
2. As Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht succinctly adumbrates, in Western philosophy “sense making” largely “hinges upon the epistemological dominance of the Subject/Object paradigm” (“Martin Heidegger and His Japanese Interlocutors: About a Limit of Western Metaphysics,” *Diacritics* 30.4 [2000]: 83); the notion of a sensation of
meaning developed especially in chaps. 4 and 5 of this study will attempt to complicate that formulation, while chap. 7 will examine one instance of its figurative intran- sigence. For perhaps the most technically extensive and scrupulous consideration of the relation between sense and meaning, see Gottlob Frege’s distinction between sense and denotation, “On Sinn and Bedeutung,” in The Frege Reader, ed. Michael Beaney (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997) 151–71.

3. For a listing of some of the many works that have considered the relation between Romanticism and history, see James K. Chandler, England in 1819: The Politics of Literary Culture and the Case of Romantic Historicism (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1998) 33; Chandler’s seminal study can be seen as a reflexive summation, and transcendence, of many of the historicizing impulses motivating Romantic studies since the 1980s. For my own engagement with portions of Chandler’s thought, see chap. 7.

4. For a previous attempt to triangulate de Manian thought, Marxism, and Romanticism, see Forrest Pyle, The Ideology of Imagination: Subject and Society in the Discourse of Romanticism (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1995). Pyle’s elegant study especially uses Althusser’s theory of ideology to formulate these connections; the present study employs a more varied, but hopefully no less fruitful, set of writings from the Marxist tradition in its interrogation of these relations.

5. Consider, for example, Brian Massumi’s opening statement in a recent work: “When I think of my body and ask what it does to earn that name, two things stand out. It moves. It feels. In fact, it does both at the same time. It moves as it feels, and it feels itself moving. Can we think of a body without this: an intrinsic connection between movement and sensation whereby each immediately summons the other?” (Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, and Sensation [Durham: Duke UP, 2002] 1). This dynamic physicality is arguably a key attraction in Deleuzian thought, no matter how indeterminate or volatized it becomes in his and others’ formulations; as such, Deleuzian sensation at least in this key instance diverges from the non-phenomenal disposition that informs large portions of the notion of sensation developed in this book. See also chap. 7, n. 13, and Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1987).


tion of William Hazlitt’s famous 1825 work speaks to how long and intensely the term revolution has reflexively been part of the Romantic imaginary.

9. This is not to say of course that Levinson’s study somehow enacts the same belief in nineteenth-century Communist revolution that Marx expresses, but that the critical force of her hermeneutic comes from a sense of class antagonism and market forces that reproduces the power of the Marxist analysis, although one obviously coupled with the strategies of post-structuralism. In contrast, Christensen’s study of Byronic commercial culture exploits but also more explicitly troubles the ontologies of Marxist categories of dialectical history, something that becomes even more clear in the conceptual shape of his later work, Romanticism at the End of History (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2000).

10. “Wordsworth’s greatest gift to literary history, and his greatest contribution to an understanding of history, is that he was never sure that he knew what to say, or how to say it. His failure of resolution and independence which, however conscious it was, was in every important sense deliberate and is as such open to careful intellectual and theoretical articulation, aligns him with those readers of the twenty-first century who are engaged in trying to understand the dynamics of their own society as that society becomes, increasingly after 1989 and again after 9/11, more and more obliged to confront the possibility that the very mechanisms with which it purports to alleviate its concerns are themselves significantly implicated in their continued and urgent existence” (David Simpson, Wordsworth, Commodification, and Social Concerns [Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009] 234).


14. See, for example, David Simpson’s Subject to History: Ideology, Class, Gender (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1991) 1–33, 163–90, as well as his “Is Literary History the History of Everything? The Case for ‘Antiquarian History,’ ” SubStance 28 (1999): 5–16.


