In distinguishing brilliance from dependence and linking care work to pathologized forms of dependency like addiction, Holmes sounds a bit like Schaef, who marks caregivers as naturally co-dependent.[13] Schaef implies that what Kittay will recognize as the systemic devaluation of care labor results from co-dependents' inherent pathology:

> Since co-dependents have such low self-esteem and are so externally referented, they are often caretakers. Caretaking is a special characteristic of the "co-

[13] Marguerite Babcock and Christine McKay's edited volume, *Challenging Codependency: Feminist Critiques* (1995) offers an extensive, interdisciplinary set of critiques of the concept. Christine McKay's "Codependency: The Pathologizing of Female Oppression" argues persuasively that co-dependency overlooks feminist research on gendered power differentials in relationships. Other critics have noted that in her zeal to produce this disease category, she has "extended the parameters of symptomatology beyond all limits" (Harper 41). Marguerite Babcock, pointing to other, similarly expansive clinical definitions of co-dependency, argues that "the freely shifting definitions of codependency […] feeds into the rambling, grandiose assertions made about codependency" (3-4). Elizabeth Ettorre (1997) also discusses the pathologizing of women connected to male addicts in her work on feminist addiction studies, taking up co-dependency explicitly to argue that "the idea of co-dependency confirms a traditional view: the centrality of relationships in women's lives and women's almost total responsibility for maintaining relationships" (154).

> dependent" characterized by their penchant for martyrdom and their "need to be needed" (52-53).

Caretaking, then, for Schaef, is characterized by a sort of insistence on self-denial that deletes personal boundaries altogether. Despite her best intentions, Schaef's co-dependency paradigm becomes something of a feedback loop. Co-dependency effectively serves to stigmatize those placed into economic and physically dependent relationships by systemic forces related to gender, sexuality, race, and/or disability. In turn, the stigmatization of that labor (and those who perform it) devalues it. Schaef's insistence on an individual path out through treatment does not address the inequities within the system and, instead, unwittingly contributes to the stigma faced by those without the resources to escape it.

Rather than contest Holmes's reading of Coleridge's intersecting dependencies, I want to challenge the distinction that both Holmes and Coleridge make between chemical and interpersonal dependencies and intellectual accomplishment. That distinction is historically contingent—for Holmes as much as for Coleridge. "Dependency," in every sense of the word, is surely a problem for Coleridge, the poet. But in working through that problem, Coleridge perhaps unwittingly reveals that the logic that associates independence with productivity serves more to maintain patriarchal authority than to enable the productivity of genius. Coleridge's insistence on maintaining the ideal of independence may have been as stifling to his creative development as his inability to consistently achieve that ideal.[14] But as Kittay's work demonstrates, that logic persists and is, in fact, even more obscured today than it was for

[14] The question of how Coleridge's play with the entanglements of chemical, interpersonal, and textual influence might revise Harold Bloom's influential concept of the "anxiety of influence" warrants further consideration beyond the scope of this chapter. It also raises questions about how that anxiety operates differently when the influence is not another man.

Coleridge. Perhaps merely by leaving “Christabel” unfinished, Coleridge mounts a critique of independence that anticipates Kittay’s.

Although Holmes does not discuss “Christabel” in the context of care, the poem has much to say about Coleridge’s understanding of care work. The relationship between Geraldine and Christabel, for all its meta-thematic, queer, and proto-Freudian energies, reads coherently as that of a caregiver and her dependent. Geraldine behaves in ways consistent with folk tales about witches or vampires. She is found mysteriously behind an oak tree and collapses at the castle’s threshold, forcing Christabel to carry her in. Geraldine’s response to Christabel’s question, “who art thou?” (70), is for Karen Swann explicitly a fictional narrative grounded in accepted tropes of circulating library fiction. Swann argues that readers of “Christabel” overlook the extent to which Geraldine’s story is rooted in the trappings of genre fiction. In echoing Christabel’s own story and drawing on genre tropes, Geraldine’s account in the forest “complicates the issue of feminine identity by suggesting its entanglement, at the origin, with genre” (534). For Swann, that entanglement serves as a “seduction” for both Christabel and readers of the poem. But many of those folklore behaviors—appearing prone against a tree; requiring assistance in crossing the threshold—might also be the actions of one in need of care. In starting with Geraldine’s story, Swann overlooks the fact that she prefaces it with a request for aid:

> Have pity on my sore distress,
>
> I scarce can speak for weariness:
>
> Stretch forth thy hand, and have no fear! (73-76)

Geraldine requests care in response to a request for her identification. The substitution either posits her need for care as, in and of itself, an identifying detail or suggests that she has no

identity because she needs care. In either case, her immediate call for aid suggests that gothic conventions produce and rely on dependencies as a generator of plot.

In foregrounding Geraldine's need for care, Coleridge seems to rely on disability as "narrative prosthesis" (Mitchell and Snyder 1). In defining "narrative prosthesis," David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder argue that disability in fiction is typically not deployed as a meaningful identity category but, instead, as merely "a character-making trope in the writer's and filmmaker's arsenal" (1). The associations of bodily weakness and wounding with supernatural ill intent is surely operating within that narrative framework. However, Coleridge complicates these narratives by figuring those states as central to Geraldine's capacity for attracting Christabel. This narrative turn operates both in the poem's eroticization of the relationship and in its depictions of caregiving. In Christabel's bedchamber, the revelation of Geraldine's wounded breast is preceded by a scene of caregiving that blends pharmacy work with maternal care, as Christabel offers Geraldine an intoxicating medicine connected to Christabel's own mother:

> O weary lady, Geraldine,
>
> I pray you, drink this cordial wine!
>
> It is a wine of virtuous powers;
>
> My mother made it of wild flowers. (190-194)

The word "cordial" suggests both friendship and community and medicinal properties. The Oxford English Dictionary cites Christabel as an example for the definition, "Of medicines, food, or beverages: Stimulating, 'comforting', or invigorating the heart; restorative, reviving, cheering." In connecting it to her mother, whose spirit hovers over much of the action of Part I of the poem, Christabel connects the act of communion with herbal medicine typically associated with women.

The act ultimately restores Geraldine at the expense of Christabel's bodily autonomy. That transfer of power is evident in the difference between Geraldine's first and second doses of the cordial wine. While the first is offered by Christabel, Geraldine takes the second of her own accord:

> Again the wild-flower wine she drank:
>
> Her fair large eyes 'gan glitter bright,
>
> And from the floor whereon she sank,
>
> The lofty lady stood upright;
>
> She was most beautiful to see,
>
> Like a lady of a fair countree. (220-225)

In allowing her to stand "upright," the restorative power of the wild flower wine returns Geraldine to able-bodied humanity. Her "lofty" beauty is accentuated by her uprightness as both allow her to supplant both Christabel's mother (whom she casts away with a trance) and—importantly—Christabel from their roles as caregivers. Geraldine now wields the cordial wine herself and, with it, control of the bedchamber and those in it.

The blurring of alcohol and medicine into magical elixir reflects the poem's larger refusal to distinguish disability from suggestions of supernatural or monstrous beings. This slippage between monstrosity and deformity or disability suggests that the poem is playing with the pre-/early-modern moral model that understands physical disability as a divine marker of human imperfection or a sign of supernatural power.[15] The narrator's reflexive blessings of Christabel support such a reading, as does his introduction of Geraldine as an ambiguous "it":

> But what is it, she cannot tell.—

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[15] See: Daston and Park (1998)

On the other side it seems to be,

Of the huge, broad-breasted, old oak tree. (39-42)

The Coleridgean "it" here denies Geraldine gender and, perhaps, even humanity. That distinction is reinforced by the line break between "the other side" and the clarifying "Of the […] old oak tree." In coming to help Geraldine, Christabel crosses very clear boundaries of physical space and even of species. The poem refuses to determine whether those boundaries are merely physical or if they have supernatural import. This ambiguity is most explicit when Christabel brings Geraldine to the threshold of Sir Leoline's castle. Before entering the gate, we are told, "The lady sank, belike through pain" (129). The clarifying phrase suggests that Geraldine is playacting rather than feeling actual pain. Christabel's efforts to carry Geraldine over the threshold, therefore, connect Geraldine to a long folk tradition of vampirism and witchery. However, the collapse is consistent with Geraldine's immobility elsewhere in the poem. In Christabel's bedchamber, Geraldine "In wretched plight, / sank down upon the floor below" (188-189). Here, the narrator dispenses with accusations or implications and merely acknowledges Geraldine's "wretched plight." The shift here is a telling inconsistency that suggests, at the least, uncertainty about the nature of Geraldine's helplessness.

The conclusion of Part I refuses to resolve the question of whether Christabel and Geraldine's relationship is symbiotic or parasitic. The narrator clearly believes it to be the latter. His description of the women sleeping together blends care, intoxication, and seduction:

And lo! The worker of these harms,

That holds the maiden in her arms,

Seems to slumber still and mild,

As a mother with her child (298-301)

He begins here with the assumption that Geraldine is doing "harm," but presents nothing sinister in the appearance of the embrace, which, he acknowledges, "seems" maternal. We are left, then, to take his word for it that

> A star hath set, a star hath risen,
>
> O Geraldine! Since arms of thine
>
> Have been the lovely lady's prison.
>
> O Geraldine! one hour was thine—
>
> Thou'st had thy will! (302-306).

The suggestion that this embrace does harm are exclusively the impositions of the narrator's reading of the tableau. And even those glosses cannot fully write over the peaceful scene he describes. Christabel sleeps soundly in Geraldine's arms. Only in the speaker's verse do those arms become a "prison." Similarly, only the narrator declares the victory of Geraldine's will over Christabel. Geraldine herself remains silent in this moment.

A similar tension between appearance and interpretation operates in the speaker's account of the change in Christabel's "countenance," which "Grows sad and soft" after Christabel "gathers herself from out her trance" (312-314). This shift echoes the conclusion of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," in which the wedding guest wakes the morning after hearing the mariner's tale "sadder and wiser" (624). The intertext suggests that Christabel's encounter with Geraldine—like the wedding guest's meeting with the mariner—marks her move into experience. The suggestion re-frames the cordial wine as a source of communion for Christabel as much as for Geraldine. But the speaker's insistence on focusing on the "lovely" "prison" formed by Geraldine's maternal embrace makes it difficult to accept this reading uncritically. And while Christabel's countenance is changed by "visions sweet" that cause her to both cry and

smile in her sleep (326), it is impossible to tell whether the image is a true vision that marks her movement into identity or a false dream forced onto her by Geraldine. Ultimately, the speaker's nonspecific dread suggests that the distinction may not matter. The maternal prison may well be an enthrallment whether Geraldine intends it to be or not. In that case, as care giver becomes child (and the dependent becomes mother), the concluding tableau suggests that the boundaries around Christabel's identity are threatened merely by her relationship with Geraldine, regardless of Geraldine's actual intent. Such a suggestion anticipates in some ways Schaef on co-dependency. To paraphrase Schaef, it becomes difficult in this instance to tell where Christabel ends and Geraldine begins.[16] But at the same time, for all the gothic traditions that seem to mark Geraldine's ill intent, Coleridge's ambiguity in depicting them suggests a more vexed and complicated understanding of these influences than appear in Schaef's easy pathologizing.

The poem refuses to satisfactorily determine whether this transformation is the result of the nature of dependencies or something uniquely sinister about Geraldine. Christabel, for her part, seems throughout Part One a largely willing accomplice to Geraldine's recovery. When Geraldine tells Christabel to disrobe, Christabel obeys without question: "Quoth Christabel, so let it be! / And as the lady bade, did she" (235-236). But while this obedience happens after Geraldine's self-assertion with the second drink of canary wine, it is not noticeably different from Christabel and Geraldine's earlier interactions. From the moment she responds to the moan at the oak tree, Christabel does largely as "the lady bade" even to the point of employing subterfuge to ensure that her father does not learn of her actions. In requiring care, the poem seems to suggest, Geraldine exerts a powerful influence over her caregiver, who in agreeing to those requests threatens the boundaries of her own identity. Fittingly, then, the physical

[16] See Schaef 45.

expression of Christabel's submission to Geraldine re-asserts Geraldine's disabled/supernatural appearance even as she demonstrates a new-found mobility. One may wonder what Christabel gets, exactly, from this relationship. Schaef, addressing a similar question about "co-dependents," connects care work to intoxication:

> Co-dependents are relationship addicts who frequently use a relationship in the same way drunks use alcohol: to get a "fix." Since co-dependents feel they have no intrinsic meaning of their own, almost all of their meaning comes from the outside; they are almost completely externally referented. (44)

Schaef's model ignores the ways in which interested and non-neutral conceptions of "independence" have historically determined who can claim "intrinsic meaning." Moreover, her model for constructing a self is her own, 12-Step inspired program. The narrative sounds very much like Wollstonecraft and Rousseau's account of the associationist mind—if the mind is not possessed of a strong sense of self, another's will fill that vacuum. It also recalls Johnson's discussion of the opportunities and dangers of the novel's capacity for filling "vacuous" minds. Johnson is, in a sense, the most honest of these thinkers as he acknowledges that something must fill the mind. Perhaps Christabel, whose disobedience to her father, which opens the poem, is ultimately inspired by the pursuit of her "betrothed knight," is just such a vacuous mind.

One thing that does seem to be certain is that just as Christabel and Geraldine's relationship does not change over most of Part I, neither is Geraldine's disabled body radically cured. In bed following the wine scene, but unable to sleep, Christabel watches as Geraldine disrobes:

> Full in view,
>
> Behold! Her bosom and half her side—
>
> A sight to dream of, not to tell!

O shield her! shield sweet Christabel! (251-254)

A line canceled from all published versions of the poem seemingly offers some clarity in describing the revealed bosom and side as "lean and old and foul of hue." That line, in addition to resolving the rhyme scheme, would further the association of Geraldine's disabled body with her possibly supernatural force. But the published version denies its readers such narrative clarity or verse closure. Instead, it offers further ambiguities about Geraldine's nature. In either case, Geraldine remains marked with difference.

In the concluding episode of Part I, Geraldine engages in perhaps the most unambiguously sinister action of the poem: the curse of Christabel. In that curse, Geraldine suggests that this mark is contagious: "Thou knowest to-night, and wilt know to-morrow / This mark of my shame, this seal of my sorrow;" (269-270). But it remains unclear what, exactly is changed by this curse. Geraldine asserts that her spell makes her "lord of thy utterance, Christabel!" (268), but she employs that power solely to dictate the way that Christabel accounts for Geraldine's presence in Sir Leoline's castle. If asked about the evening, Christabel will only respond,

> Thou heard'st a low moaning,
>
> And found'st a bright lady, surpassingly fair;
>
> And didst bring her home with thee in love and in charity
>
> To shield her and shelter her from the damp air. (275-279)

Geraldine here takes from Christabel the power to say what she sees. And if Geraldine is a supernatural force, this innocent account of the evening is clearly nefarious. But it is also in a sense an honest account of what happened. Indeed, there is little evidence that Christabel even disagrees with this account at this point in the poem, a problem that may speak to either

Geraldine's innocence, to Christabel's inability to recognize the danger Geraldine poses, or, perhaps, to both at once. That ambiguity suggests that, for Coleridge, an innocent Geraldine might be as threatening to Christabel as an actively evil one. The threat she poses to Christabel is enacted in the mere act of sympathetic care—an act that Christabel is unable (and perhaps unwilling) to resist.

Anticipating, in a sense, Schaef's argument that co-dependency is encouraged if not outright produced by systemic forces, Coleridge uses Part II of the poem to recontextualize this scene of potentially dangerous feminine caregiving as happening within and at the behest of a larger system of patriarchal authority. Although Christabel finds Geraldine outside of the boundaries of the castle, the poem's opening description of the sound of the castle bell echoing across the landscape suggests that the lord of the castle's influence extends well beyond those walls. The insistent tolling of "the castle clock" at both the "quarters" and the "hour" shapes the soundscape of the surrounding areas by inspiring a cacophony of animal responses (1, 10). The "mastiff bitch" offers "sixteen short howls" in response to the bells (12). Even the owls' unmetrical "Tu—whit!——Tu—whoo!" (3), although not directly connected to the bells, are framed by it: "'Tis the middle of the night by the castle clock, / And the owls have awakened the crowing cock" (1-2). In this way, his dependents live, quite literally, to the time he sets. Sir Leoline's metrical expressions of his independence, in turn, stifle the opportunity for opposing voices to express themselves or—when they do speak up—to be interpreted as opposition. Within that power structure, Part II demonstrates that for Sir Leoline, dependents must prioritize his interests, even if they come at the expense of their own bodily autonomy.

The opening of Part II re-contextualizes the castle bell as not merely a marker of time but as part of a deliberate expression of Sir Leoline's authority. At his command, the castle bell is rung at regular intervals as both a memorial for his dead wife and

> a warning knell,
> Which not a soul can choose but hear
> From Bratha Head to Wyndermere (342-344)

Occasioned by the death of his wife, Sir Leoline's memento mori is forced upon his domain, who like the wedding guest "cannot choose but hear." But Sir Leoline's power comes not from a supernatural power or the force of his will but from his legal position. His aural influence on the landscape therefore has more in common with the power of Kubla Khan, who "decreed" the "stately pleasure-dome" (2). Just as the pleasure dome was unable to fully order and organize the landscape, Sir Leoline's bells do not stifle opposition voices. Bracy the Bard notes that the ghost of the sacristan's brothers—"three sinful sextons"—"give back, one after t'other, / The death-note to their living brother" (353-355). Likewise, the bells inspire mocking echoes from the devil:

> And oft too, by the knell offended,
> Just as their one! two! three! is ended,
> The devil mocks the doleful tale
> With a merry peal from Borodale. (356-359)

Swann reads in the echoing responses to the tolling bells a continuity with the poem's larger interest in exposing and mocking the "laws of gender and genre" (553). Bracy, Christabel, and the devil reiterate the sound, and in so doing each "simply 'lets' the law mock its own voice" (553). But even in mocking it, they nonetheless repeat it rather than replace it. Even voices that

explicitly oppose Sir Leoline's order ultimately re-affirm it by staying on his metrical time. It is unclear whether mocking repetition undermines or reinforces Sir Leoline's power. Coleridge's inability or refusal to conclude the poem perhaps suggests that this problem is not resolvable. The two known accounts of Coleridge's plans for concluding "Christabel" agreed that the poem was to end with Christabel marrying "her beloved."[17] For all his play with the prescribed laws of gender and genre, Coleridge failed to find a satisfactory ending outside of those laws.

The poem similarly reconfigures Bracy the bard's prophetic dream, which seems to stand in opposition to Sir Leoline's command that Bracy greet Sir Roland with the news of his daughter's safety. Bracy's dream allegorizes Christabel and Geraldine's meeting through the image of the snake strangling the dove while camouflaged by the surrounding "grass and green herbs underneath the old tree" (540). As Bracy and the speaker interpret it, the dream marks Christabel's painful fall into Geraldine's thrall. The image echoes the bedchamber tableau that ends Part I, as the snake uses the grass surrounding the dove to mask its influence on the bird. At first, Bracy fails to recognize why the dove seems to struggle. The image collapses the boundaries between the snake, the dove, and their surroundings. But just as the tolling of Sir Leoline's clock interrupts the dream (and sets to order the surrounding wilderness in both dream and reality), Sir Leoline himself cuts off Bracy's wish to act on his prophecy. Sir Leoline, "half-listening" (565), misinterprets the dream as a warning about Geraldine's safety. That interpretation re-affirms his command to Bracy. In this way, Sir Leoline subjects not only Christabel's and Bracy's desires, but also Geraldine's to his own. Each of them is useful only insofar as they support his wish to be reunited with his estranged friend. The poem's conclusion,

[17] The first account appears in Gillman's biography. Gillman asserted that Geraldine was to disappear, only to reappear in the guise of the beloved. Her plot would have been foiled by the knight's return. Derwent Coleridge's account is less specific but likewise suggested that Christabel's sufferings would be revealed to be in the service of reuniting her with her loved one.

in which Geraldine is elevated to the place of privilege in Sir Leoline's court, occurs because it pleases him, not because it will help her.

While Sir Leoline is asserting his self-interest by way of a misreading of Bracy's dream, Christabel is falling further into Geraldine's thrall by way of a "forced unconscious sympathy."[18] Fittingly, given the ways in which Geraldine is disabled throughout Part I, Christabel's expression of "forced unconscious sympathy" is marked as a loss of her own sound mind and body:

> Christabel in a dizzy trance
>
> Stumbling on the unsteady ground
>
> Shuddered aloud, with a hissing sound; (589-591)

In addition to losing her ability to speak, Christabel loses her capacity to stand upright. Coleridge emphasizes her dizziness, repeating the phrase "dizzy trance" later in the account (607). This "passiv[e]" imitation of Geraldine results from Christabel having "So deeply […] drunken in / That look, those shrunken serpent eyes" (601-602). The scene is a distorted reversal of their wild flower wine communion in Part I. Here, Christabel rather than Geraldine drinks in, but the results are the same. Christabel remains prone while Geraldine re-asserts her uprightness, as the poem concludes Part II with Geraldine walking alongside Sir Leoline, together leaving Christabel behind.

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[18] This phrase is a potential direct link between "Christabel" and Coleridge's relationship with Robinson. In the published version of "The Apotheosis," Coleridge praises Robinson's verse as an expression of "imitative sympathy," but an earlier draft considers the phrase "unconscious sympathy" (15). The phrase marks sympathy as fundamentally uncontrollable and, in the case of Christabel, a threat to the boundaries of the self. The draft appears in an (apparently unsent) letter to the *Monthly Review* long assumed to date from 1800. For an account of the discovery of the full poem along with a side-by-side comparison of the draft and published versions, see David Erdman's essay, "Lost Poem Found: The Cooperative Pursuit & Recapture of an Escaped Coleridge 'Sonnet' of 72 Lines," *Bulletin of the New York Public Library* 65 (1961): 249-68.

But the specific source of Christabel's intoxication is worth lingering on. The impulse that led Christabel to bring Geraldine into her bedroom is now a "forced unconscious" compulsion to "sympathy" that happens at the expense of her own bodily autonomy and well-being. She cannot choose but imitate her ward/oppressor. Here, that impulse takes the form of something like chemical intoxication. Following Schaef, we might say that without "intrinsic meaning," Christabel takes "almost all of [her] meaning from the outside"—namely, from Geraldine (Schaef 44). Disability, it would seem, follows. The very impulse that caused Christabel to provide Geraldine care here leaves her unmoored, nonverbal, and unable to control her body. But given that the hiss itself is directed at Sir Leoline, that disabling sympathy seems to oppose his order even as it destroys Christabel's autonomy. If the snake imagery creates continuity with Bracy's dream, the presumably unmetrical vocalization of Christabel's performance likewise recalls her and Geraldine's stealthy entrance into the castle in that both resist Sir Leoline's tolling time-keeping.

How, then, does the hospitality that brings Geraldine into the castle (and that Christabel, in Part I, directly connects to her father's sense of masculine chivalry) become resistance to her father's reign, particularly given Sir Leoline's excitement at hearing Geraldine's story? The short answer may well be that it does not. After all, Sir Leoline's rejection of his daughter occurs not because of this non-linguistic, unmetrical outburst, but in response to her later plea, "By my mother's soul do I entreat / That thou this woman send away!" (616-617). Unlike the hiss, the request seemingly subscribes to the power dynamics of Sir Leoline's castle. It respects his authority to make this decision, but it also attempts to co-opt the rhetorical power of his dead wife/Christabel's dead mother. In truth, then, her request threatens not only Sir Leoline's avenue towards a restoration of his friendship, but also the very grief by which he organizes his realm. In

rejecting this linguistic request rather than Christabel's non-communicative, dizzying fall, Sir Leoline takes issue with the challenge to his rule more than to his daughter's loss of identity. If she is co-dependent, but in the service of Sir Leoline's interests, all is well. A problem arises only if that co-dependency builds towards an opposition to his claim to independence.

Sir Leoline's decision to sacrifice his daughter's independence (in the sense of identity formation and free agency) at the altar of his independence (in the sense of patriarchal and economic sovereignty over his daughter, his subjects, the memory of his wife, and Geraldine) demonstrates the extent to which patriarchal power depends on feminine dependencies. In a sense, this revelation leaves Coleridge with an insight that makes traditional resolutions to this gothic narrative inadequate if not counter-intuitive. Marriage to the beloved would resolve the heroine's individual situation while ultimately re-affirming the system of dependence that initiated the problem of Geraldine's dependence/influence on Christabel. These dependencies prove unresolvable because the generic confines of the romance depend upon them. Even in breaking off from her work to enable Geraldine and her father, the best Christabel can hope for is to enter a more benevolent dependence-based relationship with the "betrothed knight."

Throughout the poem, questions of dependencies and enthrallment operate on two registers: the familial and the literary. In the familial, "Christabel" demonstrates the ways in which patriarchal authority warps even love and charity to its needs. Christabel and Geraldine become, like the Mariner and the Wedding Guests, figures through which Coleridge considers the ways that literary dependencies operate in a market that ostensibly values originality. Coleridge's preface, which at once asserts independence from and claims a dependency to Walter Scott's similar (and wildly successful) "The Lay of the Last Minstrel," frames the poem

with the latter set of considerations.[19] But the conclusion to Part II—a slightly revised version of some lines Coleridge wrote about Hartley in a letter to Robert Southey—closes the poem in a way that unites the two concerns. Six months after he recorded the dream of the ghostly woman, Coleridge introduces an early version of these lines in the letter with a brief consideration of the dangers his love for Hartley poses to his own mental constitution:

> Dear Hartley! we are at times alarmed by the state of his Health—but at present he is well—if I were to lose him, I am afraid, it would exceedingly deaden my affection for any other children I may have—— (728)

The introduction to the lines here describes how caring for Hartley has changed Coleridge. But the lines themselves point to the ways that Coleridge—in figuring Hartley in verse—likewise reshapes Hartley. Coleridge's imagination transforms the "little child" to a "limber elf" and, in so doing, "Must needs express his Love's Excess / In Words of Wrong and Bitterness" (728). Even if the letter itself does not acknowledge it, the verse reveals an underlying truth of familial life organized around patriarchal conceptions of independence of particular concern for a father/poet. Coleridge suggests that it is difficult—if not impossible—for him to imagine his relationship to Hartley outside of this system that damages the son. In the published poem, Coleridge deflects his own agency in the process by admitting only to producing "Words of *unmeant* bitterness"

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[19] Scott's poem was inspired in its subject matter and metrical construction by manuscript versions of "Christabel," but was published before it. Coleridge's preface, then, preemptively defends "Christabel" against accusations of plagiarism while also suggesting that even if it was not rightly his, Coleridge needs the credit more than Scott:

> I am confident, however, that as far as the present poem is concerned, the celebrated poets whose writings I might be suspected of having imitated, either in particular passages, or in the tone and the spirit of the whole, would be among the first to vindicate me from the charge, and who, on any striking coincidence, would permit me to address them in this doggerel version of two monkish Latin hexameters.
>
> 'Tis mine and it is likewise yours;
> But an if this will not do;
> Let it be mine, good friend! for I
> Am the poorer of the two. (68)

Samuel Rowe (2016) reads meter in *Christabel* as "the product of a struggle between a mind and its impulses" (579).

(665, emphasis mine). But in both versions, Coleridge imagines what D. B. Ruderman calls a "perverse economy of love" (71). By expressing his care both directly to Hartley and in writing, Coleridge does his son harm.

The image explicitly recasts the seemingly clear account of fatherly care of "Frost at Midnight" as itself a sacrifice of Hartley, the actual child, to Coleridge's authorial ambition. Coleridge seems to worry that his own work provides a structural space that denies Hartley the independence that Coleridge's poetic ambitions demand for himself. In allowing his poetic "I" to wander, Coleridge "pents" Hartley up in verses. That shift to the familial raises an added complication to Coleridge's ultimately aborted efforts to finish "Christabel." Not only is he a Christabel, subject to the enthralling influences of those poets around him, but he may well also be Sir Leoline in that, by asserting his own personhood, he necessarily makes a dependent of Hartley. Perhaps "Christabel" must remain unfinished for Hartley's sake.

"Excit[ing] Emulation": Mary Robinson's Sickroom Coterie

Mary Robinson's recognition of the complex relationship between parental care and poetic production is evidenced in her "Sonnet to Mrs. Charlotte Smith, on Hearing that her Son was Wounded at the Siege of Dunkirk" (1793). The poem centers on Smith's motherly mix of anxiety and pride for her patriot son, who lost a leg in the battle. The conclusion, however, turns on the suggestion that fame is a limited resource for which mother and son must ultimately compete: "And, while for him a laurel'd couch she strews / Fair Truth shall snatch a Wreath, to deck his parent muse!" (13-14). In Robinson's account, Smith's expression of motherly pride necessarily reflects on the poetic fame of his "parent muse." Some of the laurels that would be his must be reserved instead for the woman whose existing verse makes his bravery noteworthy to the public. The verb "snatch" suggests that this transfer is done without his permission, but

Smith's laurels nonetheless actually worked to her son's benefit. Smith, after all, paid his surgeon with a copy of her collected works. In this way, Smith's previous success enables her to care for her son while his injury further affirms and supports the value of both her old and potential new writings.

While Coleridge is troubled by these necessary familial/economic relationships to the point of leaving "Christabel" as a fragment, Robinson's work builds towards a coherent strategy that re-writes dependency not as antithetical to the impulses of genius, but as a model for re-thinking intellectual productivity as an inherently collaborative process. If Coleridge's relationships with his children and with his influences are co-dependent in that drawing on them ultimately cuts off all participants off from the promise of self-sufficiency and independence, Robinson's relationships are interdependent. She understands her characters and her readers as part of a consistently fluctuating current of influences that, if properly understood, can be mutually and collectively beneficial. While *Walsingham* demonstrates an ambivalence about the effects of relationships of care on both participants, elsewhere in Robinson's late writings she offers an account of dependency work and collaborative intellectual production that anticipates Kittay's dependency critique of the Enlightenment's idealization of the independent rational self. In recognizing interdependency, Robinson provides a model for re-thinking intellectual and artistic pursuits separated from individual ambition.

This is not to say that Robinson does not share Coleridge's concerns. Like Coleridge, Robinson often entangles questions about interpersonal dependencies and drug use. This function is perhaps most explicit in her short poem "The Invocation" (1792). Two years after it appeared in the *Oracle*, the poem was published in an expanded version in Robinson's 1794 *Poems*. There, it is given the longer and more specific title, "Invocation, Written on the Recovery of My

Daughter from Inoculation, and First Published with the Signature of Oberon." In both versions, Oberon answers the distraught parent's call for aid, pledging to gather and administer herbs and drugs—both real and supernatural—to contribute to Maria's safe recovery. A passage added to the 1794 version includes lines describing the administration of opium. The addition points to opium as both an element of and a metaphor for the work of care done in the sickroom. In both cases, it validates that labor as skilled and dangerous. Oberon takes "From the poppy":

> Mortal's balm, and mortal's bane!
>
> Juice that, creeping through the heart,
>
> Deadens ev'ry sense of smart;
>
> Doom'd to heal, or doom'd to ill;
>
> Fraught with good, or fraught with ill. (n.441)

Robinson's account of the "juice of the poppy" foregrounds the very real physical dangers inherent in using opium in the eighteenth century. Given that the opium trade was entirely unregulated in the period, the potency of opium-based products varied unpredictably.[20] Overdoses were a real, but necessary, risk associated with using what was essentially the only drug that worked in the period. Robinson/Oberon's work here, then, is dangerous and requires great skill and care rooted in experiences of the sickroom.

If the juice of the poppy allows Robinson to ground Oberon's flight in her real knowledge as giver and receiver of care, it also threatens to return us to fairyland through the opium dream. Robinson explicitly raises this threat when Oberon goes on to describe himself stealing the poppy from witches while they were "Busy o'er a murd'rous spell." The image hints at the both the witches of *Macbeth* and the central scene of "Tam O'Shanter," Robert Burns's

[20] See Berridge (1999), 62-72.

mock-epic tale of a drunken man witnessing the midnight revels of witches and warlocks. In so doing, Robinson points to the historical association of real intoxicants with supernatural potions.[21] That invocation re-writes Oberon's care work as, itself, a method of creative production. In gathering these intoxicants, that is, Oberon/Robinson produce an intoxicating bit of verse. At the same time, this collection of intoxicating texts and substances, described in the voice of a character from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, raises several interrelated questions about liberty and necessity, the borders of the self, and the ways in which chemical intoxicants and interpersonal influence might warp all these questions.

Here, Robinson suggests that those discourses intersect in the sickroom in ways that are at once illuminating and ultimately unresolvable. Oberon's movement from real to metaphorical treatment keeps open the questions of influence raised by the poppy. The boundaries of identity are explicitly challenged in Oberon's climactic description of his own sentimental concern for Maria, which Robinson codes explicitly as another medical treatment. Oberon promises:

> Round about her aching head,
> Many a healing drop I'll shed;
> From her pale, and alter'd face,
> Health, the sickly hue shall chase;
> Health, that through the bosom flows,
> And bathes the cheek, (53-558)

His tear drops here recall laudanum, which was added by dropper into another liquid—typically, but not exclusively, alcohol—to produce a drinkable anodyne. Further additions to the 1794 version of the poem explicitly indicate that these tears function as a painkiller: "When they reach

[21] See: Roth (2005), 59-76.

her languid eye / Soon the rending pang shall fly" (n.441). The ambiguity of the diction here—in which the tears reach Maria's eye—raises an unanswerable question. Do the tears work because Maria sees them? Or are they physically dropped from Oberon's eye into her own? Either way, in the conclusion of the 1794 version, Oberon takes the place of the juice of the poppy in Maria's body, vowing never to "depart / From the gentle maiden's heart" (n441). The image is protective to the point of almost being sinister. The sentimental transaction of care necessarily and permanently transforms Maria's body against her will.

In this way, the poem sticks to the narrative arc and metaphorical construction of Robinson's explicitly erotic Della Cruscan poems. This makes sense given her use of the Oberon pen name, which she inaugurated with "Oberon to the Queen of the Fairies," a poem in that Della Cruscan tradition.[22] That poem, like this one, finds Oberon interested in a young girl named Maria. There, Oberon, at Titania's request, facilitates Il Ferito's sexual advances on Maria by causing her to dream of his positive attributes. Fittingly, that effort, like Oberon's caregiving in "An Invocation," relies on images of chemical intoxication. Oberon plans to come to Maria while she is in a sleep brought on by "nectar […] / sweeter than haughty JUNO sips" (23-24). When he hears the name "Il Ferito" on her lips, he puts in her mind "picture[s]" of his best qualities (39). In a posthumously published Oberon poem, "Oberon's Invitation to Titania," Oberon employs a similar tactic to his own benefit, hoping to seduce Titania by enticing her to "sip / The dew that from each herb is flowing" (7-8). The vague title given to "An Invocation" in 1792 seems to encourage readers to understand the poem as a part of this tradition. Daniel Robinson notes that this Maria is clearly younger than the Maria of the earlier poem and Oberon concludes with the paternal pledge to be the "watchful […] Guardian of her destiny" (61-62).

[22] Further suggesting Robinson's mixed thinking about caregiving and eroticism, she used the Oberon pen name for her poem to Charlotte Smith as well.

But Oberon also muddies these waters by eroticizing her illness, focusing on her "fev'rish lip," "crimson blushes," and "throbbing pulse" (46-47, 52). These images elicited an anonymous response, "Titania's Reply," in the *Oracle*. In it, Titania offers a jealous rejoinder to Oberon's dalliance with Maria as if that interaction constituted some form of infidelity. This was perhaps not unexpected by Robinson, who before the month was out published a response to Titania that takes up the playful eroticism suggested by her interlocutor. In this way, Robinson at once expresses and takes literary advantage of the ambivalence she feels about both the labor of care and the labor of literary production.

If this poem suggests that parental ambition can oppose childhood development, Robinson's "Golfre, A Gothic Swiss Tale" explicitly foregrounds these concerns. Golfe tells the tale of the Baron Golfre's disastrous efforts to force the peasant girl Zorietto into marriage. After coercing her into the marriage by threatening her caretaker, a local goatherd, Golfre spends the morning of their intended wedding day violently murdering her beloved. The wedding, however, is interrupted by supernatural forces that unclasp Zorietto's clothing to reveal a birthmark that proves Zorietto is Golfre's daughter and that Golfre was born of his first wife while he kept her locked in "a flinty Tow'r" (77), where she would soon after die.

As in "Christabel," the setting of "Golfre" is organized around the sovereignty of its tyrannical patriarch. The poem opens on an image of the Baron Golfre's "Castle Strong" "Towering above" the surrounding landscape. Like Sir Leoline's castle bells, the Baron Golfre's bells toll out at midnight. But the sound is not matched by owlets or a mastiff bitch, but by the Baron Golfre himself:

> Oft, upon the pavement bare,
>
> He'd dash his limbs and rend his hair

With terrible emotion!

And sometimes he, at midnight hour

Would howl, like wolves wide-prowling; (29-32)

Just as Sir Leoline's bells give time to the surrounding forest, Golfre's ranging enforces an implicit power over his domain. In a sharp contrast, Robinson's account makes explicit the violence inherent to such expressions of power. Golfre does not merely howl across his land. He prowls it like a wolf. Golfre's savagery proves a blunt metaphor for an impulse like Sir Leoline's self-interested effort to impose order on the natural world. In pursuing his own interests, Golfre turns the entire world into his potential prey. These two expressions of Golfre's tyranny work in concert to coerce Zorietto into a marriage. He meets her when he arrives, bloody, at her gate at the end of one of his violent fits. Smitten, he returns after three days to ask for her hand. The goatherd, reminding him of his first wife, refuses consent. Zorietto agrees only after Golfre threatens his life. On the morning of the wedding, however, Golfre asserts his independent and all-reaching power in eliminating a potential rival. He meets Zorietto's beloved atop his mountain home and "seiz'd the Youth, and madly strew'd / The white Cliff, with his streaming blood" (354-355). The bloody scene ("His heart lay frozen on the snow" [359].) is enough to suggest that the young man was done in by a wolf. Based on the evidence, Zorietto readily believes the story.

The marriage, in turn, is only stopped by a series of supernatural interventions. Neither the goatherd, who is absent, nor Zorietto, who faints "cold as a corpse" (397), has any real agency in contesting Golfre's will. Instead, her clothing falls away to reveal the birth mark that makes Golfre recognize her as his child:

> The pearly clasp, self-bursting, show'd
>
> Her beating side, where crimson glow'd
>
> Three spots, of nature's painting." (399-401)

Like Geraldine, Zorietto engages in a telling disrobing. But she does not remove her clothing—the clothing falls away of its own accord. Golfre recognizes the birth marks as the same as those on "his buried Lady's side" and on "The Baby, who had early died" (403, 409), thereby revealing that Zorietto is the child spirited away from Golfre's tower and her mother is the wife left there to die.

Thus, while all Golfre's words (and actions) are put towards producing *meant* bitterness and violence—including the violent murder of Zorietto's lover—he is ultimately undone their *unmeant* effect on his daughter. Even still, he does not succumb to his guilt until further supernatural intervention from the spirits of Zorietto's dead mother and lover. They descend, pass through the ceremony, and stop to pray at Zorietto's "little cross" while "three paly lights" that match both her glowing birth mark and the lights of Golfre's castle at midnight "descend" with them (427, 438). As the vision dissipates, it is replaced by a storm that sends "a fragment huge / From the steep summit" where Golfre murdered Zorietto's peasant-lover (448-449).[23] Zorietto is seemingly saved from Golfre's savage pursuit of self-interest, then, by the sacrificial and collaborative efforts of her dead mother and lover, who forge a union in her service. But even this is not fully enough to stop Golfre. Instead, he demands that she explain why she is

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[23] The echo of the "redounding" "fragments" of Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" should not be dismissed as coincidence given an earlier description of the landscape, which echoes further Coleridge's "dulcimer," "mingled measure" and "fountains":

> And no the breeze began to blow,
> Soft-stealing up the mountain;
> It seem'd at first a dulcet sound—
> Like mingled waters, wand'ring round,
> Slow falling from a fountain. (217-221)

afraid. When she responds that she fears not the supernatural storm but "that wolf" that she thinks killed her beloved, Golfre confesses, calls for forgiveness, and falls dead (483). Zorietto's fear of this single wolf, rather than a pack, reframes Golfre's ambitions as outside of the natural/familial order. Zorietto's (unmeant) accusation demonstrates to Golfre the ultimately self-defeating ends of his pursuit of his own desire.

The poem ends with the image of Zorietto praying to the little cross alone, but in the presence of the "three lamps" that suggest at once a connection to the mother and lover whose earthly sacrifice and spiritual intervention enabled her freedom from Golfre and a movement of the family seat from Golfre's castle—where these lamps first appear—to the surrounding lands (539). The image positions Zorietto and the spirits of her mother and lover as an echo of (or, perhaps, a replacement for) the trinity. That displacement suggests a method by which to re-consider the terms of the poem's moral:

> For CHARITY and PITY kind,
> To gentle souls are given;
> And MERCY is the sainted pow'r,
> Which beams thro' mis'ry's darkest hour,
> And lights the way—TO HEAVEN! (544-548)

The charity that dooms Christabel here takes the place of the erotic/companionate love that a marriage plot might reinforce. In existing outside of the walls of "The BARON GOLFRE's castle strong" (and therefore likewise outside of legal/economic systems it supports), this supernatural family unit likewise exists outside of the structure of marriage and reproduction that supports Golfre's sovereignty (3). But importantly "Golfre" does not reveal Zorietto's parentage to restore

her to her family seat. It does so to liberate her from it through the spiritual echo of her loved ones' sacrifices.

What remains is a closing tableau devoid of romantic pairings or the promise of an extension of the familial line. The lover is there, but, we might say, only in spirit. In this way, Robinson's poem offers an escape from the confines of contemporary conceptions of liberty based on independence, but only one marked by violence, suffering, and loss and with no means to perpetuate itself. To bring Zorietto to this moment, Robinson hoists Golfre's remains—already "Black, wither'd, smear'd with gore" (533)—"high on a gibbet" (534). But she must also send Zorietto's peasant-lover to a death so violent that Zorietto finds it easier to believe it the work of wolf than man. In this way, "Golfre" takes part in what Diane Long Hoeveler has called "victim feminism" in that it figures women's oppression through acts of patriarchal violence in gothic fictions. But at the same time, it figures resistance to that violence explicitly in the form of circles of familial care.

Robinson's late private letters, written from her sickroom, advocate a similar (if less violent) sort of cooperative, collaborative reflection and tethering of identities. In one letter, she expresses her desire for "a world of Talents, drawn into a small but brilliant circle" to produce a "harmony of Souls" (qtd. in Pascoe 43-44). Judith Pascoe connects that idea directly to another strand in Robinson's letters in this period—that is, boastful descriptions of the broad circle of literary, intellectual, and social luminaries that regularly gathered in her sickroom. She writes to Samuel Jackson Pratt that

> I am still tormented with ill health, but I have had my Cottage perpetually full of visitors ever since I came to it: and some charming literary characters, -- *autheresses* -- &ccc. (321).

Pascoe connects this bit of bragging to a letter to Jane Porter from the following month in which she describes a desire for a "select Society" to produce "a splendid sunshine" (326). But this dream is made impossible by those "malignant Spirit[s] of contention, — the Demons Envy, Calumny, and Vanity, led on by the Imp Caprice, and the phantom Imagination" (326). Robinson in this letter inverts Coleridge's depiction of supernatural forces in "Christabel" and even—to an extent—her own in "Golfre." Here, the witcheries are not in others but in the self. Dependency is not the work of deceitful witches but the production of harmony; the self-interested passions, teasing demons. Robinson's movement from the corporeal—the Demons and Imps—to the ghostly—the phantom Imagination—serves as a useful reminder that we began with the question of dissipation. If, as Walsingham's account suggests, dissipation is a feedback loop that threatens independence by encouraging and requiring further dissipating acts, Robinson counters that suggestion by positing that the actual origin of that destructive impulse is the insistence on a competitive declaration of the self.

In contrast to the phantoms of individual ambition, Robinsons points to the potential tangible benefits of the sickroom coterie in her model of female authorship in Robinson's *Letter to the Women of England* (1800). Robinson closes that work by introducing an appended list of current and recent women writers of note with the hope that they "will not fail TO EXCITE EMULATION" (85). But if Robinson's own explicit figure of emulation, Mary Wollstonecraft, downplayed the role of imitative habit in producing rational women, Robinson foregrounds it. In an apostrophe to the women her letter addresses, Robinson takes up Wollstonecraft's slavery imagery:

> O! my unenlightened country-women! Read, and profit, by the admonition of Reason. Shake off the trifling, glittering shackles, which debase you. Resist those

> fascinating spells, which, like the petrifying torpedo, fasten your mental faculties. Be less the slaves of vanity, and more the converts of Reflection. (83)

Robinson's "reason" taps into the Enlightenment discourse of liberty in that it allows her readers to "shake off […] shackles." But, in an acknowledgement of the inescapability of habit and influence in the associationist mind, these women replace one form of habitual thinking with another. Through measured, rational "reflection," women escape the "Fascinating spells" of patriarchal custom and the associated slavery of "vanity." But Robinson expresses this transformation in the language of religion. These women become "converts," transformed by the books they read.

Contemporary reviews of the *Letter* responded with a mix of fear and ridicule for Robinson's model of influence. Reading something like the violence of "Golfre" into Robinson's call for a "legion of Wollstonecrafts" to "undermine the poisons of prejudice and malevolence" (41), the *Anti-Jacobin* called on its readers to play Jesus Christ to Robinson's demon "Legion" and "cast her out." The rhetorical turn leans heavily into Coleridge's more ambiguous association of Robinson with witchery to figure her as a dangerous, infecting influence, but with none of Coleridge's acknowledgement of just how enticing (and potentially beneficial) such relationships can be. In trying to influence his readership to form a legion in opposition to Robinson's own, the reviewer plays into Robinson's rhetorical hands. Her legion, after all, also attacks an unnatural invading force in the social body—"the poisons of prejudice and malevolence" (41). Those poisons, Robinson suggests, are largely masculine in origin.

Later in the *Letter*, Robinson implicitly connects her metaphorical use of poison and habit here to intemperance. She brings up the "vices'" "that men perpetually indulge in, to which women are rarely addicted," chief among them, drink. Robinson rejects the standard

contemporary claim that men are more likely to "yield" to the sensual pleasures of wine than women due to their inherently stronger passions. Instead, she suggests, man's and woman's passions differ in kind. Men's passions "originate in sensuality"; women's in "sentiment" (44). In short, "man loves corporeally, woman mentally" (44). In arguing that women's love is mental, Robinson here seemingly writes against her insistence—across her corpus—that feminine affection is expressed physically (not only sexually, but also through the often-physical work of care). But in thinking in terms of dependence and care, the distinction makes sense: a "corporeal" passion treats its objects as limited resources to be consumed; a sentimental love might eschew the competition inherent to such a system. In this model, rational choice and subjecthood no longer oppose or transcend associationist habits. They become instead just one among many possible habits. While Robinson suggests that men and women may exhibit different proclivities and tolerances, she maintains that all human beings are fully capable of learning or (importantly) forgetting the habits of the autonomous mind.

Even as it conforms to many traditional understandings of gender, this theorizing of the passions upends traditional understandings of identity, intellectual inquiry, and human advancement by reading them through the lens of destructive masculine love and restorative feminine love. Participants in Robinson's collaborative ecosystem—be they attending Robinson in her sickroom, teaching and learning in her proposed school for women, or participating in the print culture of the day—follow one another's mental lead and thereby escape the "malignant spirit of contention." Those who oppose it compose specters of originality that, in the end, do little more than expose their authors' addictions to sensual pleasures and the methods by which economic independence can justify as natural those acquired tastes. But at the same time, one

must wonder if Robinson, (in)famous in her day for her skills as an imitator of other poets, might have a self-interested reason for imagining such a utopian vision of interdependent collaboration.

For his part, Coleridge in using dismissive erotic verse to distance himself from the witchery of Robinson's influence seems to want to turn these questions of influence back directly to genre. But to turn back to where we began, it's not entirely clear that Robinson's account of collaborative harmony here differs in action from Coleridge's account of the composition of "Kubla Khan." Coleridge's preface, after all, begins with the admission that what he calls in his subtitle "A Vision" is the result of the influence of "an anodyne [that] had been prescribed" "in consequence of a slight indisposition" and the text of Purchas's *Pilgrimage* (102). As if to be sure no one misses the point, Coleridge even quotes some—but not all—of the words he pilfers in the poem. A long history of critical attention beginning with John Livingston Lowes's source study, *The Road to Xanadu*, has demonstrated that the poem depends not only on Purchas but on a wide, complex web of influences. As Tim Fulford notes, Robinson, whose imagery in the "Kubla Khan"-inspired "To the Poet Coleridge" influenced some of Coleridge's later revisions to the poem, is a key part of that web. The two and their poems become, in a sense, interdependent: both provide for the other key images, and Robinson's poem serves as an interpretive guide to Coleridge's enigmatic fragment.[24]

Coleridge writes that the interruption of the person from Porlock causes that web to dissipate like a reflection on "the surface of a stream into which a stone had been cast" (102). The liquid mirror here echoes the anodyne of the preface and anticipates the flowing river Alph of the poem. Each suggests a fragility against which only the permanence of pen put to paper saves "the lines that are here preserved" (102). Similarly, the "images [that] rose up before him

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[24] See Daniel Robinson (1995).

as things" in the preface are echoed in the rebounding rocks, the floating dome, and the prophetic speaker's floating hair. Coleridge's willing and insistent admission that these seeming feats of magic are in another sense merely borrowed "charm[s]" may well be another of his characteristic deflections. But they also suggest that if we laugh at the juxtaposition of the sleeping poet of the preface, whose automatic production arguably owes as much to his influences as to his genius, with the poet/prophet who floats above the fragment's final lines, Coleridge may well be in on the joke.

CHAPTER 3: "Grotesque Mixture[s]": Feminine Dissipation in Edgeworth's *Belinda*

If her Grace the Duchess of Newcastle, instead of penning her lord's elaborate eulogies, had undertaken to write the life of Savage, we should not have been in any danger of mistaking an idle, ungrateful libertine, for a man of genius and virtue. The talents of a biographer are often fatal to his reader.
Maria Edgeworth, preface to *Castle Rackrent*

In defending the "unvarnished" voice of Thady Quirk, the Irish Catholic servant who narrates her first novel, *Castle Rackrent* (1800), Maria Edgeworth takes issue with the very quality that she claims makes Samuel Johnson's writing so enthralling. His skillful prose and framing produces sympathies for the irredeemable Savage and, in so doing, proves "fatal" to the reader. The novel that follows seemingly affirms her condemnation of Savage's dissipation (and Johnson's unwitting affirmation of it) by tracing the fall of an Anglo-English estate in Ireland through four generations of decay perpetuated by the "mixture of quickness, simplicity, cunning, carelessness, dissipation, disinterestedness, shrewdness, and blunder" in its owners and those who would take advantage of them (97). Certainly, on the level of plot, the novel seems a far more explicit rejection of the related personal and social costs of dissipation than Johnson ever produces. As the holders of the titular estate over-draw on their wealth and property to cover their various habits—largely, drinking and gambling—the Irish Catholic tenants and servants largely suffer until Jason, Thady's son, manages to own enough of Sir Conolly's debts to leverage it into ownership of the estate. At a key moment in this process, Sir Conolly's habits and the debts he incurs to pursue them come to a head following a lavish celebration in which "loads of claret went down the throats of them that had no right to be asking for it" (55). Relating the story long after the fact, Thady writes that "I couldn't but pity my poor master who was to

pay for all" (55). The worries are nearly affirmed the following day, when a messenger from his wine merchant arrives to "put him up" for his debts (57). Fortunately, Sir Connolly's recent election to Parliament conveniently grants him immunity from such claims on his liberty (57).

But if the novel rejects outright masculine dissipation, it expresses ambivalence about women who indulge similar tastes. While the "gentlemen [drink] success to Sir Sidney till they were carried off, […] the ladies [were] all finishing with a raking pot of tea" (55). In a glossary appended to the novel at the insistence of Edgeworth's father, she describes this in terms of "the Bona Dea," in that both "are supposed to be sacred to females" (111). The Bona Dea, a mysterious ritual for Roman women dedicated to chastity, fertility, and medicine during which the consumption of wine is permitted, figures the raking pot as a sort of feminine intoxication. Edgeworth's glossary associates it with the intoxications of the ball. The pot is brought out "after a ball" by "a favorite maid" for "a few chosen female spirits" (112). The Tea enables a sort of carnivalesque ritual that allows for an intoxicated/-ing resistance to patriarchal forms of authority:

> amidst as much giggling and scrambling as possible, they get round a tea-table, on which all manner of things are huddled together. Then begin mutual railleries and mutual confidences amongst the young ladies, and the faint scream and the loud laugh is heard, and the romping for letters and pocket-books begins, and gentlemen are called by their surnames, or by the general name of fellows—pleasant fellows! Charming fellow! Odious fellows! Abominable fellows!—and then all prudish decorums are forgotten, (112)

Helen O'Connell argues that the scene points to a larger assumption in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century thought that tea drinking was a vice specific to the Irish working poor and

British women. Kathryn J. Kirkpatrick, in her introduction to the Oxford edition of the novel argues that this footnote voices fear that English women, in their own secondary status, might be susceptible to the discontent of working Irish Catholics. The raking pot, then, becomes a suitable metaphor for a sort of eighteenth-century consciousness raising enabled when Irish-Catholic servants come into proximity with the ladies of the house.

But if the glossary of *Castle Rackrent* ultimately provides an intellectual/moralizing check on the threat of intoxicated/-ing resistance, Edgeworth's second novel, *Belinda* (1801), imagines a feminine dissipation that proves far more difficult to control. In the characters of Lady Delacour and Harriet Freke, Edgeworth imagines explicitly a contagious form of feminine resistance that takes the forms of cross-dressing, queerness, disability, and dissipation. Coleridge and Robinson present interdependency as an alternative to eighteenth-century family structures that build an illusion of patriarchal independence through a web of subordinate dependencies. Edgeworth in *Belinda* goes further by re-interpreting the forms of independence imagined by Enlightenment thought as, themselves, dependencies. Dissipation and disability become for Edgeworth's characters not sites of care and dependence but persuasive modes of writing one's independence—indeed, one's genius—that inspire imitation. Her characters explicitly deploy these supposed forms of dependency to separate themselves from Enlightenment/masculine structures of control justified, at once, through discourses of common-sense morality, rational thinking, and medical expertise.

Freke and Delacour's capacity to disrupt those discourses is perhaps nowhere more evident than in critical accounts of the novel. While Edgeworth's attitudes towards politics, gender, and sexuality have proven difficult to pin down across her writings, *Belinda* has arguably inspired the widest range of interpretations. Most critics see *Belinda* as trying to build a concept

of femininity as a compromise between the traditional domestic figure and the proto-feminist, radical Wollstonecraftian figure discredited by the excesses of the French Revolution, but critics have also put her at both ends of that political spectrum. While Andrew McCann, for example, figures Edgeworth as an anti-Jacobin in the way she eventually excises Freke from the novel, Suvendrini Perera considers the novel to be covertly Jacobin. Anne Mellor acknowledges Beth Kowaleski-Wallace's claim that *Belinda* establishes a "new-style patriarchy with its appeal to reason, cooperation between the sexes and the non-coercive exercise of authority" (243), but she aligns that model of marriage with Mary Wollstonecraft's by pointing out that both imagine marriage through a radical egalitarianism.

Lady Delacour and Harriet Freke's strange, diseased, and deformed bodies play significant roles in this critical accounting, but even critics who read the novel as a critique of traditional concepts of domesticity typically read their rehabilitation and expulsion, respectively, at the hands of Dr. X— as changes that the novel affirms as positive. Those that do not suggest that the novel's depictions of bodily difference and medical intervention serve to advance an argument about gender. Patricia A. Matthew suggests that the novel posits science and medicine as a method by which the fallen woman might be rehabilitated and reincorporated into society. More skeptical of the novel's depiction of medical science, Jean Coates Cleary, in contrast, demonstrates the ways in which eighteenth-century medical knowledge about the breast builds out of misogynistic myths about clean and unclean female bodies. Katherine Montwieler suggests that the resolution of Delacour's cancer plot contests sentimental theories that associate women's physical bodies with their moral constitutions and thereby challenges the moral/metaphorical lens through which women's bodies were read. These perspectives—particularly those of Coates Cleary and Montwieler's—do important work in demonstrating the

ways in which disease and disability are socially constructed in the period, but they also read disability and illness as extensions of Delacour and Freke's gender or sexuality rather than seeing both as mutually constitutive of these characters.

In making this argument, I hope to call attention to the ways in which critics accept uncritically that disability functions primarily on a metaphorical register in literature. In doing so these critics rely on disability as what I call a critical prosthesis. I derive this term from David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder's influential concept of "narrative prosthesis," which they define as the tendency for fiction writers to employ disability "as a character making trope […], as a social category of deviance, [and] as a symbolic vehicle for meaning-making and cultural critique" (1). By "critical prosthesis," I mean the critical tendency to consider disability only on these symbolic, cultural terms. This tendency is at work even in criticism not explicitly about medicine and the body. For example, Claudia Johnson develops her important conception of women in the eighteenth-century novel as "equivocal beings" by marking their depictions of insanity and "disfiguring excess" as methods by which the novel "[forbid], degraded, and displaced" "female subjectivity" (2, 18). Similarly, Susan C. Greenfield understands disability as a metaphor through which to understand gender when she asks, of the conclusion to Freke's plot, "if Harriet has to be painfully maimed to become a woman, how essential can her femaleness be?" (218). While much work on *Belinda* and the eighteenth century in general has been done on explicating the metaphorical and moral import of disability, considerably less critical energy has been put into considering representations of disability as, in Mitchell and Snyder's words, "an option in the narrative negotiation of disabled subjectivity" (1). In considering disease, disability, and drug use as elements of Lady Delacour and Harriet Freke's disabled subjectivity, this chapter reveals that

Belinda dramatizes a social economy in which physically and mentally distinctive figures hold great sway in conversations about both disability and gender.

In this chapter, I take Greenfield's question as an important way to get at the novel's approach to gender, but I also challenge the curative logic that necessarily interprets physical disability as unessential or unnatural. I consider what happens when disability—even painful maiming and disfiguring excess—is understood in *Belinda* as a part of identity connected to and just as powerful as gender or sexuality. In considering the novel's complex depiction of drug use alongside pain and disability, I show how twentieth-century understandings of disability and addiction have shaped these critical investigations of this novel.[1] An understanding of Delacour's body as shaped by both disability and intemperate drug use is, moreover, essential to understanding how her character is understood in the novel's society. While the nature of Lady Delacour's wound remains secret to most of the characters in the novel, they nonetheless medicalize her, agreeing that she is "the most dissipated woman in England" (126).[2] And yet, like Percy Shelley's dead leaves, the dissipation of Lady Delacour and Harriet Freke's influence allows it to extend beyond the limits placed on them by the intertwining medical authorities, social hierarchies, and narrative conventions to which their bodies are subjected.