Chapter 1  •  Romantic Sobriety


3. See Norman Longmate, The Waterdrinkers: A History of Temperance (London: Hamilton, 1968); Brian Harrison, Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question in England, 1815–1872, 2nd ed. (Staffordshire: Keele UP, 1994); and Roy Porter, “The Drinking Man’s Disease: The ‘Pre-History’ of Alcoholism in Georgian Britain,” British Journal of Addiction 80 (1995): 385–96. Porter acknowledges the traditional view of locating in late Georgian medicine the new perception of alcoholism as a medical illness; he argues against this historical distinction, however, by asserting that this view of alcoholism already existed in the early eighteenth century, a fact that would bind eighteenth- and nineteenth-century views on drink together (390–91). See, however, n. 22. Sobriety, of course, also appears in other discourses early on in the eighteenth century; consider, for example, some of the titles of the Irish archbishop Edward Synge: “Religion Tried by the Test of Sober and Impartial Reason”; “Sober Thoughts for the Cure of Melancholy, Especially that which is Religious”; and “Two Tracts; the One, Directions to a Sober Christian for the Offering Up to the Lord’s Prayer to God in His Private Devotions; the Other, Sober Thoughts on the Doctrine of Predestination” (The Works of Edward Synge, Late Lord Archbishop of Tuam in Ireland [London: Thomas Trye, 1744]). I am grateful to Richard C. Sha for this reference.

4. Clifford Siskin, The Work of Writing: Literature and Social Change in Britain, 1700–1830 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1998) 107, 129. Siskin focuses, of course, on the Romantic conception of creative writing at work and on the relation of that vocation to the rise of the professional classes. In this sense his is a New Historicism engage-
ment with an earlier sociological and materialist scholarship that stressed the relation of sober industry to a Protestant work ethic, to the working classes, or to both. See Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (New York: Scribner, 1958); and E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage, 1966) 57–59. But see also n. 16 and chap. 8, n. 1. The nexus of these relations could also be applied beyond the working and professional classes; in this light George III, with his change in reputation from modest Farmer George to the Mad King, becomes the quintessential Romantic subject. For a discussion of his conscious remaking of the image of the monarch, see Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1992) 209–10.


10. I am indebted to Michael Macovski for this insight. For a discussion of Wordsworth’s ghostly figures in relation to commodity reification, see Simpson, 1–16; see also my introduction.


“Forever Young: Master Betty and the Queer Stage of Youth in English Romanticism,” South Atlantic Quarterly 95 (1996): 596–98. Carlson identifies youth with unfinished development but also associates it with the first-generation Romantics, who especially found its theatrical staging a site, and a defense, of their earlier revolutionary enthusiasm. See also most recently Richard C. Sha’s smart and provocative reading of Don Juan as allowing Byron to use puberty to “question the value of maturity and conventional masculinity,” with the poem primarily about the founding powers of the “youthful body . . . as full of perverse potentiality . . . a paradoxical ground of latency” (Perverse Romanticism: Aesthetics and Sexuality in Britain, 1750–1832 [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2009] 241–42).

15. Geraldine Friedman, The Insistence of History: Revolution in Burke, Wordsworth, Keats, and Baudelaire (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1996) 9. One could qualify this view with Helen Vendler’s claim about “Keats’s characteristic sobriety,” ostensibly gotten from Milton’s L’Allegro, which underwrites her own well-known narrative about the poet’s maturation during the writing of the Great Odes, and which is exemplified by the “rejection of ‘Bacchus and his pards’ ” during “Ode to a Nightingale” (The Odes of John Keats [Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1983] 250). Yet one might also observe how this “characteristic sobriety” is folded into the larger movement of “Nightingale” toward a variety of imagined sensations based on the poetic thought experiment of the senses’ nullification; thus, sensory deprivation becomes the occasion for poetic sensation. Similarly, the end point for Vendler of Keats’s putative poetic maturation is “To Autumn,” a work whose lyrical sense of perfection has oftentimes been understood to be a triumph of sensation over semantic meaning. For a reading of Keats’s poem that focuses on its relation to physical sensation, see chap. 7; see also the analysis of Keats’s relation to pre-cinematic sensation in chap. 10.