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[1] Anya Taylor offers perhaps the only sustained consideration of the novel's treatment of drug use. While Taylor notes the trouble intoxicated women pose for eighteenth century gender scripts, noting that the women in the novel drink to "share in the excitement of [the] male world or to recreate a similar wildness in the routs of rivalrous women" (216), she turns to the novel's treatment of male drinking and, in particular, its representation of the drunkenness and rehabilitation of Lord Delacour, "who correspondingly stops drinking" after Lady Delacour gives up opium (215). The pair's "interactively destructive addiction," which results from an "empty marriage" positions Delacour as "an early pattern for the study of wives of alcoholics" and the novel itself as "a remarkable anticipation of twentieth-century analyses of women's reactions to drunken husbands" (214-215). In reading the novel's treatment of addiction through a modern medical lens, Taylor accepts uncritically the gender biases inherent to twentieth-century addiction paradigms. For a full consideration of those gender biases in modern conceptions of addiction, see Ettorre (1992).

[2] Some form of the word "dissipation" appears in the novel 25 times. In 19 of those instances, it describes Lady Delacour directly.

Foregrounding this feminine dissipation at once demonstrates Maria Edgeworth's understanding of and engagement with contemporary discussions of compulsive drug use and her use of that discourse to challenge the supposed moral purpose of the novel. It suggests that if Edgeworth uses Harriet Freke as a vessel to safely contain the more outrageous characteristics originally attributed to Lady Delacour (as some readers have suggested), she instead loses control of—or perhaps intentionally lets loose—the dissipated/-ing influence of Freke, which enthralls even the most unlikely of followers.[3] Lady Delacour and Freke employ their bodies and the chemicals they ingest to perform an ambiguous radicalism all the more powerful for its illegibility and ephemerality.

I make this argument in three parts. First, I demonstrate how Harriet Freke's ambiguously strange body makes her a sort of patient zero for feminine dissipation. In so doing, I argue that *Belinda* explores the potential rhetorical value of extraordinary bodies and irrational minds in discourses about gender and ability. Next, I consider how Lady Delacour, in taking up Freke's influence, deploys both her body and opium in performing her "fashionable dissipation" (70). Delacour's performances of disability and intoxication challenge both moral/medical restrictions on behavior and conceptions of the unitary self in ways that at once echo the cultural work of the eighteenth-century masquerade as described by Terry Castle and anticipate Tobin Siebers's concept of disability as masquerade. Finally, I demonstrate how the novel narrates, through Dr. X—'s and the narrator's paired efforts to control Freke and Lady Delacour, the intertwining of medical and moral discourses to address the threat posed by feminine dissipation. In highlighting the distinction between the novel's treatment of Clarence Hervey's and Lady Delacour's problematic drug use, I argue that the novel ultimately exposes the ways in which gender informs

[3] For readings of Freke as a safe container for the excesses originally planned for Lady Delacour, see Johnson (1988), O Gallachoir (2000), and Perera (1991).

these discourses. In a brief conclusion, I read the novel's final tableau as a covert critique of Dr. X— and the narrator's narrative prescriptions. This conclusion—famous for its performative nature—demonstrates the continued fluidity of Lady Delacour's masquerade by enacting the transmission of that influence to the most unlikely of hosts, Belinda, the seemingly stable moral center and heroine of the novel.[4]

Contagious Genius: Feminine Romanticism (De)Form'd

Early in her account of her history to Belinda, Lady Delacour identifies the central attraction and danger of Harriet Freke through a reference to Alexander Pope:

> There was a frankness in Harriot's manner which I mistook for artlessness or character: she spoke with such unbounded freedom on certain subjects, that I gave her credit for unbounded sincerity on all subjects […]. I, amongst others, took it for granted, that the woman who could make it her sport to "touch the brink of all we hate," must have a stronger head than other people. I have since been convinced, however, of my mistake. I am persuaded that few can touch the brink without tumbling headlong down the precipice. (44)

Delacour understands Freke's apparent freedom as, at once, enthralling and necessarily leading to disaster. The quotation comes from Pope's "Epistle to a Lady," which asserts that such a freewheeling woman is most attractive to man:

> Yet ne'er so sure our passion to create,
>
> As when she touch'd the brink of all we hate. (51-52)

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[4] This is enacted in the shift in tenor of Belinda's particular *bildungsroman*. While Edgeworth's plan for the novel positioned Lady Delacour as a clear negative example by which Belinda learns her moral, the finished novel, I argue, positions Lady Delacour and Harriet Freke's feminine dissipation as a necessary influence that shifts Belinda ironically from a figure who is horrified by Hervey's dismissal of her as "a composition of art and affectation" to one who unknowingly furthers Freke and Lady Delacour's performances (26). For a reading of Belinda as a central figure around which multiple transgressive characters and genres orbit, see Fitzgerald (1992).

The “Epistle” derives much of its humor from the classical definition of women as disabled or deformed men. As such, the poem has become an important touchstone for critical examinations of gender and disability in the eighteenth century.[5] Although Pope describes his ideal woman in terms of disability, he represents that disability as a carefully calibrated performance that produces uncertainty. She is, famously, “at best a Contradiction” (270), but that contradiction must be carefully limited: “*just* not ugly,” “*just* not mad” (50, emphasis mine). Pope implicitly differentiates “Fine” “defect[s]” and delicate weaknesses from mere defect or mere weakness even as he obfuscates the rubrics by which we might make those distinctions (44). What results is an inversion of the classical understanding of women’s supposed lack of rationality: her submission to the passions becomes not an inherent weakness so much as a Calypsian shapeshifting power employed rationally—if dishonestly—in response to the social markets and scripts available to her.

The spatial metaphor co-opted by Edgeworth puts the most successful women on “the brink,” suggesting that in manipulating those associations, she plays a dangerous game. Fittingly, given the similar metaphors with which drug use will come to be described in the modern era, when Pope does not describe these performances in terms of disability, he invokes intoxicants. Silia’s mood falls, for example, because she has found a pimple and not, as Pope’s listener first assumes, because she is drunk. Elsewhere, women move effortlessly from reading Taylor’s edition of *The Book of Martyrs* to “drinking citron with his Grace and Chartres” (63-64). Pope’s couplet turns on the angel/whore dichotomy—she is “A very Heathen in the carnal part, / Yet still a sad, good Christian at her heart” (67-68). But Pope suggests, again, that the woman derives power from her ability to vacillate between these extremes. Addicted to neither the scripture nor

[5] See Deutsch (1996), Nussbaum (2000), and Campbell (2000).

the bottle, Pope's ladies move rapidly and imperceptibly from one to the other. In so doing, they ensure that the stakes remain high, and all possibilities remain in play. She becomes, herself, intoxicating.

I argue here that despite Delacour's rejection of Freke because of her necessary fall from that brink, both Freke and Delacour intentionally and successful derive their power from precisely this sort of play with intoxication and bodily difference. Drawing on Terry Castle's work on the carnivalesque role of the masquerade in eighteenth-century understandings of gender, I suggest that Freke and Delacour's bodies—and the chemicals they ingest—allow them to perform something like what Tobin Siebers has called the "disability masquerade" (96-98). Siebers differentiates his "masquerade" from the closet in that performances that emphasize or modulate disability explicitly resist the ideology of ability, which defines bodies as static and easily categorized as either able-bodied or disabled. Such performances open narrative and moral possibilities that the generic structure of the novel is unable to close off. In so doing, their bodies and minds play crucial and generally unacknowledged roles in producing a moral complexity that exposes (and critiques) both contemporary moral scripts and the generic boundaries of the novel as a literary form.

As Castle notes, the masquerade's power had the capacity to entice even in novels that brought it up only to warn readers of its dangers. Similarly, *Belinda* offers an enthralling depiction of feminine dissipation that runs counter to Edgeworth's supposed moral purpose of the work she called a "moral tale."[6] This reading complicates Lennard Davis's influential

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[6] Maria Edgeworth's advertisement to *Belinda* designates it as a "moral tale," and not a "novel," explaining:
Were all novels like those of madame de Crousaz, Mrs Inchbald, miss Burney [sic], or Dr Moore, she would adapt the name of novel with delight: but so much folly, errour, and vice are disseminated in books classed under this denomination, that it is hoped the wish to assume another title will be attributed to feelings that are laudable, and not fastidious. (3)

argument in *Enforcing Normalcy* that the English novel both describes and prescribes a culture that excludes disability. While Edgeworth's original plan for the novel seemingly did just this by presenting physical decline and death as a just punishment for Freke's moral transgressions, Edgeworth's contemporary readers of the actual novel marked and responded to what turned out to be a more complex treatment of the relationships between morality, gender, and disability.[7] The anonymous reviewer for the *Monthly Review* focuses his critique on the unintended consequences of the moral bent of this narrative arc:

> Lady Delacour, while she continues to appear as the votary of vanity and fashion, and heroic under excruciating corporeal suffering, is a Being who interests and even commands some respect: but Lady Delacour reformed (however favourable to the moral effect of the work this reformation may be,) and unexpectedly rescued from bodily pain, is a comparatively flat and vapid creature. (368)

The reviewer's parenthetical aside pays lip service to the moral purpose Edgeworth plans. In pairing Lady Delacour's "corporeal suffering" and "bodily pain" with her moral transgressions (and their cure to her reformation), the reviewer seemingly assumes a similar metaphorical connection between body and mind that Edgeworth describes in *At Home and Abroad* and that twentieth-century critics so often apply to the novel. But in his explicitly stated preference for the

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[7] Edgeworth's outline for the novel presents a straightforward narrative revolving almost entirely around reinforcing the moral telegraphed by its working title, *At Home and Abroad*. In this plan, Lady Delacour dies tragically because of her physical and economic dissipation. In turn, Belinda learns from her negative example to "[prefer] happiness at Home to happiness Abroad" (483). In this version of the story, Lady Delacour's performance becomes a betrayal of her true self, which is marked by a "hideous spectacle" of fatal breast cancer that symbolically and narratively derives from her social transgressions. She attempts to hide her condition through "every species of fashionable folly and extravagance" and by "endeavour[ing] to exceed all her predecessors and competitors, not only in all that woman, but 'all that man dare do'" (479-480). This public pursuit of her "own *pleasures*" provides only a "thin veil" through which Belinda sees quickly. Unable to hide her secret, Lady Delacour's confession confirms the connection between her immoral behavior and her physical wound. She laments, "My mind is eaten away by an incurable disease like my body" (480). She dies despite the intervention of Dr. Sane, and in so doing affirms her husband's revision of Pope: she "goes so near the brink, that her husband thinks she has gone beyond." (480).

unreformed and pained Lady Delacour, he at the same time challenges the curative logic that necessarily validates medical and moral rehabilitation.

The resulting novel, in which Lady Delacour not only survives but also takes control of the novel's final pages, rejects this curative logic, replacing it with a series of ambiguities perhaps best represented by Lady Delacour's refusal to explain the moral: "Our *tale* contains a *moral*, and, no doubt, / You all have wit enough to find it out" (478). While critics have considered the complex implications of the novel's meta-thematic final chapters, critical engagements with the novel typically follow the writer in the *Monthly Review* in connecting Lady Delacour's "corporeal suffering" and her amoral behavior. Anne Mellor aligns Edgeworth with Mary Wollstonecraft's ideas about marriage by concluding that Edgeworth demonstrates her "lack of sympathy for Lady Delacour, and the intensity of passion and sexual desire she embodies" in the "violent transformation [she] imposes on Lady Delacour at the end of the novel" (45). Echoing the language of *Monthly Review*, if not its challenge to the plot's curative logic, Mellor concludes that "she becomes 'Lady Delacour Reform'd' and acknowledges that lasting spiritual and emotional comfort can be found only in 'domestic happiness'" (45).

But if healthy bodies are required to produce domestic happiness, bodily and mental disability encourage relationships that challenge the heteronormativity of eighteenth-century domesticity. As Lady Delacour describes it, her friendship with Freke results directly from Lady Delacour's mental pain and Freke's strange physical appearance. Lady Delacour tells Belinda that she suspects her breast milk killed her first two children and that she is estranged from her third child because she was sent out to nurse. She then connects those familial tragedies and failures to her public behavior:

> I wanted only to explain to you why it was that, when I was weary of the business, I still went on in a course of dissipation. You see I had nothing at home, either in the shape of husband or children, to engage my affections. I believe it was this "aching void" in my heart which made me, after looking abroad some time for a bosom friend, take such a prodigious fancy to Mrs Freke. (43)

In justifying her connection to Freke as the result of a lonely melancholia, Lady Delacour anticipates the psychoanalytic model of addiction that positions problematic drug use as efforts to self-medicate for mental or physical pain left untreated or unacknowledged by medicine.

If her mental health left her prone to Freke's influence, the power of that influence is explicitly rooted in Freke's strange physical appearance. As Lady Delacour claims,

> [Freke] was just […] coming into fashion—she struck me the first time I met her, as being downright ugly; but there was a wild oddity in her countenance which made one stare at her, and she was delighted to be stared at—especially by me—so we were mutually agreeable to each other—I as starer, and she as staree. (43)

Rosemarie Garland-Thomson has theorized that the "stare" can reformulate conventional understandings of the stare as an act of objectification by the starer. The staree, Garland-Thomson writes, "offer[s] an occasion to rethink the status quo," and thereby puts "who we are […] into focus by staring at what we are not." (6). This act of staring begins with just such a surprising distinction: Lady Delacour is drawn in not by Freke's clothing but by her "ugliness," the "wild oddity in her countenance." When Lady Delacour is compelled—"made"—to stare, she decides that what she is not—Freke—is what she would like to be.

Noting the complex ways in which people with disabilities make their disability variously more and less visible depending on context, Siebers offers an understanding of "disability as

masquerade" analogous in important ways to Garland-Thomson's reformulation of the stare. Siebers insists that in "claim[ing] disability rather than concealing it," the disability masquerade holds a transformational potential in that it communicates those ideas and theories to others who might not share them (118). Writes Siebers, "Exaggerating or performing difference, when that difference is a stigma, marks one as a target, but it also exposes and resists the prejudices of society" (118). As such, the wide range of ways that people with disabilities represent it "[fulfill] a desire to tell a story steeped in disability, often the very story that society does not want to hear, by refusing to obey the ideology of able-bodiedness" (118). The effect of the disability masquerade works despite concerted efforts to delegitimize performances of disability as individual pathology, narcissism, and/or dishonesty.

In *Belinda*, that story is often associated implicitly with Mary Wollstonecraft. In a chapter titled "Rights of Woman," Freke visits Belinda ostensibly to convince her to join her at a social event. Fittingly, given the chapter's title, the scene instead becomes a barely veiled political and philosophical debate about the tenets of Wollstonecraft's philosophy. Freke takes on exaggerated (and undercooked) versions of Wollstonecraft's arguments for feminine liberty. She argues women are "enslaved" by "delicacy" and that "shame" is "the cause of [their] vices" (229). Freke's rhetorical missteps seemingly reveal these positions to be inspired by transgression for its own sake: she claims for herself "the courage to be bad" before declaring, "Whatever is, is wrong" (226, 230). Earlier, Freke tries to pass off a citation from Milton's Satan as coming directly from Milton. Here, she perverts both Rousseau and Pope's *Essay on Man* to argue for resisting things as they are.[8] Freke's fashionable energy, then, is directly connected to

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[8] The first epistle of *An Essay on Man* concludes,
And, spite of pride in erring reason's spite,
One truth is clear, whatever is, is right. (293-294)

her rhetorical position. At the same time, Freke's argument for resistance is matched by her restless, strange physical body: the narrator makes note of how she "dashed into the room" to "boisterously" shake Belinda's hand and remarks on the "strange[ness]" of her rapid speech (225). These details once again reassert the important relationships Freke's strange, transfixing physicality, her immoral behavior, and her politically radical stance.

Belinda and Mr. Vincent best Freke's arguments rhetorically, and in so doing, seemingly reveal her power to be located entirely in her strange physical appearance, which covers over an ultimately empty rhetoric. The narrator claims that Freke's speech is self-evidently hollow: she said "odd things" that merely "pass for wit" (227). In short, "she could be diverting to those who like buffoonery in women" (227). In the immediate aftermath of the encounter, Belinda affirms the narrator's account by creating a hierarchy of feminine wit in which Freke sits at the bottom:

> Mrs Freke's wit, thought she, is like a noisy squib—the momentary terrour of passengers—lady Delacour's, like an elegant fine work, which we crowd to see, and cannot forbear to applaud—but lady Anne Percival's wit is like the refulgent moon, we 'Love the mild rays, and bless the useful light.' (232)

The hierarchy turns back to the Percivals' wit as the ideal method by which to move forward against both oppressive gender relationships and the dangerous radicalism of a Wollstonecraft. And while Belinda clearly positions the moon as a more powerful source of interest than Freke's squib or Delacour's elegant work, it nonetheless places a limit on the power of feminine wit by making it a mere reflection of some even greater, more brilliant (presumably, more masculine)

William Kernick, whose translation of Rousseau Wollstonecraft employs in the Vindication, uses Pope's formulation to translate Rousseau's "Ce qui est, est bien." Again, Freke's formulation here is a parodic overstatement of Wollstonecraft's actual argument, which is that however perfect God's design may be, man's imperfect nature and incomplete information may produce injustices in the social structure.

source. That is to say, the best woman in Belinda's understanding is reflecting the influence of another, greater mind.

Despite the narrator's and Belinda's best efforts to discredit Freke as an empty squib, in this scene she explicitly positions herself against such limitations on woman's capacity for original thought. In a further parodic overstatement of the *Vindication,* Freke suggests that Belinda should stop reading: "Books only spoil the originality of genius. Very well for those who can't think for themselves—but when one has made up one's opinions, there is no use in reading" (227). The argument is a simplification of Wollstonecraft's distinction between genius and normal minds in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. Drawing on eighteenth-century models of associationism, Wollstonecraft dedicates chapter 6 of the *Vindication* to demonstrating women's capacity for reason given proper education by distinguishing the mind's "habitual" and "instantaneous" association of ideas (144). Although Wollstonecraft never goes so far as to suggest that reading can spoil genius, she does consider that power innate and prone to disrupting received knowledge in a way that limits the value of traditional learning, which "only supplies the man of genius with knowledge to give variety and contrast to his associations" (145). As Wollstonecraft describes it, this power is uncontrollable and benevolent: the "fine intractable spirits" of "instantaneous" "association" "appear to be the essence of genius." Those who can produce these instantaneous associations hold great influence over others:

> These are the glowing minds that concentrate pictures for their fellow-creatures; forcing them to view with interest the objects reflected from the impassioned imagination, which they passed over in nature (145).

Such a model of genius claims for all the sort of masculine self-actualization and free thinking that Mellor attributes to "masculine Romanticism." Because, contrary to Freke's rejection of

books, education provides examples for the brain of genius, women lack the opportunity—rather than the capacity—to develop such influential forms of mental production.

The situation is even worse for normal minds. In contrast to the inherently passionate brain of genius, the typical brain is "ductile" in early life but "stubborn" once developed. As such, "the associations which depend on adventitious circumstances, during the period that the body takes to arrive at maturity, can seldom be disentangled from reason" (145). In such a state, what for David Hume were the necessary habits by which we navigate our inability to know much about the world become for women a series of conditions that produce "habitual slavery, to first impressions" (145). The early turn to the marriage market and the second childhood of marriage are "superinductions of art that have smothered nature" (145). The resulting women's "false notions of beauty and delicacy" effect their physical bodies, producing "a sickly soreness, rather than a delicacy of organs" (145). For these normal minds, a rational education that teaches—by cultivating a very different set of habits—the power of reason, is the closest to the sort of liberty offered to the passionate, free-acting.

Freke positions her intervention here, as elsewhere, as an effort to expose and challenge these habitual tendencies. Freke "delight[s] in hauling good people's opinions out of their musty drawers, and seeing how they look when they're all pulled to pieces before their faces" (231). Ostensibly mocking Belinda for her own reliance on Lady Anne's influence, Freke gestures towards Belinda's actual chest of drawers and asks, "Pray, are those lady Anne's drawers or yours?" (231). It is, given Belinda's hierarchy of wits, a prescient indictment and, it seems, one that is ultimately more successful than it might have seemed. While Belinda certainly never comes around to accepting Freke's claim that "whatever is, is wrong," the interaction does leave

Belinda re-considering her own musty drawers. In the paragraph immediately preceding Belinda's dismissal of Freke as a noisy squib, the narrator admits that

> Good may be drawn from evil. Mrs. Freke's conversation, though at the time it confounded Belinda, roused her, upon reflexion [*sic*], to examine by her reason the habits and principles which guided her conduct. (232)

This new-learned skill proves particularly useful in Belinda's hesitancy to marry Mr. Vincent, the Percival's preferred suitor. Her reasoned hesitation is confirmed by the revelation of Mr. Vincent's disastrous gambling habit. Despite its success with regards to Mr. Vincent, Belinda's interpolation of Freke's lesson remains a "mild" reflection of the refulgent waves of Freke's sun, which in this scene seems to replace—or at least augment—that light provided by Lady Anne.

Freke, then, becomes a Wollstonecraftian genius in convincing Belinda to re-think her habitual morality; however, her body and her mind look very different from that imagined by Wollstonecraft in her depiction of genius. While Wollstonecraft acknowledges some truth to the common assumption that geniuses typically had weak bodily constitutions to match their strong brains, she explicitly denies the possibility that a weak or sick body might produce mental greatness. To the contrary, "strength of mind has, in most cases, been accompanied by superior strength of body, natural soundness of constitution" (57). What appears to "superficial observers" to be the "delicate [constitution]" of genius is instead evidence that "people of genius have, very frequently, impaired their constitutions by study, or careless inattention to their health" (57). Freke revises Wollstonecraft on this issue in particular: Her arguments may be weak from a rational standpoint, but Freke is not particularly interested in becoming a convincing logician. As she tells Belinda at the start of the chapter, "There's nothing I like so much as to make good people stare" (225). Freke here echoes and affirms Lady Delacour's

earlier description of her interest in drawing looks. Ever the willing "staree," Freke draws on her ambiguously odd body to shake people out of their habitual mental processes. Throughout the novel, her convincing performances of masculinity—painted in phosphorous, she convinces Juba that she is an Obeah curse following him from the West Indies; merely dressed in men's clothing, lurking in the garden after dark, she convinces Delacour that she is the ghost of Lawless come to foretell her death—shock her audiences into questioning the established order.[9]

Lisa Moore rightly suggests that Freke's clothing enables her masculine behaviors and mannerisms; however, the novel also clearly attributes Freke's convincing performance of drag to her ambiguously strange body. Delacour notes that Freke seems built, mentally and physically, for men's clothing: "Harriet had no conscience, so she was always at ease; and never more so than in male attire, which she had been told became her particularly" (47). Lady Delacour's account of the carriage scene reiterates the relationship between disability and Freke's cross dressing by initially mistaking Freke for a "madman." When she asks Freke to identify herself, Freke does so willingly, punning, "Who am I! Only a Freke!" As her outsized influence on the novel demonstrates, the diminutive "only" proves disingenuous: Freke matters precisely because her insistence on playing with the social and physical constructions of gender and bodily ability reveals the performative qualities inherent to and enabled by both. In the next section, I describe how that seemingly capricious power re-iterates itself explicitly and implicitly in her audiences. Lady Delacour takes up Freke's embodied difference and expresses it not only in her notorious

[9] There is an undercurrent of racializing disability throughout the novel, represented perhaps most explicitly in this scene and in Lady Delacour's self-identification as an Amazonian and as Scheherazade. I discuss those moments in greater detail later in the chapter. The West Indies are a space that produces non-normative bodies and minds—it is where Mr. Vincent cultivates the gambling addiction that leaves him unfit for the marriage market. At the same time, Juba enters the British marriage market. The public reaction to that marriage—Edgeworth was convinced to excise it for the novel's inclusion in Barbauld's *British Novelists*—suggests, however, that despite some overlap, race and disability were understood in vastly different ways in the period.

public behavior and her wounded breast, but also in her reliance on opium both to play within and to push back against traditional eighteenth-century gender scripts.

Intoxication as Masquerade

Despite Freke's major role in the novel' first half, the violent expedience with which the narrator punishes her for her transgressions seemingly undermines her capacity to exert her influence beyond Lady Delacour. After Freke gets her leg caught in a man-trap while trying to spy on Lady Delacour, Dr. X— examines her and determines that due to her wound she would "never more be able to appear to advantage in man's apparel" (312). The narrator then asks us to see her "conveyed to her cousin's house, where without regret we shall leave her to suffer the consequences of her frolics" (312). The episode uses a new deformity to seemingly rejects not only Freke's body but also the ambiguous gendering enabled by it. If she refuses the novel's normalizing moral interventions on her performance of gender, the novel itself thrusts them physically upon her. And yet, two chapters later, the spectre of the deviant Freke returns when she is revealed to be the ultimate source of an anonymous letter challenging Belinda's innocence. Once again, the narrator makes an appeal to morality to justify moving on from Freke, claiming that "the only interest, that honest people can take in the fate of rogues, is in their detection and punishment" (342). After briefly relating Freke's role in convincing the malevolent servant Champfort to write the letter, the narrator concludes, "So much for Mrs Freke and Mr Champfort, who both together, scarcely deserve an episode of ten lines" (343). And yet, as even my brief, incomplete rundown of Freke's role in the novel here demonstrates, she is afforded far more than the ten lines the narrator suggests she does not deserve.

Freke's ability to exert influence from within the confines the novel ostensibly sets for her character resembles in many ways that of the masquerade as described by Terry Castle.

Castle reads the historical masquerade in terms of Bakhtin's carnival, suggesting that the eighteenth-century masquerade offers "remarkable insight into the imaginative life of the period" (viii). Historically, Castle writes, the masquerade responded to philosophical debates of the day by contesting notions of the self as a static object. In so doing, the masquerade produces

> A material devaluation of unitary notions of the self, as radical […] as the more abstract demystifications in the writings of Hume and the eighteenth-century ontologists. The pleasure of the masquerade attended on the experience of double-ness, the alienation of inner from outer, a fantasy of two bodies simultaneously and thrillingly present, self and other together, the two-in-one. (4-5)

In this sense, Freke's claim to be "only a Freke!" is not self-deprecating so much as it is self-liberating. Taking the eighteenth-century meaning of the term "freak"—a meaningless frolic or public prank—Freke, like the masquerade, explicitly calls into question the permanence and the naturalness of her racial, gendered, and bodily identity.[10]

Like Freke, the moral infection/hallucination offered by the masquerade proves uncontainable in the fiction of the eighteenth century. Following Tony Tanner's observation that the ostensibly moral prescriptivism demanded by the novel as a form is often undermined by individual novels' titillating depictions of vice, Castle positions the masquerade in the eighteenth-century novel as an ultimately contradictory narrative convention. While the masquerade serves as a site at which to advance plot by opening moral complications and transgressive possibilities that the narrative bent of the text will ultimately close off into a moral

[10] Critical treatment of Freke's name underscores the often-unrecognized importance of her physically strange body. Despite warnings in essays from both Mellor and Colin Atkinson and Jo Atkinson that the word "freak" in the eighteenth century did not yet hold connotations of physical disability, critics cannot help but make the connection. Susan C. Greenfield argues that the novel's various references to monsters suggests this might be an early example of the word's modern usage. Moore suggests that "Harriot Freke's name itself signals her unnatural status in the novel's terms" (505). Even Mellor, despite her caution, refers to Freke as a "caprice of nature" (42).

prescriptivism, in practice the masquerade scene "engenders a rewarding or euphoric pattern of narrative transformation" that the novel's conclusion cannot possibly close off fully (122). What results is a textual doubling analogous to the bodily doubling of the masquerade itself:

> With the turn towards the irrational world of carnival, the eighteenth-century English novel becomes unlike itself: it diverges from its putative moral project and reshapes itself as a phantasmagoria and dream. (126)

For Castle, the novel's inclusion of the masquerade causes the text to double back upon itself, changing genres, and—ultimately—becoming as unknowable as an illusion, a dream, or a trip. Such elements disrupt the logical moral force of the narrative arc and undoes the novel's purported purpose. Even the most moral of novels unwittingly becomes an advocate for the transgressions it ostensibly critiques.

Castle demonstrates that these dramatizations of philosophically charged carnival energy were particularly resonant with regards to gender. While moralists depicted the masquerade as a space in which a woman's innocence was at great risk, masquerade behavior might also be understood as an "altogether comprehensible reaction to the horrific erotic repression enjoined upon respectable women by eighteenth-century culture" (44). In hiding a woman's identity, the masquerade becomes "the realm of woman," a "feminocracy" in which "the magisterial, dominant, or disorderly woman [is] its most potent emblem" (253-254). In this feminocracy, the existential is also political: anonymity "divest[s]" women of names "inevitably associated with the power of husband or father" and, therefore, "obscured a woman's place within patriarchy" (254-255). The masquerade was, thus, depending on the observer, either liberating women or transforming them into a dangerous "Amazonian race" (255).

The invocation of the Amazonians connects the historical relationship between disability and femininity to the overriding set of bodily metaphors for the masquerade that Castle picks up from her primary sources: that of a physical distortion of the social body through illness, disability, or intoxication. Filled with self-mutilating Amazonians, the masquerade becomes "a kind of exemplary disorder" consisting of "hallucinatory reversals" that serves as "both a voluptuous release from ordinary cultural prescriptions and a stylized comment upon them" (6). Depending on the observer, the intoxication becomes, alternately, a disease and a cure:

> To speak metaphorically, the basic question is whether an imagery of inversion—the World Upside-Down, for instance—has an inoculating or an infectious effect on collective consciousness. It is possible, Barthes has suggested, to "immunize" the collective imagination "by a small inoculation of acknowledged evil. … One thus protects it against the risk of a generalized subversion." Others have held the view put forth most succinctly by Charles Lamb: "We dread infection from the representation of scenic disorder." (89)

Although Castle readily takes up the bodily metaphors of her primary sources, she downplays the role of actual bodily difference in both undergirding these metaphorical considerations of the masquerade and in populating masquerade spaces. As a mingling point for all of British society, the masquerade was surely a place where disabled and able bodies confronted one another. [11]

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[11] Castle notes that while the cost of tickets ostensibly produced a class-based barrier between those inside of and outside of the masquerade, the boundary was permeable enough that all of London society was present in the masquerade space. Some evidence for the presence of people with disabilities at the masquerade is visible even in the texts Castle cites. People of short stature appear in costume as a court jester and a monkey, respectively, in prints by Charles White and Hogarth. A man leans on a cane in corner of a 1724 anti-masquerade print. Disability was also a feature of costuming unexamined by Castle but visible on a 1744 masquerade ticket for Hickford's Rooms, which depicts a man using a sort of false false leg (his real leg, bent at the knee, is plainly visible behind him). Richard III likewise served as a common stock costume. Altogether, disability seemed to contribute to the masquerade's larger move to depict what Castle calls "emblem[s] of mutability," among them, the corpse and the coffin. These performances enact quite clearly Tobin Siebers's claim that identity is always unstable. The presence and

Moreover, Castle's cataloging of the costuming conventions points towards several categories—"transvestite" and "animal" in particular—that are closely related to historical understandings of disability and monstrosity.

Perhaps most obviously, actual chemical intoxicants played a key role in producing the social intoxications central to the work of the masquerade. Marty Roth closes his monograph, *Drunk the Night Before: An Anatomy of Intoxication*, by observing that considerations of the Bakhtinian notion of the carnival typically ignore the role of actual intoxicating substances in producing the conditions for the important upheaval of social constraints enabled by the carnival (and, by extension, literature).[12] In describing the masquerade, Castle makes a similar omission. In a *Weekly Journal* report from February 15, 1718 that Castle presents as "an epitome of masquerade phenomenology," a catalog of the wines on hand for the event precedes descriptions of the food, music, and costuming:

> on the Sides are divers Beauffetts, over which is written the several Wines therein contain'd, as Canary, Burgundy, Champaign, Rhenish, &c. each most excellent in its kind; of which all are at Liberty to drink what they please, with large Services of all Sorts of Sweetmeats (qtd. in Castle 25)

The prevalence of actual and metaphorical disability and intoxication in both the masquerades themselves and the discourses they inspire are important for at least two interrelated reasons.

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performance of disability in the actual masquerade is an important opportunity for research that goes beyond the scope of this chapter.

[12] Roth's argument is an important corrective, but perhaps leans too heavily into strictly chemical understandings of how drugs work. Drawing on Craig MacAndrew and Robert B. Edgerton's *Drunken Comportment: A Social Experiment* and Norman E. Zinberg's *Drug, Set, Setting: The Basis for Controlled Substance Use*, I would suggest that just as intoxicants played a role in figuring the experience of carnival, the carnival itself established expectations for the drugs that were, in turn, met. Drugs and carnival might be most accurately described as having a mutually constitutive role in producing the cultural critiques Castle, Bakhtin, and others have described. In this sense, my reading of intoxication takes on a soft constructivism akin to Siebers's concept of complex embodiment, which attempts to demonstrate that "both sides [representation and the world] push back in the construction of reality" (30).

First, it points to the ways in which the cultural work of the masquerade was made possible by non-normative bodies and minds. Second, it speaks to the potential for those bodies and minds to do that same cultural work outside of the space designated for the masquerade.

And while the novel opens with a masquerade scene that explicitly plays with the social problems inherent to a society that understands identity as fluid and performable, the masquerade energy of the novel begins with and emanates from Freke herself, as a sort of patient zero, so to speak. Freke's transmittable revolutionary energy, in turn, is explicitly marked as intoxication as often as it is marked as disease. In an early demonstration of that power, Freke appears in Lady Delacour's carriage visibly drunk in order to maneuver Lady Delacour and Lawless into agreeing to their disastrous unchaperoned carriage ride. In recounting her late-night departure from Mrs. Luttridge's faro table after having lost "an immensity of money," Lady Delacour at once emphasizes her ability to perform and hints coyly at her own intoxicated state: "it was my pride to lose with as much gayety as any body else could win; so I was, or appeared to be, in uncommonly high spirits" (45). Although she only hints with the pun on "spirits" at her own alcohol consumption, she directly describes Freke as "mad with spirits, and so noisy and unmanageable that, as I told her, I was sure she was drunk" (46). Freke's chemical doubling here is matched directly with her cross-dressing, and both, together, are interpreted by Lady Delacour as evidence of mental disability: she mistakes her for a "madman" (46).[13] Of course, none of that

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[13] Similarly, Lord Delacour's alcoholism, if less featured than Freke's drunkenness or Lady Delacour's opium habit, is, as Taylor suggests, more harshly presented by the novel. As framed by Lady Delacour, Belinda's first interaction with Lord Delacour—when he was "dead drunk in the arms of two footmen" (11)—does not constitute a proper introduction. On the following morning, Lady Delacour introduces Belinda to "Lord Delacour—sober" (11). While Belinda "was inclined to think that lord Delacour sober would not be more agreeable or more rational, than lord Delacour drunk" (11), Lady Delacour seems intent on maintaining the distinction, given that she refers to her drunk husband as "the body of my lord Delacour" during the "daily" "funeral of my lord's intellects" (11). Lady Delacour's funeral metaphor implicitly justifies her behavior. If her husband is dead, she becomes a widow and her insistence on spending their money and spending time with young fashionable rakes becomes, if not acceptable, at least a legible stock set of behaviors.

stops Lady Delacour from letting her into the carriage. Given her interest in staring at difference, we might instead presume that it encouraged her.

While Edgeworth's plan for the novel positioned Lady Delacour's doubled identity as a "thin veil" of public elegance through which Belinda can see her true "domestic misery" (480), the Lady Delacour of the finished novel actively mimics Freke's rhetorical positioning of her various identities. Like Freke, she at times relies on intoxicants both to cause those transformations and as props that aid in her performances. In the novel, Lady Delacour's "thin veil" is not an isolated, unintended revelation. It is, instead, a part of a larger, carefully calibrated and skillfully performed masquerade. In the carriage ride home from the masquerade ball, Delacour "heaved a deep sigh, threw herself back in the carriage, let fall her mask," and revealed to Belinda "a full view of her countenance, which was the picture of despair" (30). As Delacour moves Belinda (and the reader) through the stages of her revelation, the seams of her narrative stitching become increasingly visible. While Delacour will on the following morning eschew a detailed description of the "mummery" of a fortune teller's room because she "despair[s] of being able to frighten [Belinda] out of [her] wits" (47), here she reveals her own body with all the staging and penchant for the dramatic that one might expect of a Radcliffe novel. After getting the key to her boudoir from Marriott, Delacour "beckon[s]" Belinda follow, only to "shut and [lock] the door" "the moment she was in the room" (31). The room is "rather dark" (31). Delacour, after wiping "the paint from her face" "with a species of fury," holds the room's only lit candle "so as to throw the light full upon her livid features" (31). The candle reveals that "[h]er eyes were sunk, her cheeks hollow—no trace of youth or beauty remained on her deathlike countenance, which formed a horrid contrast with her gay fantastic dress" (31). Delacour then becomes something like a Geraldine to Belinda's Christabel, "baring one half of her bosom" to

"[reveal] a hideous spectacle" (32). Like any good gothic scare, it leaves Belinda, later that night in her own bedchamber, wide awake with the image of the breast "felt indelibly impressed upon her imagination" (33). In juxtaposing tragically with her physical markers of illness, age, and melancholia, Lady Delacour's masquerade costuming exposes the extent to which the presentation and interpretation of both of her identities are ultimately contingent upon conventional ideologies. In revealing them at once, she reveals the generic structures by which each, in isolation, is made coherent.

Her performance sets up the first-person account of her history in the following two chapters, which further supports her efforts to destabilize the unitary self. Lady Delacour invites Belinda into her boudoir to hear the story IN a letter that ostensibly assuages Belinda's fears with respect to her behavior the night before: "I have taken a double dose of opium, and am not so horridly out of spirits as I was last night—so you need not be afraid of another *scene*" (34). The acknowledgement of her opium use allows Lady Delacour to position laudanum as a necessary component of the construction of her rational, *real* character. At the same time, however, in mentioning the "scene" of the previous evening in order to reject it, the letter ensures that the irrational Lady Delacour remains foregrounded in Belinda's memory. The narrator confirms Lady Delacour's understanding here of opium's ability to restore Delacour to herself by noting that Belinda "found lady Delacour with her face completely repaired with paint, and her spirits with opium" (34). The episode introduces the possibility of multiple selves and, perhaps radically, suggests that Lady Delacour's intoxicated, painted self is more true to the original than her sober, pained one.

Turning back to Lady Delacour's letter, we find that she explicitly claims a body that transgresses against not only the boundaries of her sober hysteria but also against gender, race,

and ability: “There certainly were such people as Amazons. I hope you admire them—for who could live without the admiration of Belinda Portman!” (34). Lady Delacour’s self-identification as an Amazon takes advantage of her reputation in a way that demonstrates that the ultimate intent of her performances, like Freke’s, is not so much to hide her wounded breast but to hide the specific nature of her disease. Fittingly, then, her dissipated identity is widely understood by the novel’s other characters as some sort of physical deformity. Lacking hard physical evidence, those characters point back to her supposed moral missteps as a wife and mother to justify their diagnoses. Noting that Clarence Hervey was unaware that Delacour was a mother, Margaret asks, “will you tell me after this, that lady Delacour is not a monster?” (102). Lady Anne responds with an ironic reference to Delacour's well-known influence on the public: “Every body says, that she's a prodigy, […] and prodigies and monsters are sometimes thought synonymous terms” (102). In their different readings of the word “monster,” Margaret and Lady Anne present Lady Delacour's public persona as something that might be understood through early modern understandings of physical disability, which read it variously as a wonder or prodigy that shows the power of God or a monster that should be interpreted as a bad omen.[14] Lady Anne reads Delacour as a natural “wonder” to be viewed and interpreted; Margaret reads her as an “error” to be erased. Regardless, the debate—based as it is on incomplete knowledge of Delacour’s condition—demonstrates the tenuousness of the distinction between the monstrous and the wondrous. At the same time, it reaffirms Lady Delacour’s self-identification as a physically disfigured Amazonian. Even when the wound remains invisible, her performance marks her as

[14] For a comprehensive treatment of this dichotomy, see Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park’s *Wonders and the Order of Nature.* Rosemarie Garland-Thomson also offers a succinct summation of the categories as narratives “of the marvelous” and “of the deviant” (*Extraordinary Bodies* 13). Garland-Thomson argues that in the modern formulation of disability, narratives of deviance take precedent.

wounded, and that marking gives her a voice that supposedly rational, able-bodied subjects seek to marginalize.

If Lady Delacour's wounds enable her performance, so too do her efforts to disguise the specific nature of that wounding. "Dissipation" becomes a safe way to signal this unknowable shifting. Lady Delacour claims it willingly in ways that frame her motivation for remaining so elusive:

> If you have any humanity, you will not force me to reflect: whilst I yet live, I must *keep it up* with incessant dissipation – the teetotum keeps upright only while it spins. (122)

Lady Delacour's "teetotum," precarious and dependent upon contingency and uncertainty, is of a kind with Pope's brink. Differently put, she reclaims "dissipation" from dysphoric accounts of decay, decline, and death and, in so doing, re-writes it as a strategy for self-preservation.[15]

In large part, Lady Delacour keeps her teetotum upright by resisting narrative closure, which she equates with death. On the evening of the masquerade, following the revelation of her breast, Lady Delacour defends her secrecy by alluding to the moral tales through which the public would understand her wound:

> There is no torture which I could not more easily endure than their insulting pity. I will die, as I have lived, the envy and admiration of the world. When I am gone, let them find out their mistake; and moralize, if they will, over my grave. (32)

Fittingly, then, her narrative actively resists narrative coherence. She begins by warning Belinda not to expect a novel: "I once heard a general say, that nothing was less like a review than a battle; and I can tell you, that nothing is more unlike a novel than real life" (36). She rejects

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[15] In this sense, Lady Delacour's experience of dependency anticipates and reinforces Eve Sedgwick's observation that medical paradigms for addiction in the twentieth century rely implicitly on narrative convention.

romance (“Of all lives, mine has been the least romantic” [36]) before, in relating the story of her fateful carriage ride with Lawless, explaining a laugh by noting that “I am not come yet to the tragical part of my story, and as long as I can laugh, I will” (46). This generic mirroring produces twinned, opposing versions of her narrative: it is at once tragedy and comedy. In this way, it deflects analysis and defies the assumption that life can produce coherent narrative that seemingly characterizes masculine/able-bodied Romanticism.

This effect reaches a dizzying apex as Delacour builds towards the narration of her duel with Luttridge:

> Life is a tragicomedy! Though the critics will allow of no such thing in their books, it is a true representation of what passes in the world; and of all lives, mine has been the most grotesque mixture, or alternation, I should say, of tragedy and comedy. All this is apropos to something I have not told you yet. This comic duel ended tragically for me (57).

Although she amends it to the softer “alternation,” Delacour's initial visual metaphor for her life story (it is “grotesque” in its rejection of genre categorization) succinctly emphasizes the connection between Delacour's disobedient narrative, the “hideous spectacle” of her breast, and the monstrous readings her bodily affect and behavior inspire even in people who have not seen the physical source of her alterity.

We might just as easily suggest that the “mixture,” which Delacour does not amend, invokes the twinned spectres of Delacour’s rouge and laudanum, which both play important roles in keeping her generic teetotum in motion. Despite her letter’s promise that a “double dose” will stave off the fits of the previous evening, Delacour breaks off in her history when Lawless dies in his duel with Lord Delacour. The result of the duel, she tells Belinda, produces the inveterate

remorse that eats away at her mind like a cancer. Her physical reaction to the return of this guilt leaves Belinda "terrified at the wildness of her manner" (51). This slightly muted version of the carriage fit is assuaged by her "drops"—that is, laudanum—followed by "coffee, and afterward *chasse-cafe*" (51). What appears to be a loss of control followed by a drug-induced restoration of it is almost immediately coded by Lady Delacour as a well-timed cliffhanger. After taking her drops, she references the narrator of the *Arabian Nights*, asking, "Now shall the princess Scheherazade go on with her story?" (51). Whether this is a planned performance or a skillful improvisation seems irrelevant: either way, the narrator affirms Lady Delacour's claim by following the question with a chapter break and opening the following chapter with Lady Delacour again gloating: "I left off with the true skill of a good storyteller, at the most interesting part" (52).

In claiming an affinity with Scheherazade, whose storytelling abilities hold off the sultan's violent patriarchal authority, Lady Delacour makes a few important claims for my purposes here. First, of course, she positions herself in a society that oppresses her based on her gender. More complicated, however, is the implication that those restraints enable the narrative innovations that ostensibly keep her alive. We might make sense of this through an understanding of the *Thousand and One Nights* as, itself, a story about the power of habit: transformed by the revelation of his wife and sister-in-law's infidelity, Shahryar responds with a heavily ritualized effort to rape and destroy all women. Scheherazade contests this patriarchal violence with enticing tales that, iterated long enough, re-habituates the murderous sultan and turns him, by habit, into a husband without his notice. Lady Delacour's fluid, self-sustaining narration likewise asks her audience to rethink the roles available to themselves and—more importantly—to Lady Delacour.

Fittingly, then, when Lady Delacour does finally give in to Belinda's repeated efforts to convince her to submit to Dr. X—'s treatments, she does so in a way that foregrounds not the painful, risky, experimental surgery that she is likely to face but instead the narrative ramifications of that surgery: "What am I now?" she asks Belinda, "Fit only 'to point a moral, or adorn a tale'. A mismatched, misplaced, miserable perverted being" (266). The figure points again to the relationship between her body and her behavior: she is "perverted" by her moral transgressions, but she now accepts that public knowledge of her state is necessary to her reformation. Quoting "The Vanity of Human Wishes," she positions herself as the butt of a Johnsonian aphorism. If her previous statements about genre and existence are to be believed, this is as great a sacrifice as the loss of her body would have been. In fact, they are inextricable from one another.

Generic Interventions

The completion of Lady Delacour's rehabilitation plot suggests that her failure is in underestimating—not overestimating—the power of generic conventions to shape her body. In determining that Lady Delacour's cancer was merely a superficial wound "made to persist" by the machinations of her quack doctor, Dr. X— produces a medical justification for supplanting her own narrative of resistant dissipation with his own triumphant tale of modern medicine. In making the experimental mastectomy unnecessary, his diagnosis denies her even the role of martyr to the moral causes she once resisted. In revealing the *true* nature of her wound, it also elevates X— and his profession even while it absolves them of the responsibility of successfully completing the surgery. He becomes, in Marriott's estimation, "the best man in the world, and the cleverest" (313). I argue here that Marriott's assessment is merely the clearest expression of what Dr. X—'s various interventions are meant to elicit from the novel's characters and its

readers. But in the clear distinction between how Dr. X—treats Harriet Freke and Lady Delacour and how he treats Clarence Hervey, the novel makes visible the gendered assumptions upon which his authority—and the credit he takes for his work—is built.

In her rush to champion Dr. X—, Marriott even refuses to acknowledge the sacrifices Lady Delacour will have to make to recover. Marriott summarizes his treatment plan for the rest of the party: "Doctor X— says, if my lady will leave off the terrible quantities of laudanum she takes, he'll engage for her recovery'" (313). While the novel validates Lady Delacour's fear of death and pain because of the mastectomy, no one so much as mentions the not-insignificant pain and danger of opium withdrawals. Within a page of the diagnosis, Lady Delacour improves, reunites with her husband, and becomes a good mother. Anticipating the self-interested practices of Victorian medical practitioners, Dr. X— goes even further than erasing her suffering: he attaches a moral register to her hesitancy to undergo this painful cure: had she submitted to Dr. X—'s desire to observe her body earlier, she could have "saved herself infinite pain, and *them all* anxiety" (314, emphasis mine). I argue in this section that the novel complicates Dr. X—'s easy narrative in a number of key ways. Primarily, it does so by marking the ways in which Dr. X—'s prejudicial understanding of gender shapes his treatment paradigms. Seen together, Dr. X—'s interventions to treat both Lady Delacour's and Clarence Hervey's dissipation expose them as indebted as much to the accepted narrative scripts of late eighteenth century literary production as to actual medical knowledge.

While his recovery is swifter, Clarence Hervey's fall into dissipation is arguably more immediately threatening to his life than Lady Delacour's. Dr. X— makes his first appearance in the novel shortly after Hervey, encouraged by the "fumes of wine" and an "Anacreontic spirit" (90), jumps into the "Serpentine River" on a bet despite not knowing how to swim. Percival,

observing from afar, heroically fishes the "absolutely senseless" Hervey from the river while his riotous friends watch helplessly. As the name of the river suggests, the scene is not subtle in its symbolic register. Percival's intervention and Dr. X—'s subsequent moralizing are as much a salvation and a baptism as they are a medical treatment. As his relationship with Hervey develops, Dr. X— implicitly seeks to turn Hervey's dive into the river into a fortunate fall. In so doing, he positions Hervey as a masculine Romantic literary genius defined primarily by his access to mental anguish. Dr. X— instructs,

> Mr Hervey, you must never marry, […] for your true poet must always be miserable. You know Petrarch tells us, he would not have been happy if he could: he would not have married his mistress if it had been in his power; because then there would have been an end of his beautiful sonnets. (108)

X—'s logic here rests on moving Hervey out of the comedy he is in and into a masculine Romantic model of twinned mental growth and literary production. Misery—in fact, pain—becomes necessary in X—'s model by which Hervey fulfills his potential. In response to the promise of tortured literary production, Hervey claims for himself a smaller ambition than Petrarch. Alluding to the genies of "Aladdin," he claims he'd prefer to be the weaker of the two: "I would […] infinitely rather be a slave of the ring than a slave of the lamp" (109). The reference is telling particularly considering Lady Delacour's identification with Scheherazade. While Lady Delacour takes on the identity of Scheherazade, who wrings narrative innovation out of her condition, Hervey rejects a similar role to identify instead with a magic being bound by another's will. In the terms of Belinda's hierarchy of wit, he willingly takes on the role of the moon, reflecting another's true genius, rather than that of the sun. Unable to spontaneously

produce useful knowledge, Hervey nonetheless can do good if he is under the influence of a properly benevolent master.

That master proves to be Dr. X—, who is clearly aligned with the rational, moderate liberalism represented by his friends, the Percivals. Anticipating his moral tact with regard to Lady Delacour, Dr. X—pushes back against Hervey's lack of ambition by pointing to the potential public good of great work. The doctor laments Hervey's decision to "waste" his "great" powers "upon petty objects" (116). While the cure for Lady Delacour's dissipation will prove to be submission to medical expertise, the cure for Hervey's is heroic self-actualization. Building to a pitch, Dr. X— wonders, rhetorically, if someone "who might be permanently useful to his fellow creatures" should "content himself with being the evanescent amusement of a drawing-room?" (116). The distinction here between Hervey's potential for genius and Lady Delacour's need to obey is largely rhetorical: because Dr. X— suggests this path for Hervey, there is no way in which he can move down it without reducing himself to a reflection of Dr. X—'s more original light.[16]

Hervey's genius may be a mere rhetorical trick, but it's one most everyone in the novel is willing to accept. Hervey tells X—, "you have roused my ambition, and I will pursue noble ends by noble means" (116). The transformation is convincing enough that even the cold Belinda is impressed:

[16] Lord Delacour's decidedly unheroic drunkenness—cured through a re-attachment to his newly sober wife, which in turn weans him from his dependence on intemperate friends—would provide a useful counter-example. We might attribute this distinction to the difference between the novel's hero and a minor character or in the difference between a single and married man's debauchery. But as Taylor's reading of the novel suggests, even Lord Delacour is shielded from some of the moral blame for his behavior as his wife's sobriety is positioned as a prerequisite to his own.

> His character appeared [to Belinda] in a new light—she was proud of her own judgment, in having discerned his merit, and for a moment she permitted herself to feel 'unreproved pleasure in his company.' (116)

As the narrator acknowledges, Dr. X—'s diagnosis—and Hervey's response to it—have the benefit of flattering not only Hervey but also his admirer. Belinda, in seeing good in Clarence Hervey, reformed, affirms her initial attraction to him. This circular logic assures that Dr. X—'s assertions will continue to be assumed to be true—in disagreeing with him, Belinda and Hervey must admit that they, too, were wrong. X—, then, gives Hervey a path by which he can achieve both personal and private narrative closure. Moreover, he seems to offer Hervey the opportunity to choose a course of life that he considers preferable to the life of dissipation he had been living.

In accepting a life lived for public good through a self-actualizing path out of his mental pain, Hervey acts out the narrative arc Mellor has identified as masculine Romanticism even as the novel itself calls the validity of that narrative into question.[17] In so doing, Hervey affirms Dr. X—'s implication that there are good and bad ways to respond to pain. This moral dichotomy anticipates the valorization of pain in body studies that Siebers critiques in *Disability Theory*.[18] As Lenard Davis observes, body studies typically see the body only as "a site of *jouissance*, a native ground of pleasure, the scene of an excess that defies reason, that takes dominant culture and its rigid, powerladen vision of the body to task" (qtd. in Siebers 59). Siebers notes that theoretical examinations of pain suggest that pain is a useful node on the path towards this sort of embodied resistance: body studies have suggested that "pain remaps the body's erotic sites, redistributing the erogenous zones, breaking up the monopoly of the genitals, and smashing the

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[17] As other critics have demonstrated—and Mellor acknowledges in looking to deconstructive readings of Wordsworth's *The Prelude*—whether male Romantic poets affirm this narrative is an important and open question.
[18] See Chapter 1, 65-66.

repressive and aggressive edifice of the ego" (63). As a counter-measure to the ease with which theorists can "mythologize disability as an advantage" (63), Siebers calls for a new realism that acknowledges the "blunt, crude realities" of disability, pain, and illness. By valorizing some responses to pain (patient suffering that builds towards a publicly useful creative response) while denigrating others (chemical medication and fashionable social interaction), Dr. X—'s treatment paradigm effectively maps a moral binary onto this discourse of pain and reveals the ideologies of ability undergirding the imposition of closure in Edgeworth's novel.

Although Dr. X—'s treatment paradigm for Hervey's dissipation taps into Romantic narratives of self-consciousness in ways that expose the narrative prostheses at work in those stories, he offers Lady Delacour instead a treatment plan that necessarily invalidates her pain. After all, for much of the novel, opium does not convert Lady Delacour's body in pain into another site of mere "*jouissance*." Instead, the novel almost goes out of its way to depict opium's role in enabling Lady Delacour's rational capacities by holding off her mental and physical pain. Opium's medicinal qualities are perhaps most apparent on the morning following the masquerade, when her letter to Belinda promises that her "double dose" of laudanum will keep her in "spirits." And yet, until Dr. X— exposes the role of opium in making her wound persist, the novel's characters largely accept laudanum as necessary to Lady Delacour's wellbeing. At the end of her reunion scene with Belinda, Lady Delacour wonders aloud while taking her laudanum, "Is it not shocking to think […] that in laudanum alone I find the means of supporting existence?" (269). Tellingly, at this moment Belinda does not resist Lady Delacour's therapeutic justification for drug use.

In fact, Belinda and the narrator actively re-affirm the therapeutic benefits of opium by employing it as a convenient way to save Lady Delacour from her dangerous flirtation with

Methodism.[19] In this episode, the narrator explicitly codes Delacour's sober identity as not herself. Resulting from the largely latent influence of her "methodistical mother," Delacour's loneliness gave way to mystical thinking during the periods "when the effect of laudanum was exhausted, or before a fresh dose began to operate" (270). The experience at once reflects Delacour's character and her body: "Her understanding, weakened perhaps by disease, and never accustomed to reason, was incapable of distinguishing between truth and errour" (270). These moments allowed her guilt to unite with "dreadful superstitious terrours" to produce enthusiastic revelry that seemingly replaces the effects of opium. The drug, in turn, provided a "stimulus" that "changed" "the train of her ideas," leaving her "amazed at the weak fears and strange notions by which they had been disturbed" (270). The scene offers an unexpected inversion of how we might expect to moralize the sort of woman Pope finds alternately "deep in Taylor and the *Book of Martyrs*" and "drinking citron with his Grace and Chartres" (63-64). In *Belinda*, the influence of a holy book can be more dangerous than that of citron.

Lady Delacour's laudanum use is encouraged in shoring up her identity in the face of even greater existential threats, but the space between Lady Delacour's opium-induced mental organization and her irrational sobriety also proves useful to Belinda in coercing Lady Delacour to submit to medical treatment. After Lady Delacour's efforts to overtake Mrs Luttridge's carriage ends in a crash that leaves Lady Delacour in great physical pain, she initially refuses Belinda's offer to bring Dr. X— in to treat her.[20] Belinda only gets Lady Delacour's consent by

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[19] If opium is contesting the empiricist self in the ways I suggest here, Methodism is a particularly relevant direction for Lady Delacour to move. As Misty G. Anderson notes, Methodism

> Had new consequences for a self defined by its capacity for consciousness, cognitive continuity, and self-possession. Methodism's simultaneous modernity and mysticism seemed to unravel the skein of the eighteenth-century conscious self just as it was being woven. (2)

Like the masquerade and, indeed, like intoxicants, the self-effacing promise of Methodism proved at once "dangerous" and enticing (2).

[20] The scene echoes Lady Delacour's duel with Luttridge in several key ways, in particular in Marriott's repeated calls for arquebusade, a lotion used to treat gunshot wounds.

denying her the opium she needs to treat both her chronic and this new acute pain. Intervening when Lady Delacour requests "double her usual quantity of laudanum" (129), Belinda "[takes] the bottle of laudanum from [Marriott's] trembling hand" (129). In so doing, Belinda ensures that Lady Delacour lacks the mental capacity to make decisions for herself. When Lady Delacour initially protests, she does so "in a loud peremptory voice" to which Belinda responds with a "firm" "no" (130). As the dispute progresses, Belinda threatens to leave Lady Delacour, which she claims would leave Lady Delacour with "no friend left" and with her "secret" "inevitably" "discovered" (131). In response, Lady Delacour's untreated pain leads her protests to devolve into cries, hesitations and, eventually, silence because of exhaustion brought on by what the narrator calls, derisively, her "delirious exertions" (131). Belinda, in contrast, maintains "a fixed determination of countenance" in her steady demands (131). The narration implies that Belinda's calm certainty demonstrates good judgement and reason in the face of Delacour's degeneration into unreason or dishonesty, but the premise relies on a contradictory set of claims: Delacour's pain-induced delirium gives Belinda the right to exact concessions from her: "you must allow me to judge, for you know you are not in a condition to judge for yourself" (130), she argues. At the same time, her delirious consent, once given, takes precedent over her informed refusal.

A similarly contradictory logic informs the scene that finally leads to the breakdown of Lady Delacour's and Belinda's relationship (which, in turn, enables their reunion and Lady Delacour's full submission to Dr. X—'s advice). During a tense discussion of the rumor that Belinda plans to marry Lord Delacour after Lady Delacour's death, Belinda willingly converses with the duplicitous, flattering Lady Delacour, who hides her true anger and jealousy behind a "mask of paint" through which "no change of colour could be visible" (202). As in the boudoir scene, tears wash away Lady Delacour's makeup to reveal the "strange and ghastly spectacle" of

her face (205). Through the tears, her tone rises, and a veil is literally lifted from her face. Belinda in this scene, however, uses the lifting of the veil to assert her own authority: "Command yourself, lady Delacour! I conjure you or you will go out of your senses" (205). Perhaps because they resist Belinda's interests (Lady Stanhope has commanded Belinda to stay in the Delacours' home at all costs), Delacour's actual, unfiltered expressions can be dismissed out of hand as insane in this scene in a way that they were not in the boudoir scene, when they promised to reveal the "mystery about her ladyship's toilette" (20).