16. Blake to William Hayley, 23 October 1804, in The Complete Poetry and Prose, ed. David V. Erdman (New York: Doubleday, 1988) 757. One might also argue that Blake, unlike Wordsworth, complicates any simple consolidation of childhood and error with the twin states of innocence and experience; see Richardson’s suggestion that Blake’s view of childhood should be understood through a “dialectical triad” (20). For the perception of Blake’s later works as in fact depoliticized, see Marilyn Butler, Romantics, Rebels, and Reactionaries: English Literature and Its Background, 1760–1830 (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1981) 51. But consider also Jon Mee’s association of Blake with the radical antinomian energy of Protestant “enthusiasm” in Dangerous Enthusiasms: William Blake and the Culture of Radicalism in the 1790s (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992). Indeed, Mee’s later argument that Romanticism can be understood as an attempt to regulate this radical enthusiasm is another compelling formulation of the sobering impulses in Romantic writing; see his Romanticism, Enthusiasm, and Regulation: Poetics and the Policing of Culture in the Romantic Period (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003). See also, however, this chapter’s discussion of the trope of sobriety in the Protestant-influenced radical and reform movement.


21. Samuel Bamford, cited in Thompson, 679. A counterpoint to such Reform strategy would be not only the anti-Jacobin narrative of sobriety but also the sobriety in dress and manners of the Anglo-European ruling classes after the French Revolution, a response to the “sartorial and political disaster” of the procession of the Estates General in 1789, when “the representatives of the Third Estate, dressed in somber black, had been cheered; but the traditionally lavish costumes of the nobility and clergy had met with jeers or silent disgust” (Colley, 187). I am indebted to Daniela Garofalo for this reference. For an in-depth study of radical and Reform culture, see Kevin Gilmartin, *Print Politics: The Press and Radical Opposition in Early Nineteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996).

22. H.O. 40.4, Rules of the Bath Union Society for Parliamentary Reform, January 1817, cited in Thompson, 740. Thompson argues, in fact, that “the Temperance Movement can be traced to this post-war campaign of abstinence” (740). This Reformist and Radical rhetoric can be ironically juxtaposed with Edmund Burke’s own admonition to the English poor: “Patience, labor, sobriety, and frugality, should be recommended to them; all else is downright fraud” (quoted in Roy Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century* [Hammondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1982] 111).

23. See also n. 28.


25. For an extended analysis of this passage along these lines, see Wang. For a detailed discussion of the relation between passion and epistemology on Great Britain during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see Pinch.


28. We should be mindful, however, of the mediations necessary for such articulations. Percy’s friend Leigh Hunt, for example, was annoyed at being confused with the working-class Reformer and antitax agitator Henry Hunt and, along with his brother John, kept the Examiner “aloof from the plebeian movement” (Thompson, 675). It should also be noted how the rhetoric of a progressive sobriety rests not only on a bifurcation between Jacobin and anti-Jacobin politics but also on one that grounds the sobriety of the working class: “The struggle of the reformers was one for enlightenment, order, sobriety, in their own ranks; so much so that Windham, in 1802, was able to declare with some colour that the Methodists and the Jacobins were leagued together to destroy the amusements of the people” (Thompson, 59; my emphasis).


31. It has long been debated whether Kant or Schelling has a stronger presence in the Biographia; my narrative representation takes as its point of departure Engell and Bate’s argument regarding the centrality of Kant for any discussion of German thought in Coleridge’s work (cxxv–cxxvi).