Fittingly, Lady Delacour at once points to Belinda's potential gain from establishing Lady Delacour's insanity and points to her ability to modulate the physical expressions of her emotions as a way to mark her sanity:

> You cannot get me into Bedlam, all powerful, all artful as you are! […] Do you not hear that I can lower my voice? — do not you see that I can be calm? Could Mrs Stanhope herself—could *you*, miss Portman, speak in a softer, milder, more polite, more proper tone than I do now? (206)

Here, Lady Delacour suggests, and Belinda seems to acknowledge, that her autonomy is demonstrated by her ability to modulate her public persona; however, given the threat Lady Delacour's unpredictability poses to Belinda's marriage prospects, the writing is already on the wall. When Lady Delacour retires briefly to repair her makeup, Helena enters the room, singing lines from the song Ariel sings after Prospero frees him in the final act of *The Tempest*. While Lady Delacour doubles down, re-entering the scene "fresh rouged, and elegantly dressed, […] performing her part to a brilliant audience in her drawing room" (209), Helena's song suggests that Belinda's efforts to medicalize Lady Delacour are in large part an effort to ensure that Lady Delacour, like Prospero, will eventually "drown [her] book" (5.1.56).

In coming to reject Lady Delacour, intoxicated, as dishonest and Lady Delacour, sober, as irrational, Belinda leaves her home and enters the home of the Percivals, whom the novel clearly sets up as foils for the Delacours. Anne marries Lord Percival only after he rejects Lady Delacour for refusing to correct her "flaws" (37). Lord Percival's rejection sends Lady Delacour into her marriage with Lord Delacour, which, in turn, produces the "aching void" that inspires her dissipation. The novel also employs the Percivals to emphasize the pathologies produced by Lady Delacour's bad mothering: they raise Helena, who, like the Percival children, is identified by a "healthy, rosy, intelligent [face]" that forms a sharp contrast to both Lady Delacour's dead children and her own pale, ghostly face (98). The moral and medical distinction between Lady Delacour and Lady Anne is seemingly confirmed by Hervey's thoughts following the Serpentine River episode. Newly "disposed to reflection, by having just escaped drowning" (99), Hervey develops a new opinion on his friend:

> The unconstrained cheerfulness of lady Anne Percival spoke to a mind at ease, and immediately imparted happiness by exciting sympathy; but in lady Delacour's wit and gayety there was an appearance of art and effort, which often destroyed the pleasure that she wished to communicate. Some people may admire, but none can sympathize with affectation. (98)

In Hervey's formulation, Lady Delacour's performance is discredited by the effort she puts into it. His reading at once ignores Harriet Freke's ability to excite sympathy through her own labored performances of difference and derives solely from a reflexive association of beauty with health.[21]

[21] For aging and ugliness as disability in women, see Farr (2015) and Jones (2000).

When Dr. X— observes Lady Delacour alongside Belinda in a later chapter, he puts the force of medical knowledge behind the binary between beautiful health and ugly disease masked by artifice. X— disagrees with (an apparently briefly relapsed) Hervey's assertion that Lady Delacour's "spirits" "inspire every body with gayety":

> '[Lady Delacour's "spirits"] incline me more to melancholy than mirth. [...] These high spirits do not seem quite natural. The vivacity of youth and of health, miss Portman, always charms me; but this gayety of lady Delacour's does not appear to me that of a sound mind in a sound body.' (115)

Belinda, in contrast, is for Dr. X— a "mild green" that "yields her charms of mind with sweet delay" (111). Positioning Belinda's "vivacity of youth" as both a marker of mental and physical "health" and as a sort of natural high in its own right, Dr. X— rejects Lady Delacour's performance of beauty, which leaves him "blasted with excess of light" (111). But while this diagnosis is based on ocular evidence, it is also largely a confirmation of an opinion he holds about her long before he ever actually sees her. As early as the Serpentine River episode, Dr. X— mocks Hervey's notorious acquaintance as "one of the finest pieces of painting extant, with the advantage of 'Ev'ry grace which time alone can grant'" (95). And while we might argue that Lady Delacour's public dissipation produced the effects of aging early, as she tells Belinda in her letter, "every body must [paint], sooner or later" (34).

However natural the aging process and efforts to obscure its effects might be, Dr. X—'s presumed ability to observe it nonetheless grants him greater access to Lady Delacour's body under the guise of medical examination. After this social event, he identifies in Lady Delacour "a perpetual fever, either of mind or body—I cannot tell which" (115). He leverages his uncertainty into a request for more knowledge about her body: "If I could feel her pulse, I could instantly

decide; but I have heard her say, that she has a horror against having her pulse felt—and a lady's horror is invincible—by reason—" (115). The diagnosis reveals several things about the medical model as figured in Dr. X—. First, it claims—and is largely granted—incredibly prescient diagnostic powers: Belinda is so distracted by the accuracy of X—'s initial diagnosis that she incorrectly positions the pieces on a chessboard. It also assumes for itself a corresponding (and self-evident) right to investigate: his desire to feel Lady Delacour's pulse trumps her "horrour"-induced resistance to it (115). "Reason" dictates, in X—'s formulation, that he has a right to her pulse (115), and Hervey complies. Noting that the ruffles of Delacour's elaborate dress quake slightly at regular intervals, he suggests that X— count the movements to read her pulse without her consent (informed or otherwise). Dr. X—'s enlightenment rationality purports to turn Delacour's body into a collection of signifiers by which he might meaningfully read her state of mind. In truth, his investigation surreptitiously—and selectively—gathers information that supports his initial diagnostic assumption that only in youth and beauty is there truth. Differently put, X— seeks details to produce a narrative that affirms his own suspicions and, in so doing, makes himself the hero of Lady Delacour's tale. While Lady Delacour in her history positions herself in opposition to Gil Blas's selective narrative style, Dr. X—'s medical authority subjects Lady Delacour to whatever narrative framings or generic conventions that Dr. X— sees fit.[22]

Many of the details of Lady Delacour's history affirm Dr. X—'s assessment, but she nonetheless resists efforts to cede control of that narrative entirely to him. She does so by explicitly citing issues of gender imbalance in asserting her preference for her unnamed quack.

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[22] Referring to the 1721 French novel, Lady Delacour promises Belinda, "I do nothing by halves, my dear—I shall not tell you my adventures, as Gil Blas told his to the archbishop of Grenada—skipping over the *useful* passages—because you are not an archbishop, and I should not have the grace to put on a sanctified face, if you were" (35).

Mocking Dr. X—'s "diploma for killing or curing in form" (178), Lady Delacour suggests that his honor, in particular, makes him a bad doctor:

> I cannot depend on any of these 'honourable men'. […] [T]heir honour and foolish delicacy would not allow them to perform such an operation for a wife, without the knowledge, privity, consent, &c. &c. &c. of her husband. Now lord Delacour's knowing of the thing is quite out of the question. (178-179)

Lady Delacour here butts up against her lack of rights as a married female patient. Because she remains property of her husband, he has a literal interest in the decision-making process surrounding her body that Dr. X— will necessarily respect. Her long-held refusal to disclose the state of her body to him is a de facto act of resistance and an assertion of her own autonomy ("I am neither a child nor a fool," she tells Belinda. "Consequently, there can be no pretense for *managing* me" [178, emphasis Edgeworth's].). This resistance is rooted in both intoxicants and narrative: Delacour's rehabilitation will require her to give up opium, but it will also force her into the conclusion of her—now, perhaps more accurately, Dr. X—'s—narrative.

Her fear of Dr. X—'s desire to disclose her state is not entirely unfounded. When Dr. X— is introduced to the narrative in the Serpentine River incident, Hervey's friends laugh about X—'s inability to adequately disguise the identity of the supposedly anonymous patients in his published accounts: "he'll have some of us down in black and white, and curse me if I should choose to meet with myself in a book," laughs sir Philip Baddeley (93). While Hervey almost immediately dismisses Baddeley after meeting X—, his accusation does offer some credence to Lady Delacour's fears. There is nothing to stop her, once she discloses her condition, from becoming the subject of a medical/moral tale of modern, masculine medicine's dominance over the transgressive female body. In Dr. X—'s formulation, however, Lady Delacour's resistance to

his professional purview becomes “a vain hope of secrecy” by which “she will inevitably destroy herself” (137). X—’s diagnosis speaks to the long history of dismissing claims to subjectivity from people with disabilities as narcissism.[23] It also, in the same way, anticipates the modern understanding of denial as it relates to addiction: X—’s moral/medical dismissal of Delacour’s understanding of her own body effaces whatever credibility she might have had as a different sort of patient.[24]

The limitations of this model are exposed by the treatment plan, which acknowledges the role of habit in producing all subjects (not merely the transgressive ones). Following the revelation that the mastectomy is unnecessary, the second volume ends with Belinda’s thoughts on the Delacour’s future course. Demonstrating a faith in the very associationist tendencies of the brain that ostensibly produced Lady Delacour’s dissipation, Belinda concludes that,

> when lady Delacour had once tasted the pleasures of domestic life, she would not easily return to that dissipation which she had followed from habit, and into which she had first been driven by a mixture of vanity and despair. (322)

Belinda’s narrative here follows Hervey’s earlier stated plan to “wean lady Delacour, by degrees, from dissipation by attaching her to her daughter, and to lady Anne Percival” (124). The ease

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[23] See Siebers (34-38).

[24] The ways in which Lady Delacour’s subjectivity is flatly denied and her friends and family make their relationships contingent on her rejection of her subjective experiences anticipate modern treatment paradigms, chief among them the intervention. Helen Keane argues that modern discourse on addiction is rooted in Enlightenment ideals of the autonomous self that are “fundamental to the ‘enterprise culture’ of contemporary liberal societies” (68). In medicalizing addiction, contemporary discourse has rewritten the experience of addiction as inherently deceitful, characterized by both a willingness to lie to others and an inability to see the truth. Such paradigms ensure that “any desires or beliefs [an addict] expresses contrary to the truth of addiction and recovery discourse can be dismissed as an expression of the disease” (74). For Keane, the intervention is an associated process of truth formulation. The intervention works because “it is assumed that the real exists independent of perception, and that the members of the intervention team have access to it and can present it objectively” (80). The result for Keane is a diagnostic and treatment model that is “in denial” about the experience of drug use. If the intervention is read, instead, “as an attempt to resolve a clash between different discursive constructions of reality,” the gaps in the logic of the medical model of addiction (chief among them, the pleasures and value that many derive from drug use) become visible.

with which domestic associations might replace chemical ones reaffirms the relationship between moral behavior and sobriety in the moral logic of the novel. Edgeworth marks this by drawing explicitly on figures of consumption—Lady Delacour is to be "wean[ed] […] by degrees from dissipation" in part by "creating in her mind a taste for domestic happiness" (124, 397)—to dramatize the formulation of new associations in her mind.

Conclusion: "What a different person *I would be*!"

In enforcing the narrative logic of associationism, Dr. X— and Belinda ultimately destabilize the foundational logic of their enterprise. If Lady Delacour is re-formed at the end of novel's second volume only through the intentional cultivation of different habits of mind, what makes this new Lady Delacour any truer to the original than the old one? Lady Delacour signals an awareness of this problem by actively equating the effects of her interpersonal relationships with the effects of her drugs. At the end of her estrangement from Belinda, Lady Delacour, mistakenly believing that Marriott has failed in her errand to bring Belinda to what she fears is her deathbed, demands, "miss Portman is not with you? Give me my laudanum" (264). She forgets the request, however, when Belinda appears, a mistake she notices only when it is brought to her attention:

> 'I thought I had taken it,' said she in a feeble voice; and as she raised her eyes and saw Belinda, she added, with a faint smile, 'Miss Portman, I believe, has been laudanum to me this morning' (269).

In mistaking Belinda for her laudanum, Delacour seemingly affirms both the therapeutic potential of Belinda leaving Delacour and Dr. X—'s theory of habitual relationships. Belinda's influence has the same restorative and euphoric potential as the laudanum.

Familial relationships remain a key (but contested) component of addiction treatment to this day, but *Belinda* in 1801 already seems willing to poke at the rhetorical shakiness of replacing one habit with another.[25] While Delacour nonetheless takes her laudanum in this instance ("nothing will do for me now but *this*," she insists [269].), Lady Delacour, reformed, positions Belinda as the source of her cure:

> She has saved my life. She has made my life worth saving. She has made me feel my own value. She has made me know my own happiness. She has reconciled me to my husband. She has united me with my child. She has been my guardian angel. (335)

The repetitive grammatical structure gives Lady Delacour's exclamations the tenor of a religious chant and therefore recalls her brief but dangerous interest in Methodism. At once, Belinda becomes Lady Delacour's spiritual guide and her chemical medicine. At the same time, in equating Belinda with both opium and Methodism, Lady Delacour implicitly asks what makes this medicine different from those she tried earlier. As she goes on to contrast her newly valuable life with her earlier life of Freke-inspired dissipation, she reiterates this question: "*She* [Freke], the confidante of my intrigues!—*she* leagued with me in vice!" (335, Edgeworth's emphasis). The parallel grammatical structure asserts a binary between the life freaked by Freke and the life normalized by Belinda. Since Belinda's influence makes Delacour's life "worth saving," she can easily sacrifice the false medicine offered by Freke. At the same time, though, the parallel reveals continuities between these two Lady Delacours and the influences that produce them. Whether she acts the coquette or the wife, or the grotesque dissipate or the healthy mother,

[25] For a critique of the intervention from a feminist and post-modern position, see Keane (2002).

Delacour builds an identity that ultimately reflects the influences and meets the expectations of someone else.

Fittingly, then, while Lady Delacour codes her assertion that she will not "wash off her rouge" as a concession to her husband's memory of her old self, the rouge also signals a continued, if altered, resistance to the domestic structures to which she claims to submit. In short, she is "*won* not *tamed*!" (314, emphasis Edgeworth's). Delacour's performance at the end of the novel demonstrates a willingness to operate within the confines of Dr. X—'s narrative constraints largely to expose them as mere conventions. Delacour takes control of the novel's final two chapters to complete the novel's twinned marriage plots, suggesting, in so doing, that she retains more of a Prospero-like power than Belinda would like. After the revelation of Mr. Vincent's gambling habit, Belinda is free to turn back Clarence Hervey. [26] Hervey, however, is only disentangled from Virginia by Lady Delacour's work to resolve Virginia's own self-styled romance plot. In joining the two marriage pairs, Lady Delacour, Lord Delacour, and Helena appear fully reunited and, in so doing, fulfill the generic requirements of their Shakespearean romance as well.

As Susan C. Greenfield argues, the novel's final tableau "[arranges] the three virgins [Belinda, Virginia, and Helena] [...] to greatest patriarchal effect" (224), but Lady Delacour's method of producing this tableau insists upon its fictive nature. She cites narrative precedent throughout in building it. Now suddenly willing to engage in Gil Blas's strategic narrative expediency, she reveals the necessary details to her audience in a way that she hopes has

[26] The wholesale rejection of Mr. Vincent as a romantic interest because of his gambling is another hanging thread in the moral construction of the novel: Hervey and Lady Delacour also gamble consistently throughout the novel. Moreover, Vincent's habit is exposed by Hervey, who watches as Vincent loses his entire fortune at Mrs. Luttridge's crooked faro game before exposing the con. Although he tells himself—and the reader—throughout the scene that he is acting in Mr. Vincent's best interest, surely Hervey considers the fact that publicly embarrassing Belinda's suitor might keep her available to him (even though he is, at the time, still engaged to Virginia).

"worked up your curiosity to the highest pitch" (462). She then defers three times the desire for that "curiosity" to be satisfied. Unveiling the seemingly lifeless Virginia, Delacour diminishes her audience's fear for her safety: "This is only a *scene*; consider it as such, and admire the actress as I do" (464, emphasis Edgeworth's). In building towards revealing her prescribed match for Belinda, she invokes perhaps the most successful novel of the eighteenth century: "we have all of us seen *Pamela married*—let us now see *Belinda in love*" (472, emphasis Edgeworth's). The meta-thematic framing of the events of the novel's final pages reduces the novel's characters to what they actually are: characters in a novel, subject to the narrative whims of their author and—perhaps even more so—to the expectations of their audience. Fittingly, then, when Belinda voices an objection to the tableau, she is limited to contesting it on the basis of literary criticism: "there is nothing in which novellists are so apt to err, as in hurrying things towards the conclusion" (477).

Lady Delacour, perhaps, learns this move from Dr. X—. Just as his narrative reduces her to an object upon which Dr. X— demonstrates his heroic knowledge, Lady Delacour, in marrying Belinda and Virginia off to suitors on the way to the West Indies to build fortunes, denies her heroines any chance to be heroic of their own accord. But the transformation does seem to succeed in giving Lady Delacour some amount of agency in affecting her own rehabilitation. In this sense, it becomes possible to trace some continuity between the reformed and the unreformed Lady Delacours: both deploy confession in ways that critique the conventions that shape the genre. In an early moment of regret, she laments,

> If I had served myself, with half the zeal that I have served the world, I should not now be thus forsaken! I have sacrificed reputation, happiness—everything, to the love of frolic. All frolic will soon be at an end with me—I am dying—and I shall

> die unlamented by any human being. If I were to live my life over again, what a different life it should be! What a different person *I would be*! (30, Edgeworth's emphasis)

Here, Lady Delacour seems to regret the splintering of her identity and sees her public life as a way by which she closed off her private one; however, in asserting the possibility of becoming a "different person" through the force of her will, Lady Delacour nonetheless defines the self as a series of consciously cultivated habits rather than an inherent identity. This position undermines the basis of Dr. X— and the Percivals' claim to rational moral/medical superiority.

Through this new narrative strategy, Lady Delacour supplants the novel's narrator, ultimately offering the novel's concluding speech and moral. However, in resisting the narrative closure offered by Lady Delacour, Belinda perhaps reveals the extent to which she has internalized Harriet Freke's lesson "to examine by her reason the habits and principles which guided her conduct." The novel, for its part, silences Belinda after she expresses this bit of displeasure, but she persists in a silent protest that forces Lady Delacour to interrupt her concluding speech to chastise her: "Clarence, you have a right to Belinda's hand, and may kiss it too. Nay, miss Portman, it is the rule of the stage" (478). The suggestion that Freke has influenced Belinda would run contrary, of course, to Belinda's opinion of herself. Shortly after watching Delacour leave on the day of her carriage wreck, Belinda takes a moment to marvel at her ability to resist Delacour's influence:

> It is singular, that my having spent a winter with one of the most dissipated women in England should have sobered my mind so completely. If I had never seen the utmost extent of the pleasures of the world, as they are called, my imagination might have misled me to the end of my life; but now I can judge from

> my own experience, and I am convinced that the life of a fine lady would never make me happy. Dr. X——told me, the other day, that he thinks me formed for something better, and he is incapable of flattery. (126)

Belinda, like Wordsworth at Mont Blanc, describes a "soulless image on the eye / That had usurped upon a living thought" (6.454-455). But she glories in the substitution with something like a Miltonic sense of morality: having seen, and rejected, the dissipating pleasures of the world, she can be all the more confident in the boundaries by which she defines her self. And yet, her very language here speaks to just how untenable this position is: she is, she admits, "formed." And while the register here looks clearly to the divine, in employing Dr. X—'s complimentary moral diagnosis to undergird her autonomy, Belinda again demonstrates that medical advice is easier to swallow when it is flattering. In so doing, she reveals the influence X— has exerted over her without her knowledge.

Of course, in the novel's final tableau, Lady Delacour easily coaxes out of Belinda an expression of resistance to the patriarchal demands implicitly placed upon her body by Dr. X—, Hervey, and the Percivals. Merely by pushing her towards the expected end of her tale, Lady Delacour exposes Belinda as dissipated in her own right. She does not fall as hard or as quickly or as obviously as Lady Delacour or Hervey or Mr. Vincent, but her fall is perhaps even more dangerous for its subtlety. Lady Delacour understands her own dissipation intimately and deploys it strategically; Belinda remains enthralled to the fiction of her impermeable self. As the medical literature reminds us, the first step towards the cure is admitting that you have a problem.

CHAPTER 4: Romantic Withdrawal: Critical Rehabilitation and Keatsian Dissipation

Unable to bear the sneers of ignorance or the attacks of envy, having no decision of character & not strength enough to buckle himself like a porcupine, & present nothing but his prickles to his enemies, he began to despond, flew to dissipation as a relief, which from a temporary elevation of spirits, plunged him into deeper & more inextricable despondency than ever. For six weeks he was scarcely sober, & once to shew what a Man of Genius does, to gratify his appetites, when once they get the better of him, he covered his tongue & throat as far as he could reach with Cayenne pepper, in order as he said to have the "delicious coolness of claret in all its glory!" This was his own expression, as he told me the fact. —Benjamin Haydon, journal entry dated 29 March 1821

I wish to devote myself to another sensation. —John Keats, letter to George and Georgiana Keats, 17, 18, 20, 21, 24, 25, 27 September 1819

Though often quoted, the journal entry that makes my first epigraph is rarely taken seriously or read particularly critically.[1] Haydon is dismissed as untrustworthy, and Keats's relationship with drugs emerges critically cleansed of the suggestion of addiction, compulsion, or habitual attachment. This effect is so built into our conception of Keats that Nicholas Roe's suggestion in a recent biography that Keats perhaps consumed more alcohol and opium than has been typically assumed received not only critical, but popular attention. It led Verlyn Klinkenborg to ask in the *New York Times*, "Can Opium or Illness Explain a John Keats Poem?"[2] This question, or, more accurately, the critical investment in answering it with a "no," shapes not

[1] Robert Gittings calls it Haydon's "dramatic and much-disputed legend" (292). Though Gittings treats Haydon as a largely trustworthy source elsewhere in his biography, he cautions here that this anecdote exists only in Haydon's journal, not in anything published by Haydon. We might also consider the possibility that Haydon's suppression of the anecdote in published writings speaks to its authenticity. Nonetheless, Gittings concludes that Keats was "drinking more heavily than usual at this time" (292). Perhaps the earliest disputation of this legend comes from Sidney Colvin who in 1920 responds to Haydon's "rudely and crudely" stated opinion as such:

> If Keats really told Haydon that silly, and I should suppose impossible, story about the claret and cayenne it was probably only a piece of such 'rhodomotade' as his friends describe, invented on the spur of the moment to scandalize Haydon or under the provocation of one of his preachments. (380)

Unprompted, Colvin goes on to defend Keats from possible accusations of addiction, deeming it "likely" that Keats "may at moments during these unhappy moments have sought relief in dissipation of one kind or another" (380). But he concludes, "that he was now or at any time habitually given to drink is disproved by the explicit testimony of all his friends as well as Brown, his closest intimate" (380). Anya Taylor disputes Haydon's accusations of habitual use but admits, with regards to the cayenne story, "if the story is not true, it might as well be" (174).

[2] See, also, Hill 2012.

only literary criticism but also academic work on drug use in the Romantic period.[3] The consequences of this work expand out from those subfields into Romantic studies generally. Keats critics have so successfully read Keats through the lens of twentieth-century attitudes towards drug use that intoxicants and addiction are largely subordinated even in recent critical turns towards the body and consumer culture, both fields in which the relevance of questions of pleasure and compulsion might otherwise be self-evident.[4] The one exception that proves the rule is work on Keats as a physician/poet, which broaches the subject of intoxicants safely by

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[3] Based on a test of a lock of Keats's hair, Ronald K. Siegel argues that "Keats was not only a user, he was probably dependent on the drug as well" (127). The finding gets mentioned in a footnote to the only reference to Keats in Barry Milligan's *Pleasures and Pains: Opium and the Orient in Nineteenth-Century British Culture* (1995). Included in a list of "Known frequent users" in the British canon, only Keats gets an explanatory footnote. Milligan's careful reference speaks to the concern Alethea Hayter expresses in her chapter on Keats in *Opium and the Romantic Imagination* (1968). The chapter appears at the very end of the book, out of chronological order and following a chapter titled "Some Writers who Took Opium Occasionally." Hayter justifies this shuffling of Keats by suggesting that, should it be proven that Keats did not take opium before writing any of his major works, readers can physically remove the chapter from the book. Her argument matches that caution. The suggestion that opium played any role in any element of Keats's writing is all but buried in qualifiers. Describing Keats's recovery from an eye injury in 1819, Hayter writes, he "*perhaps* took laudanum to deaden the pain, and he experienced some delightful hours of waking but dreamy euphoria to which he gave the name of indolence" (311, emphasis Hayter's). That "perhaps" never drops out of her discussion of opium's potential effects on Keats's poetry. But even as a thought experiment, opium offers Hayter limited returns with regards to Keats: "it would [...] at most, cast a little light on some of his imagery and turn of thought in the 1819 poems," particularly in comparison to the light offered by a critical focus on "the really important influences on Keats at the time" (312-313). Similarly, Anya Taylor acknowledges that while alcohol offers itself in Keats's poetry as "a serious option" for dealing with life's miseries, that solution is "ultimately unsatisfactory by contrast with the seeming permanence of art" (189). For accounts of the textual evidence that Keats used opium, see Roe, as well as William B. Ober's "Drowsed with the Fume of the Poppies: Opium and John Keats."

[4] In the introduction to the recent collection *Romanticism and Pleasure* (2010), editors Michelle Faubert and Thomas H. Schmid define their project as both nostalgic and forward-thinking. While the volume's chapter-length discussion of Keats acknowledges his reputation as a poet of physical pleasure ("poet of fragrant bodices, crushed grapes, slippery kisses, and embalmed darkness" [Tontiplaphol 40]), it abstracts Keats's sensuous imagery into a discussion of Romantic theories on conversation. Denise Gigante's work on Keats's interest in taste ultimately turns to a reading of *The Fall of Hyperion* as an expression of the nausea caused by the late stages of tuberculosis. Daniela Garofalo has called discussions of the role of the consumer economy in Keats "a commonplace in romantic criticism" (353). Marjorie Levinson, for example, uses Byron's claim that Keats's verse is onanistic to re-organize Keats studies around Keats's class striving. While Orrin Wang's *Romantic Sobriety* is far more explicit about the overlap between the logic of consumer capitalist systems and the logic of addiction, Wang nonetheless uses questions of sobriety and intoxication largely as a system of metaphors for thinking about economics and politics (as is evidenced by his subtitle, *Sensation, Revolution, Commodification, History*).

explicitly explaining his knowledge of those substances as the result of his professional training (and not, implicitly, the result of first-hand experience).[5]

When the subject of drug use is not elided or left oblique, as in the case of a discussion about the line "Do I wake or sleep?" on the NASSR listserv in April 2016, the conversation often becomes heated. These tensions support the addiction studies truism that the conception of addiction as "disease" is inherently fluid and never fully transcends its moral origins. That moral inflection, further, demonstrates that resistance to considerations of Keats and drugs rests less on matters of biographical fact (which are ambiguous, at best) and more on the assumptions and claims of twentieth-century addiction treatment paradigms.[6] But this chapter does not claim to establish as a matter of fact the extent to which Keats was or was not intoxicated, addicted, or dissipated. Instead, I am interested in considering the need for a disclaimer in the first place. I argue that cultural scripts for sobriety and dissipation significantly influence the ways that thinkers produce, inhabit, and interpret Romanticism. Drawing on the field of crip theory, I argue that this scholarship enacts a form of critical rehabilitation by which scholars, in rehabilitating Keats, mark their own work as sober, productive labor.

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[5] See, for example, Goellnicht (1984), Holstein (1987), de Almeida (1991), and Pladek (2016). While Pladek illuminates Keats's participation in late eighteenth-century debates in the medical field, Goellnicht and de Almeida ultimately follow Mario L. D'Avanzo in considering intoxicating medicines as part of a larger network of poetic metaphors that include potions, magic spells, and sexual attraction. In effect, this becomes another method of diminishing the experience of intoxicants in our understanding of Keats. Those foundational experiences become obscured or abstracted through the hierarchy of metaphor.

[6] Keats's letters and journals do not produce a narrative of addiction like Coleridge's correspondences or De Quincey's essays. Ober points to four key pieces of evidence to demonstrate that Keats did use some intoxicants at some point in his life. Chief among them are the suggestion (taken from W. J. Bate) that Charles Armitage Brown offered Keats opium as a "palliative" following the cricket injury that produced the famous portion of the letter to George and Georgiana that provided the raw material for "Ode to Indolence"; Brown's later written account of warning Keats of "the danger of such a habit [as regular laudanum use]"; and a letter from Severn to Joseph Taylor about Keats's insistence on keeping a lethal dose of opium with him during their journey to Rome. Of course, neither occasional use nor holding a lethal dose of laudanum are same thing as addiction or even dissipation. In some ways, this ambiguity makes the efforts to see in his life an account of sobriety even more pressing. While Coleridge and De Quincey mark explicitly the dystopic narrative of addiction (and therefore become easy cautionary tales), Keats offers critics space to find a euphoric recovery narrative that likewise reinforces normative definitions of both addiction and recovery.

In order to make visible (and thereby move past) the effects of that critical rehabilitation on our understanding of Keats, the poet, I start by offering a reading of some major turns in Keats criticism from the second half of the twentieth century to the present as at least in part an unconscious expression of conceptions of addiction and recovery as codified and popularized by Alcoholics Anonymous. Then, I turn to Keats's major letters, considering them not through the lens of heroic narratives of recovery and linear intellectual development, but as in some ways analogous to late eighteenth-century treatment paradigms for the *delirium tremens*. In the 1813 tract that first formally identified and named alcohol withdrawals, Thomas Sutton argues that the *delirium tremens* were best treated not with the traditional, "heroic" practices like blood-letting and blistering employed for similar-looking conditions but, instead, with an opium-induced sleep. This paradigm—the dominant therapy for withdrawals until the late Victorian period—provides a useful analogy for considering Keats's poetry and letters. Alongside Sutton's paradigm, the "gusto" and "relish" central to Keats's account of the poet's unpoetical character find resonance in Keats's account of Soul Making. In resisting sober, systematic thinking, these conceptions become strategies for combatting one influence with others. That model also proves a useful way to think through Keats's account of poetic progress in *The Fall of Hyperion*—Keats's most extensive consideration of the concept of the poet/physician in verse. With Sutton's model of medicinal incapacity in the foreground, the *Fall* becomes legible as a warning to poet and critic alike that while submission to one intoxicant is certainly dangerous, it is perhaps no more or less dangerous than submitting to the myth of a sober, objective personhood (or critical perspective). Keats's fragmented epic, in short, demonstrates that even if we are free to fix our habitation where we will, choosing to fix it at all produces its own forms of dependencies. In this way, Keats perhaps goes beyond Sutton. By playing with Sutton's conception of intoxication as

cure, Keats ultimately challenges the very conception of recovery through which his twentieth-century readers so often understand his poetic project.

Rehabilitating Romanticism

In explicitly considering how Keats's critics shape his body (and through his body, their own), this chapter brings to the foreground an issue that has been implicitly and explicitly taken up at various points in my dissertation's previous chapters: the tendency of literary criticism to rehabilitate its objects of study based on conceptions of health and disability contemporary to the critic rather than to the object of study. From the profane acts of communion performed by Samuel Johnson's readers and critics, through the critical re-figuring of Coleridge and Robinson's various interdependencies, and into the hesitance to take up Edgeworth's depiction of opium dependence, this project demonstrates that critical work that is not explicitly about the history of medicine or the body often implicitly maps dominant conceptions of health, normalcy, and disability onto their subjects of study. In part, this is self-motivated. Critics implicitly build healthy subjects that support accounts of their own healthy productivity. In so doing, they reveal the ways in which their work can be informed and shaped by medical paradigms contemporary to its creation.

These observations are primarily shaped by notions of crip theory and crip time advanced by Robert McRuer in *Crip Theory* and Allison Kafer in *Feminist Queer Crip*. Tucked within McRuer's account of noncompliance as a political response to the compulsory able-bodiedness at the heart of rehabilitative logic is the caution that even the most radical of academic inquiries nonetheless exist within an institutional framework that enacts rigid and specific forms of regulation. Within that framework, much critical work ultimately is complicit in rehabilitating its objects of study. In making this argument, McRuer draws on and builds from Henri-Jacques

Stiker's historical account of the rise of rehabilitation in the context of World War I. The project was benevolent in aim: "Rehabilitation promised a restoration of rank, honors, and 'true function'" (111). But it also produced two seemingly contradictory conceptions of "identity":

> Rehab demands compliance or—more properly—makes noncompliance unthinkable. It is at this point that the two different senses of identity appear to be most opposed: sign here, the final stipulation of the rehabilitative contract seems to say, you will have identity (generic sameness without equality) not identity (disabled or LGBT distinctiveness or distinction). (113)

Building on and expanding McRuer's work, Allison Kafer asserts that the assumption that the future can be marked by a reduction in or absence of disability and illness derives from the "curative imaginary," or, "an understanding of disability that not only expects and assumes intervention but also cannot imagine or comprehend anything other than intervention" (27). The curative imaginary operates in understandings of addiction as well as disability and shapes literary criticism as much as any other endeavor.

Twentieth-century addiction paradigms, in defining addiction as a certain descent into decay and death and anything other than sanctioned recovery as a relapse back into that script, performs and polices a regulatory check on identity analogous to those described by Kafer and McRuer. Helen Keane argues persuasively that disease paradigms create linguistic traps that allow for no resistance: "Any desires or beliefs [an addict] expresses contrary to the truth of addiction and recovery discourse can be dismissed as an expression of the disease" (74). In examining similarities between addiction narratives in the Victorian novel and those sanctioned by Alcoholics Anonymous, Robyn Warhol traces two possible narrative outcomes for the addict. The euphoric narrative of recovery (in which the addict is given subjectivity and allowed to tell

her own story) and the dysphoric narrative of unrepentant drug use that leads invariably to death (in which the addict is necessarily the subject of a story told by another narrator) (98-99). In producing (and policing) addiction and recovery, the narrative structures upon which 12-step programs rely foreground an under-considered element of the production of what McRuer calls "generic sameness." Addiction treatment paradigms explicitly produce narratives and bodies that mutually support one another both when they succeed in producing recovered addicts and when they fail to do so.

By employing a disease model that slips, across AA discourse, from a literal to a metaphorical descriptor and back again (Warhol 100), AA codifies and obscures the narrative construction of the curative imaginary by masking it with what appears to be a set of medically sanctioned certainties. The tendency for this sort of thinking to inform literary criticism is perhaps most succinctly demonstrated in Anya Taylor's argument that over the course of the Romantic period, authors learned to replace "Dionysian myths" with "alcoholic realities" (6). The framing suggests that the Romantics' growing concern about their chemical intake, derived largely from personal experience, resulted from their discovery of things that we now recognize as settled fact. The ease with which a disease entity contemporary to Taylor can be mapped—as "reality"—onto the Romantic period in a work that is otherwise so fully and carefully grounded in historical research speaks to the extent to which modern conceptions of recovery have informed our understanding of drug use.

Taylor's implicit acceptance of contemporary medical authority speaks to a potential limitation of New Historicism in that it reveals a countervailing force to what Jerome McGann influentially termed "Romantic Ideology." If critical investigations of Romantic literature tend to internalize Romantic ideas and even ideas that Romantic authors raise to interrogate and

challenge, critics can also externalize or impose their own ideologies in the ways that they frame and interpret their historical and literary archives. In short, the production of what McGann calls "sameness" between the past and present can dictate and re-shape meaning in both directions. We see this even in Nicholas Roe, whose observations about Keats and opium inform the questions organizing this chapter. He positions his earlier work, *John Keats and the Culture of Dissent*, as a New Historicist response to the cloud cast over twentieth-century literary criticisms by initial dismissals of Keats as a Cockney class striver, out of his league competing in the literary marketplace with classically educated poets. Roe's acknowledgement of that shadow anticipates and informs my work here, as does Roe's recognition of the metaphorics of illness and disability at work in that critique of Keats. For Roe, the Keats of the critical account becomes "a figure of apathetic sublimity" that—like his own Grecian urn—refuses to speak coherently to his audience (12) This overriding view makes Keats, in Roe's words, "truly, beautifully, an *autistic* poet, the 'foster-child of silence'" (13). While Roe's careful historical excavation offers useful context by which to make sense of both Keats's education at Enfield and the way it informed his political engagement, that work ultimately extricates Keats from those disability and disease metaphors without exposing or challenging how and why those metaphors function. Roe ultimately argues that Keats's seemingly disconnected work is in fact worthy of study because it becomes, through his particular form of critical engagement, visibly engaged in the social and political order of Keats's day.

Other critical accounts of Keats's literary progressions tend to reaffirm those bodily metaphors in ways that speak back to the question of sobriety, in particular. Given the Judeo-Christian origins of both Alcoholics Anonymous and the dominant Romantic account of poetic development (essentially, Milton's *Paradise Lost* by way of Wordsworth's *The Prelude*), this

overlap should not be surprising. AA's explicitly Christian model of disease and recovery matches the narrative shape of the fruit of John Milton's poetic development—*Paradise Lost*—and the starting point of William Wordsworth's *The Prelude*. While recovery explicitly invokes Judeo-Christian traditions and at least superficially follows the generic arc of Christian models of fall and redemption, it serves far more explicitly as a script in AA narratives than in Wordsworth's or Milton's more ambitious poetic projects. Addicts do not have "The world […] all before them" and are not free to "fix [their] habitation where [they] will" (Milton 12.646, Wordsworth 1.10). Their choice is limited, as Eve Sedgwick has observed, to either the dysphoric narrative of addiction or "that even more pathos-ridden narrative called *kicking the habit*" (131). The extent to which that choice has operated unconsciously in Keats criticism in the twentieth century demonstrates that critics can engage in acts of critical rehabilitation rooted in what Alison Kafer has termed "curative time" (27).[7] Kafer defines curative time as a logic of futurity that, in relegating disability to the past, demands rehabilitation and, therefore, compliance from disabled bodies. The great critical project of policing Keats's sobriety demonstrates that addiction, like disability, offers what Kafer calls the "future of no future" (33). That is to say, because the future is imagined as a space without disability, people with disability are presumed to be a temporary nuisance rather than a necessary component of the future or a potential collaborator in building or imagining it.

That Keats's drug use threatens notions of the future is perhaps most clearly expressed in Helen Vendler's seminal *The Odes of John Keats* (1983), which reads his major odes as one long narrative work describing his poetic development and achievement. While her introduction

[7] In addition to Kafer, I am thinking here of how McRuer qualifies his critical account of rehabilitation and degradation in *Crip Theory* by admitting that even the most radical of scholarly critique is nonetheless happening from within—and thus is ultimately sanctioned by—the university, a sanctioning that causes all acts of literary criticism to become in some sense a form of rehabilitation.

acknowledges the fact that the "story of Keats criticism" is "intertwined with the history of moral opinions of Keats" (7), Vendler demonstrates her reliance on the curative imaginary by insisting that Keats's achievement is necessarily connected to his kicking his dependence on chemical intoxicants. Vendler depicts this narrative as epic in both structure and form: "Under [Wallace] Stevens' implicit tutelage I began to see the odes as a single long and heroic imaginative effort" (184). An explicit part of that developmental journey is the rejection the false promise of transcendence offered by artificial stimulants. Vendler reads the "Ode on Melancholy" as

> a Truth poem in its refusal of drugs, in its adherence to "wakefulness" even in anguish, and in its final penetration beyond the portals of the temple of Delight into its inmost shrine. (183)

For Vendler, this refusal of drugs is the final success in a movement that begins in "Ode to a Nightingale" with the speaker's rejection of the "Draught of Vintage," and develops across the poems alongside Keats's assertion of his poetic voice.

Vendler's account of Keats's heroic emergence through the odes as a sober subject brings together the recovery narrative and the narrative of poetic progression in the Miltonic and Wordsworthian tradition. All three are organized around an intoxicated Fall and a transcendent recovery. But as Kafer notes, the concept of "fall" has a specific valence in discussions of disability and disease. Kafer argues that "falling ill" can cause "a casting out of time" by challenging or even cutting off "a stable, steady progression through the stages of life" (36). Co-opting and exacerbating these metaphors of time and space, addiction paradigms in the AA tradition discuss "hitting rock bottom" and "falling off the wagon." These allegories are rooted in both physical space and linear time: when we fall off the wagon, it presumably moves on without us. But the Fall operates in a fundamentally different way in Wordsworth, where past

experiences are inaccessible but nonetheless valuable "spots of time." In contrast, 12-Step programs demand that the past identity be rejected through a submission to a higher power and only recalled in narratives that reiterate the rejection. In this way, 12-Step programs produce a far more absolute narrative structure for transcendence and transformation than Wordsworth's uneven and ambivalent account of his own progression.

In admitting the problem and entering the program, addicts transcend their addiction and take on a *sober* identity, which is in turn explicitly policed through continued attendance at meetings and marked in space through the metaphor of the "steps" and in linear time through the celebration of key milestones. Building on and challenging queer time's critique of reproductive futurity, Kafer argues that Judith Halberstam's rejection of a dominant logic that "applaud[s] the pursuit of a long life (under any circumstances)" leaves disability out of queer time (qtd. in Kafer 40). For Kafer, Halberstam's inability to imagine disabled lives worth living derives from and participates in conventional wisdom in which impairments split identities into "before disability" and "after disability." Within these split identities, curative logic ensures that nostalgia moves only in one direction: "we cannot imagine someone regaining the ability to walk […] only to miss the sensation of pushing a wheelchair or moving with crutches" (43). AA is slightly different in that it acknowledges that recovered addicts never stop "missing" their previous identity, but that shift merely reinforces the paradigm (and demands further reiterations of the AA stories that support it). Addicts may never stop missing their old identity, but that emotion ultimately demonstrates the need for repeated assertions of their commitment to rejecting it entirely.

In the introduction to a collection of Keats's letters published in 1950, Lionel Trilling's psychoanalytic approach to Keats allows him to reject the notion that "the poet derives his power

from some mutilation he has suffered" (7). Looking to the Romantics, Trilling argues that Keats held a view analogous to Wordsworth and Coleridge's belief "that poetry depended upon a condition of positive health in the poet, a more than usual well-being" (7). While AA is not directly related to psychoanalysis, the paradigms both understand compulsive drug use as a symptom of a larger problem and conceptualize recovery in similar forms of repeated collaborative narrative making.[8] Given that Trilling is writing fifteen years after the founding of AA and five years after AA member Marty Mann ensured that its central tenets were represented in the Academy Award winning *The Lost Weekend*, it is perhaps not a coincidence that a major part of Trilling's effort to produce a Keats with "a more than usual well-being" needs to account for what Trilling calls his "appetitive inclination" (19). Trilling writes that "the ingestive appetite is the most primitive of our appetites […] and a preoccupation with it […] is felt—and not without reason—to imply the passivity and self reference of the infantile condition" (17). Trilling connects this infantile and infantilizing appetite to Keats's grandfather's gluttony and his mother's supposedly perverse sexual appetites. His suggestion that Keats's appetite derives from "the indulgence of [Keats's] childhood" perhaps even hint at an inherited trait.

This inheritance proves an obstacle for Trilling's Keats on his way to becoming what Trilling says we perceive Keats to be: "something even more interesting than a poet, […] a man, and […] a certain kind of man, a hero" (4).[9] However, those appetites become at once a cycle to

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[8] For a discussion of the theoretical overlaps between AA and psychoanalytic approaches to addiction, see Khantzian and Mack (1989). Freud's speculations on addiction perhaps provides a through-line from Byron's critique of Keats's poetry as onanistic to discussions of Keats's physical appetites. In an 1897 letter to Fliess, Freud suggests that chemical addictions are "substitutions" for "the one major habit," "masturbation" (287). For a full account of Freud's experience of cocaine addiction, developed in part while Freud examined cocaine's potential for his work and as a cure for morphine addiction, see Merkel (2011).

[9] Trilling explicitly discusses Keats's appetites as an inheritance from his maternal grandfather's "extreme" "love of eating" and his mother's rumored sexual indiscretions, which originate with Keats's guardian, Richard Abbey. Trilling's account of Abbey's letter to John Taylor speaks to the ways in which sexual and chemical appetites are interwoven by moralizing logic, particularly in Abbey's claim that Frances Jennings Keats, after the death of her husband, "formed a liaison with a Jew named Abraham and become addicted to brandy" (qtd. in Trilling 20-21).

resist and a method of resisting it. Through his writing, Keats experiences a "natural growth" of appetites from the low to the ethereal (22). This movement is for Trilling a way by which both Keats and his critics can have their "draught of vintage" and drink it, too. Having climbed the "platonic ladder of appetites" from, presumably, the bodily to the transcendent and/or intellectual, Trilling argues, Keats has "no wish to kick over the ladder by which he had climbed" (23). In this way, Keats's refusal to give up his baser desires further underscores his heroic manliness in that it does not affect his capacity for pursuing nobler, more refined tastes. In returning to those lower impulses, Keats merely re-asserts his manly capacity for not succumbing to them entirely.

Keats's actual corpus forces Trilling into similar rhetorical knots. Taking up Keats's famous conception of "Negative Capability" alongside his conception of the poet's lack of identity, Trilling asserts that it is "[a]nything but a 'negative' capability—it is the most *positive* capability imaginable" (37). Carried further, Trilling's logic points towards a figuring of the poetical nonidentity as, in fact, the most concrete identity imaginable:

> Negative Capability, the faculty of not having to make up one's mind about everything, depends upon the sense of one's personal identity and is the sign of personal identity. Only the self that is certain of its existence, of its identity, can do without the armor of systematic certainties. (37)

The end point of Trilling's argument to some extent appears to challenge traditional conceptions of masculinity, heroism, and scholastic achievement rooted in progress, demonstrable success, and certainty. But he deploys those very conceptions even as he seems to challenge them: Keats's Negative Capability becomes a positive one, and his rejection of the Wordsworthian ego

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Trilling's concerns about Frances Jennings Keats demands that we read his use of "man" here in loaded gender terms.

or the Coleridgean pursuit of certainty, a "heroic resolution of the problem of evil" (47). In this way, Trilling makes progress out of Keats's refusal to progress, a heroic gesture out of an attempt to reject heroism, and a recovery narrative out of a defiance of sobriety.

Earl Wasserman's *The Finer Tone: Keats's Major Poems* (1955) similarly employs the curative imaginary to engage in an act of critical rehabilitation. Wasserman positions his work in large part against the post-World War I re-assessment of Keats perhaps most famously expressed in William Butler Yeats's famous characterization of Keats as a boy with his nose pressed against the window of a candy shop.[10] But in resisting that modernist dismissal of Keats as addicted to sensations, Wasserman makes the seemingly curious move of connecting Yeats to the New Critics. In place of both Yeats's dismissal of Keats and the New Critics' focus on reading the poems in a vacuum, Wasserman asserts a need to read Keats both across his works and beyond the poems' "literal level" (7). Previous critics have failed, he writes, because they "assume" his poems are "only loosely associated decorative pictures and moods provoked by the poet's longing for luxurious sensuous experiences" (7-8). Although he does not use the word "dissipation," Wasserman may as well. In associating "luxury" and "sensuous experiences" with loose association and (mere) decoration, Wasserman figures past readers of Keats as, themselves, addicted to (Keats's) sensations and therefore short-sighted and unwilling to do the sustained readings that can reveal Keats's real poetic achievement. Wasserman, in contrast, offers sustained explications that present Keats's works as what Wasserman calls "autonomous poetry," which he defines as "poetry whose energy lies within the work itself and is generated by the organic interactions of its component members" (8). In describing such poetry, Wasserman

[10] Stanley Plumly reads the Modernist rejection of Keats as an offshoot of post-war sentiment in *Posthumous Keats* (338-339). Orrin Wang's argument that the Romantics, themselves, are often understood as dangerous intoxicants likewise points explicitly to the Modernist reassessment of the period. This anxiety about intoxication runs parallel, historically, to the rising influence of Alcoholics Anonymous, a post-war institution founded by a veteran.

deploys the metaphor of poem as “organism” in telling ways. For Wasserman, Keats’s greatest poems are those that can be said to be understood as both operational and purposeful in a larger ecosystem (presumably of literary consumption and criticism) and as internally complex in their own right. But the metaphor also reflects on Wasserman as critic. If the poems are organisms, their explicator becomes, at once, an anatomist and taxonomist. Implicitly, this claim does not merely reverse Yeats’s criticism of Keats. It also extends that criticism to the New Critics. While Wasserman’s readings reveal a vast ecosystem, the New Critics’ explications turn the poems towards their wasteful, desultory, insular, and fleeting ends.

And yet, the methodology of his clinical work along with the spatial constraints of his account of it (the monograph) result in a critical work that is as much selective intervention (elective surgery?) as it is a full taxonomy. Wasserman’s introduction acknowledges the limitations of his project and justifies his boundaries through a consideration of what verse best responds to his interpretative methodologies. *Endymion* is “too sprawling to lend itself to close analysis” (10). As fragments, the “Hyperion” poems “lack a total structure, cannot be organic wholes, and therefore cannot be explicated, in the full sense of that word” (10). The extension of the organic metaphor here ultimately covers over the immensity of Keats’s corpus and thereby asserts as a matter of fact that the Keats verse most worth anatomizing—that is, Keats’s most healthy verse—is the verse most amenable to Wasserman’s particular methodology.

In this way, Wasserman’s monograph is a useful case study for Kafer’s observation that the academic profession itself—with its rigid timelines and expectations of productivity—implicitly reinforces curative logic by carving out the perspective of those whose labor or life

operates on different (or unstable) timelines.[11] Wasserman's response to the success of his intervention also anticipates Kafer in its insistence on a "before" and "after" the publication of his critical intervention into Keats studies. The second edition of *The Finer Tone* opens with a "Preface" that suggests that the "Foreword" and "Afterward" of the first edition now read as the words of one "doing battle with phantom critics" (2). Vendler similarly makes a clean break in her account of Keats's sober(ing) poetic development. Arguing that Joy's grape in the final lines of "Ode on Melancholy" contains no wine, Vendler asserts that "Keats's intoxication will never again, after the repudiation of wine in *Nightingale*, be that of any earthly drink" (180). In this way, critics sober up their investigations of Keats in no small part by separating his intoxicated versification from his clear-headed poetry.

Both Vendler and Wasserman make their arguments about Keats's healthy verse in part through literal and metaphorical deployments of Keats's body. The importance of those metaphors remains consistent even when critics disagree about which of Keats's verses are, in fact, the healthy ones. Thomas McFarland's *The Masks of Keats: The Endeavor of a Poet* (2000) makes no explicit mention of Wasserman or Trilling and positions himself at times directly against Vendler's account of clear narrative and thematic progression across the odes, but he nonetheless reasserts their association of health with poetic achievement. McFarland rejects the hierarchy of genres by which the epic poem sits at the top of poetic achievement, but he nonetheless reinforces the before/after logic of the curative imaginary in this account of Keats's "career as a poet" ending in success (185). While McFarland implicitly rejects accounts of Keats's sobriety as a necessary condition of that success, he argues that Keats's efforts to

[11] Orrin Wang makes a similar argument through the lens of questions of sobriety, arguing that anxiety about Romanticism in the profession are an expression of larger concerns about the utility of literary studies, more generally.

progress towards longer narrative poems "[lead] not to intensive concentration but to dissipating interest" (128). In so doing, he employs the curative logic by asserting the superior value of Keats's short (and by Miltonic standards, most dissipated) verse. This reversal reinforces without resolving the tension demonstrated by his title, which promises to consider Keats's various "masks," but implies their narrative progression as the *Endeavor of the Poet*. In addressing Keats's success, he argues that Keats pulls those successes out of the characteristic "too-muchness" of Keats's wide-ranging, genre-crossing verse (119). But, recalling Wasserman, his sorting the dissipated from the successful verse positions his deep dive into that "too-muchness" as an examination rather than a glutting. In so doing, he further contributes to the rehabilitation of Keats studies. McFarland's use of "dissipation" to describe Keats's longer and, as he judges, less effective poems echoes the spatial and linear construction of disability and addiction in the curative imaginary, though he reverses the value judgements of other Keats critics discussed here. Here, Keats's attempts to follow Wordsworth and Milton along the "narrative line" of traditional poetic ambition (that is, his pursuit of heroic self-actualization) produce dissipation in his readers. The Odes sober us up.

While Orrin Wang centers much of his work in *Romantic Sobriety* on the ways that the demands of the profession prefigure literary scholars' approach to their subject, but even this critically reflexive account is ultimately informed by the curative logic of the Fall in its reading of Keats. Wang explicitly positions himself against Vendler in reading Keats as an intoxicated counterweight to the first generation of Romantics' turn to sobriety, but even his text ends on a moment of imagined triumph. His conclusion positions the inherently unknowable quality of literature—figured, in characteristically dizzying manner, as at once the source of Keats's embarrassment, Shelley's "unapprehended inspiration," Derrida's ghost theory, and Kant's

"nothing without a concept"—as the method by which "[w]e glimpse the other of commodity eros, an alterity to capital's iron-willed, instrumental presence" (288). Never content to let a hypothesis remain unproblematized, Wang concludes with a series of questions that simultaneously hedge and advance the claim:

> And what if that glimpse, or blink, was indeed the moment of dialectical history's *Darstellung*? How narcissistic, how embarrassing, how sobering, how *Romantic* would that be? (288)

In imagining a future in which transcending late capitalism is described as a moment of Romantic intoxication and, in turn, figuring that possibility as a "sobering" one, Wang seems to productively collapse his conception of sobriety into itself. But in so doing, he in many ways re-enacts, on the intellectual level, Haydon's account of Keats's sensual enjoyment of the cayenne-claret cycle.

In ending that cycle of sensation on the moment of imagined transcendent relief, Wang implies (an admittedly qualified) narrative of progression. Subjected to the "iron will" of late capitalism, critics find freedom through an intoxicating, speculative interaction with that which is unknowable and unquantifiable in literature. The image recalls Hume's tentative defense of religious enthusiasm as a potential path to democratic subjecthood (48), though it substitutes communion with Keats (or perhaps Derrida, or Shelley, or all three) for communion with the divine.[12] In a moment of intoxication, the critic breaks us free from our dependency upon commodities and economic defenses of the humanities as valid fields of inquiry. Wang is admirably more willing to acknowledge the potential role of intoxication within the generic confines of the *felix culpa* than others, but he nonetheless affirms the value of intoxication

[12] See Introduction, 4-5.

largely by recognizing its curative potential. The high, however irresponsible it seems, can be validated retroactively if it offers a cure for the social ills of late capitalism.

Susan Wolfson's recent monograph *Reading John Keats* makes a similar move. While Wolfson's study offers useful readings of Keats's capacity for deriving poetry from reading and rereading (both others and himself), she structures her investigation around pivots, moments when a discovery sends him irrevocably in a new, productive direction. Thus, Keats's formation of the conception of the poetical character and Negative Capability is, in some ways, a study in the embrace of irreconcilable opposites:

> Keats leaves everything darkly, brilliantly, double-bound: fairy's child and merciless enchanter; sweet food and fatal poison; love and enthrallment; awakening and still loitering; alienation from a life at arms and truancy from knightly manhood—and, not least, a twinning of question and answer, questioner and answerer. (85–86)

But at the same time, those opposites leave him primed for the discovery of truth or, in Wolfson's words, "on the verge of conceiving a deliberate poetry from self-questioning" (85). In this way, Wolfson makes a coherent vision out of her account of Keats's penchant for re-vision.

In the next two sections of this chapter, I will argue that in Keats's poetry and prose, the differences between forward and circular moment, between radical and palliative cure, and between conscious pivots and flights of fancy are dictated largely by how we define recovery and when we examine our patient. This reading operates against the medicalizing tendencies in the critics I have described here. This re-consideration reveals a Keats who consistently challenges and undercuts his poetic ambitions as often as he pursues them. The resulting poetry and prose, which critics interpret as sober in no small part to shore up fears that they, themselves,

are enthralled by it, is a testament to the power of dissipated intellect (in Johnson's sense of scattered attention or misplaced purpose).

"Playing at Draughts": Keats's Letters

One unintended consequence of the critical rehabilitation of Keats, as evidenced as much by Wang's clinical application of intoxication as by Wasserman's deft dismissal of the New Critics, is that it assumes that there are healthy and unhealthy ways to read Keats. What results is a Keats who is potentially beneficial but possibly dangerous in his own right. That is to say, we produce a Keats who is, himself, a drug. Perhaps no part of Keats's corpus produces so much anxiety about his potential to become a *pharmakon* as his letters. Keats's letters have been understood by critics to offer hints at a system or poetics by which to make sense of his verses while also proving to be dangerous chimeras that might distract. Paul de Man's brief account of Keats downplays the value of the letters. Trilling opens his essay by rehearsing F. R. Leavis's cautionary reminder that "in thinking about Keats as a poet we must be sure to understand that the important documents are his poems, not his letters" (3). That Trilling would place this warning at the top of his introduction to a collection of the letters transforms a critical insight into something of a disclaimer for the reader about to engage with a dangerous substance. Keats's effervescent, thrilling, enthralling voice threatens to take us off the scent of what really matters—at least, until elements of that voice contribute to a larger understanding of the poetics at work in Keats's verse. At that point, the letters become important pieces of literary theory.

The strange duality of the letters in our conception of Keats is perhaps expressed most clearly in John Banard's introduction to the Penguin edition of Keats's selected letters. Barnard admits that the "profound insights" of the letters are "dropped into the middle of details of his everyday life, and are never returned to again or developed systematically" (xxiii). While

Barnard acknowledges that these insights are of interest in no small part because they remain effervescent and undeveloped, he nonetheless asserts that

> Although taken together, his ideas about poetry do describe a poetics and contain lasting insights into the nature of tragedy, they remain provisional, brilliant apercus inviting further development. (xxiii)

Barnard seemingly resolves the danger of Keats's letters through a curative logic. By "further develop[ing]" Keats's "provisional, brilliant apercus" into a "poetics" with "lasting insights," Barnard produces space for himself and his fellow Keats critics to present their fascination with Keats's enthralling letters as productive labor. Differently put, if critics can sober up Keats's flights of thought by transforming them into a unified interpretive schema, they establish their own labor as sober as well.

The curative logic suggested by this account becomes explicit in Li Ou's recent monograph, *Keats and Negative Capability*. Ou begins by arguing that Keats's letter on the vale of soul-making marks the path by which the impulsive "gusto" that characterizes Negative Capability undergoes a "maturation" that results in Keats's resolution to produce "a sober, unflinching look at the world as it is, instead of tailor-making it to one's own need" (4, 7). Ou's use of the metaphorics of sobriety suggests, however, that the very danger of Keats's letters is not so much the variety of sensations they provide, but the capacity of some nexus of "apercus" to produce a system or a poetics out of a corpus that is dedicated in no small part to rejecting such systems. Ou rightly presents Negative Capability as "fundamentally experiential, aiming to encompass and convey the concreteness and complexity of experience, as opposed to an idealist stance, which seeks to abstract ideas or doctrines from experience" (5), but in asserting that this stance is a "sober" one, Ou deploys a conception of intoxication and addiction not available to

Keats, the author of these letters. Instead, I offer a reading of Keats's provisional, "profound" letters as analogous to late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century treatments for habitual drug use and withdrawal, which, instead of requiring abstinence, offered different, counter-veiling intoxicants. In that light, Keats's letters become legible as, at once, evidence of Keats's conscious effort to avoid systematic thinking and his hope that the letters might help his readers do the same.

That said, Keats takes up questions of poetic development often enough in his letters that he offers ample temptation towards finding linear narratives of development. At least on their face, Keats's two accounts of soul-making in his letters seem to offer plenty to support such narratives of rehabilitation and the path of the poet. Keats's letter to John Reynolds of May 3, 1818, describes soul-building as a movement through "a large Mansion of Many Apartments" (397). The movement through this apartment seems equivalent to Trilling's ladder of appetite both in its spatial organization and in its acknowledgement of appetitive inclination. The inauguration of what Keats calls the "thinking principle" moves us out of the "infant or thoughtless chamber" and into "the Chamber of Maiden-Thought," wherein "we become intoxicated with the light and the atmosphere" (397). In a real sense, Keats's notion of development—this tentative move towards experience—is akin to Hume's account of religious enthusiasm as an intoxicating fever or madness. It is also explicitly tied to traditional models of poetic progression. Keats quite explicitly imagines his path as one that follows in the footsteps of Milton and Wordsworth.

Within this account, Keats recognizes the dangers of habitual intoxication. In each new chamber, there is a potential for stalling: "we see nothing but pleasant wonders, and think of delaying there for ever in delight" (397). Progression comes, then, from an acceptance of reality.

The chamber of Maiden Thought "sharpen[s] one's vision into the heart and nature of man" and "convince[s] ones nerves that the World is full of Misery and Heartbreak, Pain, Sickness and oppression" (397). For Keats, the growth of the soul then demands the ability to perceive within apparent delights the truth of the world's miseries. In a sense, Keats's narrative here seemingly anticipates the organizational narrative of drug rehabilitation: the first step out of Maiden Thought is admitting you have a problem. More accurately, however, we might say that the similarity between this account and that of 12-step discourses betrays the Miltonic origins of both. As Keats's own hesitancy to bring himself out of this second room demonstrates, his model does not produce souls that were lost but now found. Nor do souls sober up or quit cold turkey. Their awakening amounts to a recognition that the darkness inaugurated by our recognition of misery is impenetrable:

> on all sides of [the chamber] many doors are set open – but all dark – all leading to dark passages – We see not the ballance [*sic*] of good and evil. We are in a Mist – We are now in that state – We feel the "burden of the Mystery," (397)

Keats here foregrounds the limitations of his vision—this is the edge of his and Reynolds's progression.[13] From here, their guide is only Wordsworth, who reached this point with "Tintern Abbey," and has since "shed a light" into the "dark passages" where Keats and Reynolds may follow, transgressing farther than Milton if only due to the linear progression of human achievement—"the grand march of intellect"—that saves Wordsworth from the superstitions to which Milton remained subject (397-398). But the very fact that Wordsworth found no happy

[13] Emily Rohrbach reads this letter—and much of Keats's poetry—as expressions of Romantic anxieties about the ways that the uncertainties of futurity disrupt claims to knowledge in the present. See: *Modernity's Mist: British Romanticism and the Poetics of Anticipation*, especially 3-7.

conclusion challenges the curative logic of sobriety. Even if they advance beyond Wordsworth's shining light, Keats and Reynolds face vast stretches of darkness.

Moreover, even if Keats's wide focus, which includes Milton, Wordsworth, and Keats, reveals a linear movement forward along a grand march of intellect, a narrower focus on Keats, the thinker/poet/letter writer, reveals a far more complicated route. This complication is perhaps clearest in the conclusion of this account of the mansion, in which Keats reassures Reynolds, "I know – the truth is there is something real in the World Your third Chamber of Life shall be a lucky and a gentle one – stores with the wine of love – and the Bread of Friendship" (398). Keats here replaces the isolated intoxication of the chamber of Maiden Thought with a purposeful communion (in every sense of the word). The ritualistic, collective taking of allegorical wine and bread seemingly moves him up the ladder of appetites, but at the same time, the metaphor offers no way up that ladder that does not rely on the experience of physical intoxication as an organizational idea. As Marty Roth notes, while much modern religion attempts to separate the metaphors of intoxication that shape their conceptions of transcendence, there remains a significant tradition within Christianity that takes the metaphors of communion as justification for intoxicating and erotic versions of the ceremony. Even traditions that do not involve the notion of communion, Roth suggests, rely on the physical experience of intoxication to undergird their metaphors of religious transcendence. In a sense, then, the wine of friendship echoes the intoxication that accompanies movement into the chamber of Maiden Thought as much as it marks a heroic self-realization.

That this (here merely hypothetical) third chamber leaves many, many other doors still in the dark, moreover, anticipates the ultimate failure of this communion to satiate Reynolds. Keats's account ends here, but there is no reason to believe that this intoxication will not burn off

to leave the burden of another mystery. Nonetheless, we might read this return to intoxicants in his hopeful turn in two ways. First, it signals Keats's failure to imagine a different description of the not-yet-illuminated chambers of the mansion; second, it demonstrates Keats's recognition of the necessity of what Johnson called "palliative cure" in the face of the miseries of existence. The famous interjection of real life that precedes this turn in the allegory to the "wine of love"—"Tom has spit a leetle [*sic*] blood this afternoon, and that is rather a damper" (398)—offers evidence for the latter interpretation. Keats's own imagined progression through the chambers of Maiden Thought mirrors Reynolds's throughout the account. Here, his turn from Tom back to Reynolds suggests either a hope that their paths move towards this wine together or a sober suggestion that he fears they will not. As the famous account of Keats's recognition of the import of his own blood in his own mouth attests, Keats, the physician, surely understood what Tom's blood meant for his prospects. That Keats turns from that image of blood in the mouth to an imagined restorative communion serves to remind at once of the inherently and inescapably cyclical nature of life and death and, in turn, of the value of a countervailing cycle of disappointment and intoxication-as-relief. Of course, the fact that relief here comes in the form of a ritualistic taking of blood into the mouth serves as an implicit reminder that no intoxication can put a permanent halt on disappointment or decay.

That said, in offering even a tenuous, temporary intoxication as relief for pain, Keats rejects sobriety in favor of a set of contemporary treatments for withdrawal and intoxication. As evidenced by Coleridge's and De Quincey's efforts to control their opium use rather than quit outright, abstinence in the twentieth century sense had not been established as the obvious solution to the problem in the Romantic period. As Virginia Berridge notes, alcohol and opium were used informally throughout England to counter-act the effects of the other (33-34). In

addition to these common informal uses, moreover, opium was used in the period as the only fruitful treatment for what was coming to be recognized as alcohol withdrawals.

Published in 1813, Thomas Sutton's *Tracts on Delirium tremens, on Peritonitis, and on Some Other Internal Inflammatory Affections and on the Gout* is credited by his contemporaries as the first publication to name alcohol withdrawals *delirium tremens*. Sutton argues that *delirium tremens* has long been misinterpreted by medical practitioners as phrenitis. While phrenitis—"a disease materially affecting the brain with continued delirium, and connected with violent morbid exertions"—looks very much like the *delirium tremens*, Sutton notes slight differences in the presentations of each condition. Unlike phrenitis, for example, the *delirium tremens* is not always attended by a fever. Chief among the differences, however, is Sutton's assertion that the *delirium tremens* is invariably experienced by patients who have consumed alcohol. While Sutton carves out the possibility that those with a certain constitution might develop the *delirium tremens* because of small amounts of alcohol consumption, the disease typically comes out of habitual use:

> Such indulgences must, I presume, generally have gone beyond moderation or propriety, and have been continued for some time, before the peculiar circumstances which fit the constitution for an attack of this disease, have become fixed in the habit. (47)

But the complexities of habitual alcohol use make the relationship between abstinence and cure difficult for Sutton to ascertain.

Because Sutton has observed patients with the condition who claim to have stopped drinking or to have never developed a habit in the first place, he must maintain that "when the constitution has been so prepared for the disease, I cannot go so far as to say, that this peculiar

disposition will be immediately, or, after some time, eradicated, upon a change of conduct" (48). But he reveals his suspicion of claims of abstinence by qualifying that concession:

> When the habits of intemperance […], and especially in the use of spirits, are once established, it is difficult to break away from such indulgences; and it not unfrequently happens, if there should be reasons strong enough to induce a party to desist publicly, that there will exist a private supply for this gratification in some way or other. (48)

This qualification marks the possibility that Sutton thinks abstinence might lead to an end of these recurring symptoms, but the suggestion remains hedged, a move that demonstrates the hesitancy with which absolute abstinence was put forth as a solution to habitual use in the period

More to the point, enforcing abstinence does not for Sutton address the symptoms or lessen the dangers of the *delirium tremens* when they arise. While the signs and symptoms of *delirium tremens* are difficult to distinguish from those of phrenitis—in no small part due to the patient's tendency to lie about his or her alcohol consumption—the treatment paradigms are radically different. Phrenitis responds to interventions typical to heroic medicine—bloodletting and blistering. *Delirium tremens* does not. Instead, Sutton notes, patients respond best to "opium in large and repeated doses" (5). This treatment, Sutton argues, relies on doctors admitting that they do not understand the disease. Practitioners who claim to know the etiology of the disease will follow logically with the heroic treatments that at best do nothing and at worse exacerbate the situation. Successful doctors resist the temptation to over-state their knowledge and instead act "without pretending to any precise notions of this affection, in so far as the contents of the cranium might be concerned" (5). These doctors, in turn, do not expect their patients to actively participate in recovery beyond taking opium. One such successful physician quoted by Sutton

notes that "the measure of [opium's] beneficial efficacy is by procuring sleep" (7). In this way, neither the doctor nor the patient acts heroically, but through that rejection of heroism they cure the disease.

Sutton's rejection of heroism turned him into something of a hero of medicine. Keats may well have come across versions of Sutton's theories while studying at St. Guy's. Sutton specifically credits William Saunders, who served as physician to St. Guy's Hospital until 1802, as a key source for his unique knowledge of the condition. Regardless, the ideas were very much in the proverbial air, as evidenced by the speed with which the Western world adapted his naming conventions. Within two years, the work had drawn transatlantic attention. A largely favorable review and summary of his findings appeared in *The New-York Medical Magazine* in 1815.[14] By 1832, "*delirium tremens*" had entered the general vocabulary to the extent that it was being used figuratively. That year, a reply to a speech from Lord Brougham in *Blackwood's Magazine* opens by acknowledging "How spirit-stirring the commencement of a campaign" can be. It then slowly develops the intoxication metaphor across the essay before diagnosing Brougham's Whig supporters with "The *delirium tremens* of radicalism, in which the unhappy patient sees real objects in ghastly distortion, and imagines himself haunted by a thousand devils, who are not only men but Tories—affable archangels all" (117, 123). In addition to being influential, Sutton's treatment paradigm seemed to work. Even when it fell out of favor in the late nineteenth century, Berridge argues that the shift was not because it was found to be ineffective but because "it was a remedy with as many possibilities for evil as for good" (72).

[14] Despite its general praise for Sutton's volume, the reviewer makes clear that Sutton's findings are not so new to print as he claims, noting with some annoyance that two of his forefathers in describing the condition "have already occupied our pages" (262).

The result of Sutton's intervention was a treatment paradigm that indicated that the best way to relieve the delusions and "violent morbid exertions" induced by withdrawal from one intoxicant is not by engaging in or inducing the patient into a heroic, sober quest of self-discovery but by "habitual[ly]" offering the potentially intoxicating and habit-forming effects of another drug. The "wine of love" in Keats's account might be said to engage in a similar sort of logic. The rest of Keats's letter on the mansion of soul-making demonstrates a similar effort to escape any one individual train of thought through a ready application of new influences. With little regard for setting the terms of his comparative study, he moves "from Hazlitt to Patmore, […] From Gray to Gay, from Little to Shakespeare" (396). The movements become a game. Keats writes, "I must play my draughts as I please, and for my advantage and your erudition, crown a white with a black, or a black with a white, and move into black or white, far and near as I please" (396). The rules and expectations of sustained argument are in this way made subservient to Keats's whim. He plays as he pleases. At the same time, he does not choose to play as he pleases: he "must" play as he pleases. In short, even if he wanted to focus on a coherent subject (or progress his argument logically), he could not: "If I scribble long letters I must play my vagaries" (396). In this way, he refuses to offer a panacea for himself or his reader. Each new stimulant facilitates a new set of unpredictable developments.

At the same time, the "draughts" here draw on a metaphor of checkers, presumably due to the visual effect of his cross-writing.[15] In invoking the board game, Keats also figures his letter as a competition with his reader. His leaps, however compulsive, also prove an attempt to

[15] As Elizabeth Cook notes in a footnote to her Oxford editions of the major works, the original of this letter, in which Keats's writing presumably crisscrossed itself, no longer exists. One wonders what "vagaries" Keats was compelled into by the accidental crossing-over of what he is writing with what he had already written.

keep his reader off-guard. The metaphor follows up on an earlier claim that his letters amount to rat-traps:

> by merely touching the spring delicately and ethereally [*sic*], the rough edged will fly immediately into a proper compactness, and thus you may make a good wholesome load, with your own leven [*sic*] in it, of my fragments (396)

Keats suggests that his letters are designed to collapse productively around their readers, thereby demanding a collaborative form of meaning-making. But Keats's gesture towards collaborative meaning-making here turns back to the violent competition suggested by the image of the rat trap. They work together only on Keats's terms and only if Keats succeeds in enthralling his collaborator.

This enthrallment is achieved in no small part by the constant juggling of influences and the rejection of the linear line of argument that such a strategy demands. Further complicating the game, however, is real life, which interrupts the letter multiple times to allow Keats to meet the demands of his body. When he picks up with the letter (fittingly enough, after appeasing his actual appetite with dinner), he presents the seagull as an emblem for his thought process: "like the Gull I may dip – I hope, not out of sight, and also, like a Gull, I hope to be lucky in a good sized fish" (397). That Keats's rhetorical gull is in pursuit of a meal just after Keats received his own is perhaps no coincidence and speaks to the irrevocable thread of connection between figure and embodied experience. Keats, it seems, as Trilling understood, can and does operate at more than one rung of the ladder of appetites at once. Moreover, while Keats will later in the letter put himself on Milton's path through the mansion of soul building, the metaphor of the gull already complicates that tentative identification with the bard who presented *Paradise Lost* as an "adventurous Song / That with no middle flight intends to soar / Above th' Aonian Mount"

(1.13-15). In both its path (which "dips," perhaps even "out of sight") and its goal ("a good sized fish"), Keats distinguishes his prose from Milton's verse. The poet of *Paradise Lost* may well be blind, like Milton, but it is difficult to imagine him taking a break from justifying the ways of God to man for supper. Keats goes as he pleases—or, perhaps, where he is compelled—in search of something to quell his appetites (both terrestrial and transcendent). But by varying his tastes—playing his draughts as he pleases—he takes and offers a shifting range of stimulants that maintain both his and his reader's interest (perhaps even against his reader's will). Thus, while Sutton declares victory when the immediate symptoms subside, Keats figuratively anticipates the Victorians' acknowledgement of the dangers posed by opium and therefore looks to vary his cures. The Victorians will seek to enforce painful and difficult regimens of abstinence. Keats sets off in search of another source of relief.

Keats will further insist on a lack of a panacea in his long letter to George and Georgiana Keats, composed between 14 February and 3 May 1819. Here, though, his account seems to acknowledge the potential for hierarchal development coming out of the pursuit of instinctual desire. In describing the difficulty of achieving true disinterestedness, Keats describes the animal instincts and desires at work in the vast majority of seemingly human behaviors:

> The greater part of men make their way with the same instinctiveness, the same unwandering eye from their purposes, the same animal eagerness as the Hawk—The Hawk wants a Mate, so does the Man—look at them both they set about it and procure one in the same manner—They want both a next and they both set about one in the same manner—they get their food in the same manner—The noble animal Man for his amusement smokes his pipe—the Hawk balances about the Clouds—that is the only difference of their leisures [*sic*]. (464)

Although he acknowledges Jesus and Socrates as the known exceptions to this general rule, Keats interprets his own striving towards poetic achievement within this animalistic cause-and-effect: "I am however young writing at random—straining at particles of light in the midst of a great darkness—without knowing the bearing of any one assertion of any one opinion" (465). This work—like, presumably, the smoking of a pipe—exists on a higher developmental plane than the hawk's flight, but his continuum leaves much space for intellect to grow. He imagines beings so superior to him that his random straining might provide them pleasure of a kind with that provided to man by the actions of a deer.

This assumed developmental hierarchy seems in harmony with Keats's account of soul-building in the earlier letter. Both accounts, in turn, gesture towards something like Trilling's hierarchy of appetites. But later in this letter—in the more famous vale of soul-making passage—Keats disputes any efforts to read in mental development or progression any hope of perfectibility:

> Man is originally 'a poor forked creature' subject to the same mischances as the beasts of the forest; destined to hardships and disquietude of some kind or other. If he improves by degrees his bodily accomodations [*sic*] and comforts—at each stage, at each accent there are waiting for him a fresh set of annoyances—he is mortal and there is still a heaven with its Stars abov[e] his head. (472)

Although the tone here is very different, we might think back to Tom's "leetle blood," which interrupted Keats's allegory of soul-making and pushed Reynolds into the "wine of love." The account here, which reminds us that "a fresh set of annoyances" awaits at the end of any triumph, reinforces the suggestion that whatever comfort Reynolds may find in communion of any sort is likely to be fleeting. Keats extends this philosophy out into the future, imagining a mankind

made “happy” by “the persevering endeavours [*sic*] of a seldom appearing Socrates” ruined by the knowledge that such happiness must necessarily end in death (472). This fresh—and insurmountable—annoyance makes a perfectible future impossible and necessarily makes failure the only conceivable endpoint of all such endeavors. The account reduces Socrates—and his ilk—to mere palliatives. Their mental exertions offering a new intoxicant that can ultimately provide only temporary relief. Such a sentiment finds a more direct expression in an 1817 letter to Bailey: “Men of Genius are great as certain ethereal Chemicals operating on the Mass of neutral intellect” (365). As we have seen throughout Keats’s work, he was fully aware that chemicals—however ethereal in their initial operation—ultimately provide diminishing returns.

If Keats’s account of the “vale of soul-making” reveals the sleight of hand that enables the wine of love to stand as a comforting conclusion to his account of the journey through the mansion of soul-building, it nonetheless offers a space in which those continual and on-going failures of happiness or contentment become productive in a different sense. In Keats’s well-known account of identity formation, “a World of Pains and troubles” form the school by which a generic “Intelligence” is made “a soul” through the activity of the heart (as distinguished from the mind). “Identity” is the result of the exponentially unique set of heart/intelligence responses to external pains:

> I began by seeing how many was formed by circumstances—and what are circumstances?—but touchstones of his heart—? And what are touch stones?—but proovings [*sic*] of his heart? —and what are proovings of his heart but fortifiers or alterers [*sic*] of his nature? And what is his altered nature but his soul? (474)

Here, importantly, Keats has dispensed with the spatial metaphor of the mansion. Moreover, while the heart is marked and scored—and therefore changed—by circumstances, those transformations are neither permanent nor undoable—they may alter or fortify nature in equal measure.

The continued iteration and re-iteration of this process perhaps explains why Keats figures religious systems that affix similar conceptions to a specific savior figure or to "personal Schemes of Redemption" as ultimately unsatisfactory applications of the system (47). By assuming the existence of and even foregrounding a clear beginning, middle, and end to the process, such schemes (in the sense of "systems of redemption") become schemes (in the sense of confidence games). Jesus—in the Gospels that distill him—is an ethereal chemical, but overindulging stifles the process of soul-building by replacing it with, per McRuer, identity in the sense of generic identification (113). Following Keats's metaphorical lead, we might call this "dependency." Perhaps only by resisting all such systems—in no small part by pursuing as wide a range of systems as possible—might one at once avoid committing to a false idol and continue to be further scored and shaped by circumstance. The account, in its insistence on the existence of human misery, runs directly contrary to the curative imaginary. By definition, there is no radical cure for the pains that shape the soul.

And with that, we remain in the problems of identity posed by Keats's earlier letters. Keats's famous account of his own "poetical Character," as distinct from the "wordsworthian or egotistical sublime" (418), offers at once a rejection of the completion of the process of soul-building and a method by which to find relief from its pain. Keats writes,

> When I am in a room with People if I ever am free from speculating on creations of my own brain, then not myself goes home to myself: but the identity of every

> one in the room begins so to press upon me that I am in a very little time anhilated [*sic*]- not only among Men; it would be the same in a Nursery of children: I know not whether I make myself wholly understood: I hope enough so to let you see that no dependence is to be placed on what I said that day. (419)

Although the *Urban Dictionary* recognizes current colloquial usage of "annihilate" to mean "the highest level of drunkenness," neither Samuel Johnson nor the OED notes an eighteenth-century equivalent. Instead, the OED traces the word's movement from describing the destruction of physical objects and immaterial concepts into theology: "To destroy the soul (as well as the body)." Johnson's examples foreground the religious tones. But the fact that the word so readily comes to refer to intense intoxication speaks to a clear through line between eighteenth-century conceptions of drug use and our own. Like "dissipation," "annihilation" speaks directly to the death or decay of not only the body but the inner spirit or conscious identity. But the emergence of "anhiliat[ion]" as slang for intoxicated to the point of black out today demonstrates both the extent to which this narrative account of disappearance through drug use has been accelerated in our modern imagination and the gallows humor that has arisen out of that narrative collapse. One night's revelry, in inducing "annihilation," always already anticipates the death and decay of addiction. But for Keats, the pain of being "pressed" is relieved by temporary "annihilation," a process that is endlessly repeatable in and across any company.

And for Keats, the concept of the destruction of the self is consistently contained within his descriptions of transcendent experiences. In his letter on Negative Capability, he writes against what he sees as Coleridge's insistence on giving up "a fine isolated verisimilitude caught from the Penetralium of mystery, from being incapable of remaining content with half-knowledge," concluding:

> This pursued through Volumes would perhaps take us no further than this, that with a great poet the sense of Beauty overcomes every other consideration, or rather obliterates all consideration. (370)

Keats's correction from "overcomes" to "obliterates," he equates the experiences of the beautiful and the sublime, and in so doing privileges the capacity of both to separate the poet from his self.

Tellingly, Keats's letter on the poetical character finds forward momentum within this violent model of interpersonal interaction precisely through the sustained annihilation or obliteration of the self. It is, Keats writes, invaded and inhabited by "every one in the room." As the letter goes on, Keats seems to derive from this annihilating impulse something that sounds suspiciously like a Miltonic pursuit/self-assertion. Keats acknowledges that he is "ambitious of doing the world some good" and "wishes that if I should be spared that may be the work of maturer years" (419). This "good" amounts to an effort to "assay to reach to as high a summit in Poetry as the nerve bestowed upon me will suffer" (419). But rather than give in to the temptations of Miltonic—or, perhaps to Keats's eye, Wordsworthian—ambitions (and thereby annihilate himself in Miltonic or Wordsworthian influence), Keats ends by playing another draught that sets both his letter and its reader off-kilter: "But even now I am perhaps not speaking from myself: but from some character in whose soul I now live" (419). The turn may be understood to be more than a mere joke. It identifies Keats's central poetic vitality not in the development of or adherence to a system (which would indeed result in the permanent annihilation he describes in his active poetic facility). Isolated dissipation, for Keats, would prove fatal. But sobriety is at worst impossible and at best merely dissipation of a different sort. The only option seems to be to sleep off one trip with the aid of another.

“Domineering Potion[s]” (and Other Sensations)

As Jack Stillinger has influentially noted, any claim to Miltonic heights on Keats’s part is necessarily undermined by his poems’ inability or refusal to sustain flight for any extended period. Writes Stillinger of the pattern of Keats’s verse,

> the speaker […] begins life in the real world (A), takes off in a mental flight to visit the ideal (B), and then—for a variety of reasons, but most often because he finds something wanting in the imagined ideal or because, being a native of the real world, he discovers that he does not or cannot belong permanently in the ideal—he returns home to the real (A’). (7)

Stillinger points out that in a graphical representation of his account of the path of the Romantic lyric poet, the “ideal” exists above the “real” “because it is, so to speak, a higher reality” (7). The pun on “higher” may have been unintended by Stillinger, but it is useful here. Keats’s speakers, seeking a satisfying method of transcending reality, experiment with a wide range of substances. Their rejection of each and the corresponding return to human reality, though, often occurs not with a resolution to pursue abstinence but instead with the next mode of transcendence already in mind. The prime of Stillinger’s “A’,” in other words, generally corresponds with the poet’s discovery of a new path to “B.”

This strategy, analogous to Sutton’s opium-induced sleep cure for the *delirium tremens*, serves to preserve both the poet’s body and his poetic voice. By accepting and rejecting a wide range of stimuli, Keats’s poetic speakers avoid the paralyzing annihilation inherent to a long-term engagement with any one stimuli. This cycle of intoxication and wakefulness propels the speaker forward through lines of verse. His rejection of each individual intoxicant may look, from a particular perspective, like recovery in the twentieth or twenty-first century sense. But

rather than subsume that intoxication into a predetermined narrative of recovery, Keats's speakers use the pursuit of new, countervailing intoxicants as occasions to produce further verse. Such a system rejects explicitly the curative imaginary and generates poetry out of Keats's skepticism about the possibility of recovery. This series of cyclical experiences of intoxication and sobriety provides both a fruitful context for reading *The Fall of Hyperion* and a productive model for re-thinking the work of literary criticism. If we are to cull value from Keats's rat traps while not becoming trapped ourselves, we must at once engage with gusto and have a ready plan for escape.

This cycle operates most clearly and famously in "Ode to a Nightingale." Vendler reads "Nightingale" as a poem that comes to reject chemical intoxicants once and for all as the source of poetry. The nightingale's song is replaced by wine, which is in turn rejected for poesy. But the poem ultimately repeats the model of rejecting one intoxicant for another across its six stanzas. In equating the experience of the nightingale's song to the effects of hemlock, Keats seems to acknowledge that his model of sober transcendence is dependent upon his understanding of drug-induced intoxications. As Keats moves up and down the ladder of appetites, he does not forget that each new rung is accessible only thanks to the previous one. That said, if the poem does not build towards a permanent rejection of intoxicants, it also does not open with a naïve faith in them. Keats expresses ambivalence about intoxicants in the poem's very first line: "My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains" (1). The poet will reveal the feeling to be caused by the nightingale's song, but not before he compares it to intoxication induced by hemlock or opium. The second line finishes the clause, "a drowsy numbness pains / my sense" (2), in a way that speaks to expected effects of such depressants. But the line break nonetheless presents us with a

seeming oxymoron—"a drowsy numbness pains"—that recognizes the failure of any drug—however euphoric—to sustain its power without side effects.

In numbing the "sense," moreover, the experience threatens both the speaker's conscious experience of the world mediated through his senses and his ability to make sense of it (presumably through the production of verse). Famously, the speaker escapes this indolent trance—which threatens to bring on what the speaker will later call "easeful death"—with a call for a "draught of vintage" (11). This is not a desire to quit, cold turkey. It is a search for a countervailing high. Marjorie Levinson argues that when Keats uses the word "draught" elsewhere in his work, he puns on "draft," as in a piece of writing. Similarly, the fact that this "vintage" famously tastes like a pastoral poem (and is supplanted in turn by the "wings of poesy") speaks to Keats's easy slippage from chemical to textual influence. That he turns repeatedly to this metaphor in letters explaining his refusal to finish *Hyperion* (he informs George and Georgiana that "I wish to devote myself to another sensation" in September of 1819) reveals again his ability to operate, at once, at multiple levels on the ladder of appetites. At the same time, it suggests a playful application of Sutton's sleep cure for alcohol withdrawals.

That play and the serious questions about sobriety and consciousness that it raises remain important to Keats across his career. He never fully resolves the question that closes "Nightingale"—"Do I wake or sleep?" *The Fall of Hyperion,* his second aborted attempt to produce a complete poem out of the story of the fallen Titans, opens and lingers on a similar question of "whether the dream now purposed to rehearse / be poet's or Fanatic's" (1.16-17). The question is initially answered (if not entirely resolved) by a turn to language. "Fanatics" and "savages," the Dreamer claims, "have their dreams" (1.1-2), but those "shadows of melodious

utterance" die because they are not "trac'd upon vellum or wild Indian leaf" (1.5-6). Argues the Dreamer,

> Poesy alone can tell her dreams,
> With the fine spell of words alone can save
> Imagination from the sable charm
> And dumb enchantment. (1.8-11)

Citing this passage, McFarland argues that Keats claims that "only poets can hypostasize dreams against dissipation" (113). Marjorie Levinson's reading of the same passage, however, notes that textual hypostatization is not a value-free process. In preserving the dream, writing necessarily distorts it. The "fine spell of words" becomes an enthralling cage rather than an emancipatory spell. Carried further, however, that observation raises questions about the fanatic's vision. The pun on "spell" is also operative in the "sable charm / And dumb enchantment" it ostensibly distorts. That is to say, the dream and the poem are both capable of enslaving the observer while the dreamer and poet are equally capable of falling into swoons of their own. In this way, the poet may be, as the speaker suggests later in the poem, a "physician to all men." But he may also run a sort of lyrical pill mill, drawing his reader into endlessly fascinating iterations of nonsense that pains our senses even as it enthralls them.

However risky these intoxicants may prove, the poem offers no way to eschew them altogether. The Dreamer's debate with Moneta about his capacity to treat the ailments of his fellow men is complicated by the fact that their conversation was enabled by a sleep induced in the Dreamer by a mysterious clear liquid. The Dreamer describes, in turn, that "full draught" as "the parent of my theme" (1.46), and the Dreamer's response to it raises important questions about sobriety and production. This draught only offers the Dreamer its theme in exchange for

his consciousness. Although Vendler reads the liquid as distinct from the intoxicating "poppy" mentioned in the following line (1.47), Keats differentiates them by degree, not kind:

> No Asian poppy, nor Elixir fine
>
> Of the soon fading jealous Caliphant;
>
> No poison gender'd in close Monkish cell
>
> To thin the scarlet conclave of old Men,
>
> Could so have rapt unwilling life away. (1.47-51)

As such, the sleep induced by the elixir is not different from but simply more powerful than the effects of the substances noted in this epic simile. That said, his description of its effects reveals a tension between its capacity to serve as "parent to the theme" and its actual, physical effect—the loss of consciousness. That question of agency and capacity for action extends throughout the scene, suggesting that even if the clear liquid is a purer or truer form of transcendence (and is, therefore, more productive for the poet), it still poses similar threats to Keats's sense of identity and agency.

Thus, while the Dreamer drinks the liquid willingly, he then "struggles hard against / The domineering potion" (1.53-54). The Dreamer's immediate struggle against the potion combined with his compositional figuring of it as the "parent of his theme" reverses the linear progression from "Dionysian myths" towards "alcoholic realities" described by Anya Taylor (6). But it is too simple to claim that Keats merely rolls back to the classical understanding of intoxication as transcendence. In describing the potion as having "rapt unwilling life away," he collapses those models together. The verb "rapt" already confuses willing transcendence with forced transformation. Moreover, the logic of the full clause suggests we read "unwilling" as an adverb modifying "rapt," a reading that suggests that the Dreamer transcends life without consenting to

the transformation. Grammatically, though, “unwilling” is, in fact, an adjective and thereby, should modify “life.” In that case, the elixir provides its drinker transcendent relief from a “life” that he experiences unwillingly. Differently put, the syntactic confusion brought on by the metrical demand to drop the “-ly” from “unwillingly” blurs the distinction between a conscious pursuit of a (perhaps “easeful”) death and a life stolen without consent.[16]

That uncertain state between chosen and enforced unconsciousness recalls Keats’s earlier “Ode on Indolence,” another poem devoted to a possibly drug-induced fall away from the pains and ambitions of life. Often associated with a letter that some have argued was written under the influence of opium taken for an injury sustained during a cricket match, “Indolence” offers an account of drug use quite different from “dissipation.” In “Indolence,” Keats’s speaker marks change only through the lazy turning of an antique vase, which depicts three figures that become allegorical representations of pursuits his indolent mood keeps him from desiring or chasing. As “Love,” “Ambition,” and “my demon Poesy” cycle through his ken, Keats experiences an impulse to action: “to follow them I burn’d / And ached for wings” (23-24). But his ambition is short-lived:

> Poesy has not a joy—
> at least for me, —so sweet as drowsy noons
> And evenings steep’d in honied indolence; (35-37)

In this description, Keats mixes his drug metaphors, “steep[ing]” the period in a “honied indolence,” to depict the effect of opium through the lens at once of ambrosia and tea. In that mixed stupor, the poet forgets linear time along with his ambition. He takes no heed of “how change the moons” (39). As such, an indolence tied directly to drug consumption stands directly

[16] The question of metrical demand raises other interesting questions about compulsion and liberty.

opposed to social, economic, and poetic development, issues that are explicitly united through biographical readings of this poem as Keats's anxiety about the economic demands of marrying Fanny Brawne.[17]

In such readings, Keats's "Indolence" is explicitly opposed to linear progression on intellectual, economic, and interpersonal terms. Indolence directly threatens Keats's ambitions by offering a more attractive, because easeful, alternative. Vendler's collation of the "Odes" into a sequence allows her to read that poem as an isolated—and rejected—idea, and Vendler along with other critics read in the *Fall* a rejection of the easeful comforts of intoxication and dreams in order to experience the pains of life. But even that narrative is complicated not only by the liquid but by the Dreamer's description of his actions under its influence. Referencing the drunken figure sometimes understood as Dionysus's preceptor, the Dreamer claims that he falls like "a Silenus on an antique vase" (1.54-56). Ian Jack identifies as Keats's likely source the Borghese Vase, a Roman work on display in the Louvre from 1811, but widely copied in England. But in calling to mind Silenus, whose greatest insights were enabled by drink, as he falls prone on the Borghese Vase, the Dreamer identifies with a figure emblematic of wine's supposed capacity to enable wisdom even as it incapacitates. Further complicating matters, Silenus's particular wisdom—that mortal life is so full of suffering that the luckiest men are never born and the most fortunate of those who live are those who die soonest—sits easily alongside the Keatsian voice that at times embraces the pursuit of "easeful death."[18]

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[17] See Cook, n.603.

[18] For Aristotle's account of Silenus's wisdom, see Plutarch's *Morals*, p. 310. None of the works Cowden Clark identifies as Keats's main sources for classical mythology, Tooke's *Pantheon*, Lemprière *Classical Dictionary*, or Spence's *Polymetis*, mentions the wisdom of Silenus, but all do mention Silenus. Both the *Pantheon* and the *Classical Dictionary* emphasize Silenus's philosophical mind, generally, alongside the tradition of depicting him riding an ass that struggled with its burden. Spence, meanwhile, expresses annoyance that modern depictions of Bacchus were typically a mishmash of Bacchus with his older, fatter, drunker preceptor. While classical depictions of Bacchus, drunk, are rare, Spence claims, the moderns, mistaking Bacchus for Silenus, depict him drunk. Given the controversy surrounding Keats's admission in the sonnet on Chapman's Homer that he does not read Greek, his

Unlike "Indolence," *Fall* does not leave the poet committing himself to oblivion. The Dreamer's choosing to wake up and pursue his quest is instead read as a dramatization of Keats's theories of soul-building. The connection to the soul-building letters is nowhere made clearer than in Moneta's punning distinction between the dreamer and man:

> Every creature hath its home;
>
> Every sole man hath days of joy and pain,
>
> Whether his labours be sublime or low—
>
> The pain alone; the joy alone; distinct:
>
> Only the dreamer venoms all his days,
>
> Bearing more woe than all his Sins deserve. (1.171-176)

The transformative element of the "venom" affirms that the process of soul-building is not explicitly marked by the production of a sober subjectivity but instead by a continuous, ongoing transformation. It also codes the "full draught" as just such an instance of soul-shaping. Intoxication becomes a necessary component of the process. At the same time, the poison introduced in "venom" explicitly re-makes that clear liquid (and with it, soul-building in general) as *pharmakon*. Moneta uses that element to justify her claim that the Dreamer is "lesser than" those who "feel the giant agony of the world" (1.157, 167). The Dreamer fails on those terms, Moneta claims, because he cannot "benefit" "the great world" (1.168-169). The elixir/venom, then, distracts from direct engagement with the troubles of the world, a distraction that both Moneta and the poet figure as illness. She calls him "A fever of thyself" (1.169); he acknowledges a "sickness" (1.184). In Moneta's curative account, then, healthy bodies produce

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putting Silenus onto a vase might be understood as a playful admission that he receives his understanding of classical mythology in easy mediation rather than through the hard labor of translation. See Roe, "Keats's commonwealth" (207-208).

healthy societies. The Dreamer's intoxicated/indolent sickness cuts him off from utility and, therefore, from futurity in Kafer's sense.

But in affirming her diagnosis, the Dreamer claims it in a disability rights sense, employing it to mount a counter-argument to Moneta's connection of utility to health on the hierarchy of human value. In his diagnosis, his ailments offer something like disability gain:

> That I am favored for unworthiness,
> By such propitious parley medicin'd
> In sickness not ignoble, I rejoice,
> Aye, and could weep for love of such award. (1.182-185)

In a sense, the dreamer takes up Silenus's prone visionary state as a defense of his own status as "lesser." Moneta's and the Dreamer's twinned interpretation of the distinction between man and dreamer asserts the value of the dream. While Moneta distinguishes the poet from the dreamer in a passage that Keats will later ask to be excised from the poem, a Venn diagram is perhaps a better model for the distinction than a strict binary. Differently put, not all dreamers are poets, but certainly all poets dream. And while there remains a marked danger in dreamers falling too far into the venom (and thereby "thoughtless sleep[ing] away their days" [1.152]), the capacity for vision depends on feeling both the "agony of the world" and relief from it.

This theory is put to practice in Thea's decision to allow Saturn to sleep, a major episode from the first *Hyperion* poem that Keats brings into the *Fall*. Faced with the sorrow of their loss, Thea decides that Saturn should sleep rather than face his sorrowful reality:

> Saturn! Look up—and for what, poor lost King?
> I have no comfort for the, no—not one—
> I cannot cry, *Wherefore thus sleepest thou?*

> For heaven is parted from thee, and the earth
>
> Knows thee not, so afflicted, for a God; (1.354-358)

Importantly, even Thea's immediate, checked impulse to wake Saturn derives not from a desire to call him into a heroic action or even merely a sober recognition of his state. It is instead the result of a sense that she might offer "comfort." In realizing she cannot, she—like Sutton—acknowledges that sleep is perhaps the best remedy for the "afflicted" Saturn. In this way, Moneta shirks heroic suffering for both herself and her patient. This scene's "three fixed shapes," Saturn sleeping, Thea crying, and "Moneta silent," echoes with a difference the three figures from "Indolence" (1.391). But while the images on the urn move as it spins on its axis, these figures remain, unmoving and unchanged. The Dreamer's account of this classical vision demonstrates some important distinctions between the Dreamer and the speaker of "Indolence." The act of watching their motionless suffering "without stay or prop / but [his] own weak mortality" becomes a "load" to be "bor[ne]" (1.387-390). While the speaker of "Indolence" lazily watches the figures move in and out of his view as if they were on a spinning vase, the Dreamer is, in a sense, heroic in his capacity for tolerating a lack of motion. The "burning brain" that results from the act of voyeurism recalls the speaker of "Indolence" burning to follow the figures (1.395), but perhaps in recognition of the dangers of enthrallment, the Dreamer's active brain is matched with a body that seemed to "every day by day" grow "more gaunt and ghostly" (1.395-396). Here, the immobility of indolence seemingly brings with it the physical signs of decay that will come to define addiction. But while any fear of such a state in "Indolence" burns itself off and leaves the speaker with no regard for the passage of time (explicitly, without concern for "how change the moons"), the Dreamer's burning brain "measured sure" the "silver seasons" of "a whole Moon" (1.392-395). In marking—really, "measur[ing]"—the passage of

linear time through both the decay of his own body and the (ultimately cyclical) phases of the moon, the Dreamer acknowledges the limitations and dangers of either ignoring or over-emphasizing linear time and, with it, progression.

Thus, despite the gaunt body that might sit as easily in a twentieth-century anti-drug advertisement as in an eighteenth-century gothic, the Dreamer's careful watchfulness (as distinguished from the speaker in "Indolence"'s disinterest) suggests something other than addiction—which is characterized by a lack of recognition of the problem. It looks, instead, like the effects of the *delirium tremens* as Sutton describes them. Although Sutton acknowledges that the *delirium tremens* can induce "forgetfulness and confusion of intellect," patients also express "great anxiety of the mind about [their] affairs" (9). At its height, *delirium tremens* induce

> an unremitting state of watchfulness, which continues until the disease is alleviated, or is succeeded by insensibility, which may partake of coma or apoplexy, ending in death. (13)

The Dreamer's "unpropped" experience of the static figures for a full moon had him explicitly wishing for it: "Often times I pray'd / Intense, that Death would take me from the Vale / And all its burthens" (396-398). Although the vision originates with an intoxicant, in being stuck in it, the Dreamer finds himself in great anxiety about the static state of that experience. The soft echo here of Wordsworth's "burden of the mystery" points back to the mansion of Keats's letter. The Dreamer seeks an escape from a cycle of development and intoxication that proves, ultimately, stifling. But unlike the ease of "Indolence," this slow decay of body and mind is the result of his having been "set […]/ Upon an Eagle's watch" by Moneta's vision (1.308-309). In "measur[ing]" the moon and producing from it "measure[d]" lines, the Dreamer explicitly marks

the watchful burning brain as a key component in his ability to transcribe and thereby preserve the vision as verse.

If *The Fall of Hyperion* does not demonstrate in Keats an appreciation for a sobriety induced by abstinence, it does demonstrate skepticism of any one drug's ability to induce a long-lasting state of productive subjectivity that is at times absent in his earlier verse. The difference is clearest in the distinction between Keats's painful, limited flight here and his earlier account of a desire for Apollonian insight, "Hence Burgundy, Claret and port" (1818). The short verse follows the Keatsian pattern in which he rejects one stimulant for another. Here, in rejecting the terrestrial wines of the title in favor of "a Beverage brighter and clearer" (4), Keats seems to travel up the ladder of appetites in a way that anticipates the clear elixir of the *Fall*. But this beverage—which will allow his brain to "intertwine / With the glory and grace of Apollo!" (15-16)—remains unconsumed: "We will drink our fill" (13). In this way, it becomes, like Yeats's lake isle, a possible—but untested—state of bliss. The *Fall*, both in its depiction of the burning madness imposed on the dreamer by his vision and in its existence as an unfinished fragment, suggests that this beverage does not exist or, if it does exist, that it is not the panacea for poet or all men that it seems here. Moneta, after all, is no picture of health and wellness: her face is "bright blanch'd / By an immortal sickness which kills not" (1.257-258). The "constant change" worked by that sickness serves only to emphasize its stifling permanence: it is a change "which happy death / Can put no end to" (1.259-260).

In place of a panacea, Keats offers the temporary relief of new painkillers. For example, shortly after recording Moneta's account of Saturn and Thea's journey "to the families of grief" who "waste in pain / And darkness for no hope" (1.460-462), the Dreamer offers both himself and his readers relief in the form of a canto break:

> And she spake on,
>
> As ye may read who can unwearied pass
>
> Onward from the Antichamber of this dream,
>
> Where even at the open doors awhile I must delay, and glean my memory
>
> Of her high phrase: perhaps no further dare. — (1.463-468)

The architectural metaphor invoked by the "Antichamber" recalls Keats's first letter on soul-building and (with it) the intoxication enabled by the transition into a new chamber. By now it should be clear that each new room offers neither satisfaction nor clear progression, but merely another iteration of the same process of intoxicating intellectual curiosity turned to painful but thereby actionable dissatisfaction.

Fittingly, then, the relief offered by the Dreamer here is presented for the benefit of the Dreamer and his weary reader alike, but it is offered in a way that prefigures the need to read on. The sentence's independent clause focuses on Moneta's continued speech and thereby asserts its importance even through our brief pause. Whatever hesitancy we and the Dreamer feel about arriving at those words is tucked into the series of conditional clauses that follow. The canto's final four words—"perhaps no further dare"—hinge our temporary relief on a "dare" to push past it. In this way, the Dreamer anticipates and even encourages his reader's forward momentum into the rest of Moneta's vision. We and the dreamer alike are dared to move through another threshold into another reiteration of the established pattern. Perhaps surprisingly, while this "dare" at the end of Canto I ushers in an attempt at the second, the certain forward momentum of Hyperion's flight—"on he flared—" (2.61)—signals the end of the fragment. But in refusing to offer a tidy conclusion to Hyperion's heroic forward movement (into an ultimately cyclical task), the Dreamer is merely offering a more honest account than the speaker of "Hence, burgundy,"

who finds a conclusion in a transcendent experience he has not yet experienced. In this way, the *Fall* suggests that what Wasserman champions as “poetic organisms”—for all their internal coherence—may well prove deceitful.

Relevant to my discussion of the role of intoxicants and palliatives in figuring the *Fall* is Levinson’s important observation that the elixir—the “parent” of the verse—is ultimately the first *Hyperion* poem, and the “full draught” another draft of the poem. Levinson argues that Keats’s second effort at the Hyperion poem does not extend the poem along its linear line but instead dramatizes the act of its production in ways that satirize the act of composition itself. Indeed, we might see Keats’s turn to Dante to correct the Miltonic inversions that left him to abort the first *Hyperion* as a literary application of Sutton’s opium treatment. Keats’s “new sensation” allows him to sleep off the effects of the withdrawal while at the same time offering its own tempting promise of transcendence and, with it, new but equally dangerous, enthralling habits. These fragments, then, speak to the danger inherent in reading closed systems—“organisms,” even—as the highest form of poetic production. If, as Keats writes to George and Georgiana, “While we are laughing the seed of some trouble is put into the wide arable land of events” (465), any poem’s claim to a stable conclusion deceives by omission. Within such a system, the sentence fragment with which the *Fall* breaks off may well be the only honest way to end.

This suggestion finds textual support across Keats’s verse. In Keats’s sonnet “On First Looking on Chapman’s Homer,” a poem with no overt mention of drugs, the text of Chapman’s translation inspires mind-altering synesthesia. In them he sees “many goodly states and kingdoms” (2), breathes the “pure serene” of “Homer’s demesne” (6-7), and hears the long-dead “Chapman speak out loud and bold” (8). This reaction to Chapman’s interpolation of Homer

provides a catalyst to produce the sonnet. Avital Ronell looks to the Romantics to argue that authors perform their function under the influence of their predecessors: "[t]o locate 'his' ownmost subjectivity, Thomas De Quincey cited Wordsworth. These texts are on each other. A textual communication based on *tropium*" (29). Keats's sonnet on Chapman's highlights this intoxicated lineage and thereby re-writes Keats's lack of Greek as an account of the flow of influence as stimulation.

The sonnet on Chapman ends without the return to self that mars drug-induced transcendence elsewhere in Keats's verse. But in "On Sitting Down to Read *King Lear* Once Again," Keats reveals that "tropium," too, is dangerous. The poem begins where the "Ode to a Nightingale" ends, with the speaker bidding "Adieu" to a once transcendent object of interest (5). Here, he sends away "Golden-tongued Romance" (1), but rather than waking up, the speaker treats his romance-withdrawal with a different form of fiction: tragedy. By returning to *King Lear*, the speaker hopes to prevent the "oak forest" setting of romance from becoming a "barren dream" (11). The poem is often read as a pivot point in Keats's career, when Keats gives up the poppy fields of romance and dedicates himself to more serious work.[19] But this turn implies its own risks. To read *Lear* is to "burn through" it (10). The solution to that consumptive reading is, the poem's final lines suggest, to rise from the ashes on "new Phoenix Wings" (14). The image at once demonstrates that the flames of the poem's "burning through" *Lear* threatens text and reader at once and, in supposing an escape from those flames, shifts the speaker back into the

[19] See, for example, Douglas Bush (1967). Anthony Hecht reads the sonnet through the lens of Keats's appetite for intoxicating and restorative reading, but nonetheless sees the turn to Shakespeare as a refinement of taste, "a ripening of intellectual powers [that] will enable him to savour this work in which the bitter and the sweet are intermixed" (73). Wolfson acknowledges that the phoenix image that closes the sonnet is emblematic of Keats's necessary return to romance, but argues that his return is charged with difference. After this sonnet, Keats writes "new romance" that carries with it implicit and explicit satire of the genre (48-50).

realm of romance. This final image suggests that even while mired in the influence of tragedy, he's already thinking about the source of his next trip.

It is tempting here to insist on a direct connection between Keats's countervailing textual treatments and opium's role in treating the *delirium tremens*. But in pushing that connection too far, I perhaps run the risk of succumbing to a temptation of the very sort that Keats's gull flights of verse and prose resist. Although he poses the question in the *Fall* of whether he be poet or fanatic, the Dreamer admits that the answer will be known only "when this warm scribe my hand is in the grave" (1.18). We might say that the fact that we are still reading Keats today gives us the answer he seems to have wanted, but the critical insistence on policing Keats's sobriety suggests that the mere act of reading Keats has long proven insufficient to establish that he is the sober poet of critical tradition. Critical accounts of Keats have instead served as the proverbial hot cup of coffee for both Keats and his reader.

This is not to say that taking critical account of Keats's intoxication leaves us hopelessly annihilated. That same critical record demonstrates that his verse has long offered insights into the concerns of both literary history and our present moment. Recent critical turns engage Keats to consider the shape of capitalism both in his day and our own. There, and elsewhere, Keats provides the promise of a path out of late capitalism, a way to think through the very linear process of global warming, and a reflection on eighteenth-century debates about medical ethics.[20] I offer here the suggestion that Keats also provides an opportunity to re-imagine conceptions of poetic originality and addiction treatment at once. But in spinning off-label uses for the poet/physician's wares, we would all do well to remember the fate of the addressee of "Ode to Melancholy," who tempts the range of intoxicants before "glut[ting]" on only one. In "burst[ing]

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[20] See, respectively, Wang (2011), White (2014), and Pladek (2015).

Joy's grape against his palate fine," he allows "his soul" to "taste the sadness of [Melancholy's] might" (15, 28-29). In pursuing our intoxicating Keatsian insights to their ends, we may well find ourselves caught in a rat-trap or, like that addressee, among Keats's "cloudy trophies hung" (30).

Coda

During his January 30, 2018 State of the Union Address, Donald Trump ended his call for sweeping changes to immigration policy by suggesting those changes would also address the opioid epidemic. But rather than launching into fearmongering about the MS-13 gang, a common tactic for both Trump and his allies in justifying immigration reforms, Trump gestured to three of his invited guests. As cameras cut to reveal a man in a dress police uniform and a woman holding a sleeping infant standing next to the first lady, Trump told their story:

> Ryan was on duty when he saw a pregnant, homeless woman preparing to inject heroin. When Ryan told her she was going to harm her unborn child, she began to weep. She told him she did not know where to turn, but badly wanted a safe home for her baby.
>
> In that moment, Ryan said he felt God speak to him: "You will do it—because you can." He took out a picture of his wife and their four kids. Then, he went home to tell his wife Rebecca. In an instant, she agreed to adopt. The Holets named their new daughter Hope.
>
> Ryan and Rebecca: You embody the goodness of our Nation. Thank you, and congratulations.

In elevating Ryan and Rebecca as the embodiment of "the goodness of our Nation," Trump frames his story with a general sense of patriotism. But its position within Trump's larger speech, as a replacement for specifics of a drug reform policy and connected directly to his

restrictive immigration policies, specifies that Trump's brand of patriotism is a deeply nationalistic one. As framed by Trump's speech, the Holets become rhetorical props in justifying regressive border and immigration policies and a corresponding law enforcement-focused approach to the opioid epidemic that includes, among other things, unprecedented instructions from the Justice Department to seek the death penalty for certain drug dealers.

Absent from the physical space of the Capitol was Hope's mother, Crystal Champ. Absent from Trump's story were any consideration of who or where she is or a conversation about the power differential between her and the policeman who now has custody of her child. On the night of the State of the Union, both her name and her story could be ignored because centuries of addiction narratives have perhaps taught us to think we know her story already. Her future is, in Allison Kafer's words, "a future of no future." Unlike Hope, whose very name echoes the persistence and power of this story, she is in a place like the one William Hogarth imagined as *Gin Lane*, where "Idleness, poverty, misery, and distress, which drives even to madness and death, are the only objects to be seen." Throughout this dissertation, I have worked to detail a historically specific account of "dissipation" that has a role in the construction of addiction but is, nonetheless, a diagnosis born of a specific historical moment. Here, however, I would like to think about the narrative continuities that operate across historical periods and diagnostic categories to justify efforts to control noncompliant bodies through medical expertise, legal authority, or violence.

Crystal Champ is understood to be addicted in a way that the subject of Hogarth's *Gin Lane* could not have been, and *Chronic Habits* contributes to an important body of scholarship dedicated to treating those distinctions with care. But the narrative of the mother who does damage to her children persists beyond historical periods in accounts of bodies and minds

deemed problematic, from the notion of maternal impression in the pre-modern and Victorian eras to the refrigerator mother of the mid-twentieth century to the interrelated myths of "welfare queens" and "crack babies" of the 1980s. The story recurs in contemporary readers' accounts of Mary Robinson's dissipation and paralysis and is a central element of the rehabilitation plot in *Belinda*. It provides the melodrama and moral impact of the conclusion to the Oscar-winning film, *The Days of Wine and Roses* (1962), one of the first of many film depictions of AA, in which the recovered Jack Lemmon protects his daughter from his visiting and hopelessly relapsed ex-wife, played by Lee Remick. The child suffering for the sins of the mother might be understood as a particularly powerful site of intersection for what David Courtwright has identified as the five categories of justification for drug regulations and prohibitions: direct harms, social costs, sinful conduct, association with deviant groups, and anxieties about the collective future. The persistence of medical concerns in these accounts of both the mother and the child, however, points to a sixth category of justification that perhaps operates most fluidly in intersection with the other five: an association of non-normative drug use with disease and disability.

The white mother, in particular, often does double duty in these intersecting discourses. She becomes at once the perpetrator of violence against her child's future and the victim of the racialized dealers and sellers of the (foreign) drugs that have left her *hopeless*.[1] From its inception in the nineteenth century, what Courtwright has called the "psychoactive counterrevolution" was justified by and in turn enabled racist narratives that often positioned white women as potential victims (5). In both the Western United States and England, regulation

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[1] When a drug affects a group of women with enough social and cultural privilege, this victim position can be turned to their advantage. For an account of the ways that women who were addicted to prescription Prozac successfully advocated for reform by defining themselves against people of color addicted to illicit drugs, see Herzberg (2006).

of the opium trade was justified by fears of Asian users and dealers.[2] This set of myths persists today. In America, efforts to control marijuana and crack-cocaine blended with efforts to control minority and immigrant populations across the twentieth century in part through the explicit production of racist propaganda associating illicit drugs with black and Latino communities.[3] The result has been disproportional policing that leads Michelle Alexander to observe in her seminal *The New Jim Crow* that "nothing has contributed more to the systematic mass incarceration of people of color in the United States than the War on Drugs" (60). In addressing the opioid epidemic as a problem of immigration and policing, this administration ensures that their response will exacerbate these inequities.

But recent turns in disability studies make engaging with the tangible effects of these narratives from within the field difficult. Fuson Wang has rightly noted that a new historical rigor in literary disability studies has opened the field up and allowed it to move beyond the grand Foucauldian histories of the field's inaugural works. This was a particular problem in literary disability studies, where David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder's field-defining concept of "Narrative Prosthesis" produced an analytic device in which "theory occasionally overdetermines the close reading" (2). *Chronic Habits* contributes to what Wang identifies as the field's "reparative" response to Mitchell and Snyder (2). By uncovering and examining historically specific responses to specific noncompliant bodies and minds, the field has at once offered a fuller accounting of the history of disability and, just as importantly, more careful

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[2] See Berridge (195-215) and Courtwright (177). For a consideration of journalistic and literary contributions and challenges to this narrative in the English context, see Milligan (2004) and Goergen (2014).

[3] Alexandra Chasin's recent monograph details the influence of Harry Anslinger, who ran the Federal Narcotics Bureau from 1930 to 1962, on American drug policy. Anslinger engaged in a wide-ranging propaganda campaign to explicitly connect marijuana use to racial minorities. This project included cultivating the cultural association of marijuana with jazz musicians and popularizing the word "marijuana" rather than "cannabis" in an effort to connect it to immigrants from Mexico and Latin and South America. For an account of how Anslinger, late in his tenure, further associated illegal drug use with communists to draw on and bolster the Red Scare, see Kinder (1981).

interpretations of literary texts' engagement with that history. But I bring up the parallels between the mother in Hogarth's *Gin Lane* and Crystal Champ's absence from Trump's account of the opioid epidemic to caution that in over-prioritizing historical specificity, we may unwittingly contribute to the work of those who would produce and reinforce systems that perpetrate systemic injustice. This is in a sense an amendment to my argument in the introduction that addiction studies scholars can learn from disability studies ways of thinking about their work beyond an ultimate search for actionable therapeutic applications. While we cannot presume that answers to these injustices exist exclusively in medical advances, literary disability studies scholars, in moving past Mitchell and Snyder's politically-motivated reading practices, should be careful not to lose sight of Mitchell and Snyder's insistence that this work speaks to the lives of the people whose history we trace.

This is not a call for an easy and uncritical presentism so much as it is an effort to acknowledge that our present and our imagined futures are inescapable through even the most careful methodologies. Courtwright, in acknowledging that he relied on the National Institute for Drug Abuse's disease paradigm of addiction to fill the gaps in his historical archive for *Forces of Habit*, implicitly suggests as much. But *Forces of Habit* marks a larger turn in Courtwright's work from uncovering hidden archives of individual drug users' lived experiences to describing the macroeconomic history of drugs on a global scale. That shift raises the possibility that the NIDA paradigm has a larger influence on Courtwright than even he acknowledges. Perhaps this concrete—if tentative—evidence of a physical etiology of addiction allows Courtwright to let a diagnostic category stand in for a group whose individuation was once the focus of his research. I bring this up not to challenge Courtwright's work on the basis of his reliance on contemporary addiction research or to question his turn in focus. Instead, I merely want to point out that his

inquiry is informed by a series of choices about his approach to the past that draw on conversations happening in and about his present.

A similar set of choices were made in a more blunt and obvious manner by the curators of the recent Tate Britain exhibit, "Art and Alcohol," which ran from November 2015 to September 2016. The exhibit positions Hogarth's *Gin Lane* as the starting place in a great tradition of artists exploring "Britain's relationship with alcohol." But while the exhibit's literature mentions Hogarth's complementary piece, *Beer Street*, which posits beer as an important stimulant for both economic and sexual productivity among the merchant and landed classes of London society, it was not on display. That omission ensures that despite the introductory text's acknowledgement of the complexities of Britain's "relationship with alcohol," the actual exhibition presents a somewhat one-sided understanding of it (One reviewer, writing in *The Londonist*, called it "a sobering exhibition."). Near the displayed engraving, the curators paired Hogarth's description of *Gin Lane* with Henry Fielding's contemporary and complementary thoughts on gin drinking. Writes Fielding, of gin,

> A new kind of Drunkeness, unknown to our ancestors, is lately sprung up amongst us, which, if not put a stop to, will infallibly destroy a great Part of the inferior People…what must become of an infant who is conceived in Gin? With the poisonous Distillations of which it is nourished both in the Womb and at the Breast.

Minus the eighteenth-century construction and the alcohol-specific metaphor of distillation, Fielding's invective would not sound out of place in a news report on the supposed "crack baby" epidemic. But it is not enough merely to note the persistence of these narratives. Martin Rowson's 2001 update of Hogarth, *Cocaine Lane*, suggests that these historical parallels are as

likely to affirm prejudices as to challenge them. Thus, while, as Wang suggests, purely theoretical or polemical approaches to literary history quickly become hammers in search of nails, excising that theory altogether threatens to obscure the presence other, more active hammers. If we are, as I have suggested, always already ahistorical, being intentionally so may be the best way to trouble the medical discourses that obscure and naturalize moral accounts of disability and addiction.

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