32. The very point of overdetermination is to make secondary whether Coleridge knew about Kant’s fastidious reputation; he certainly may have, however, as there were brief biographies of Kant in England from quite early on, and Coleridge probably knew them. Moreover, Coleridge would certainly have known of Kant’s references to immoderate consumption and ethical ascetics (see Kant, “On Stupefying Oneself by Excessive Use of Food or Drink” and “Ethical Ascetics,” in The Metaphysics of Morals, ed. and trans. Mary Gregor [Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991] 222–24, 273–74).

33. For a sustained argument regarding Kant’s Enlightenment and French revolutionary associations and the adverse reaction that Wordsworth might have had to Coleridge’s interest in the philosopher, see Chandler, 251–57. For the British and European association of Kant with Jacobinism, see Simpson, Romanticism, 94–99; and René Wellek, Immanuel Kant in England, 1793–1838 (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1931) 13–15. As Chandler notes (257), the Biographia demonstrates Coleridge’s own awareness of these issues in the passage where his praise of Kant is also a reflexive disaffiliation from “those who have taken their notion of immanuel kant from Reviewers and Frenchmen” (153). See also, however, Peter Thorslev’s distinction between the reason of German idealism and the reason of French Enlightenment abstraction in “German Romantic Idealism,” in The Cambridge Companion to British Romanticism, ed. Stuart Curran (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993) 74–94.

34. See Wellek, 88–89; and G. N. G. Orsini, Coleridge and German Idealism: A Study in the History of Philosophy with Unpublished Materials from Coleridge’s Manu-
scripts (Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1969). See also Mary Anne Perkins, *Coleridge’s Philosophy: The Logos as Unifying Principle* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994) 239–40. Coleridge also, however, uses a rhetoric of Stoic philosophy to affiliate himself with Kant and to distinguish himself from other philosophical traditions; thus, he uses as an appropria-brium Epicurus, who can refer both to a philosophical position of receptivity (Wellek, 18) and to thinkers such as Helvétius, Paley, and Priestley, practitioners of the Jacobin-associated, Enlightenment error that is the familiar target of his more explicit moments of conservative sober rhetoric (Orsini, 157). But see also Kant’s own philosophical balancing of Stoic and Epicurean principles in “Ethical Ascetics,” 273. Finally, James Engell uses the language of addiction to assert how Coleridge feared that metaphysics was leading him from Christianity to pantheism (*The Creative Imagination: Enlightenment to Romanticism* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1981] 361–62). Thus, Coleridge’s engagement with metaphysics both exploits a language of sobriety and is generated by varying, asymmetrical moments of that discourse.


**Chapter 2 • Kant All Lit Up**


4. A notable exception to this trend in Romanticist historicist scholarship would be James K. Chandler’s commanding *England in 1819*, which argues for the singular influence of British Romantic historical thought. Interestingly, Chandler’s paradigms are buttressed by engagements with thinkers usually associated with the concept of the long eighteenth century, such as J. G. A. Pocock (101–2).

While this chapter focuses on the relation between Romanticism and the long eighteenth century, its argument should in many ways also be applicable to the possible reorganization of Romanticism into the long nineteenth century—indeed, this will be one of the main claims that I make. For one analysis voicing concerns about the recent collusion between Romanticism and the nineteenth century, see Tilottama

5. One might also object to delimiting the historicist work of the 1980s through the operations of an ideological critique. But see Wang, 71–82, for the argument that revisionist, ideological critique best characterizes 1980s Romanticist historicist work, as opposed to the more imprecise nomenclature of 1980s Foucaultian-inspired New Historicism.

One might finally point out the appearance in the last decade or so of a new generation of Romanticist scholarship implicitly or explicitly inspired by deconstruction. Whether such institutional soundings ever achieve the status of a true overturning in critical thought—for or against deconstruction, or Romanticism for that matter—is in one way the question explored by this chapter.


8. See also Klancher, “Romantic Criticism.”

9. For an extended consideration of the diminished role of the Revolution in Romantic studies, see chap. 6.


11. For a critique of the normative assumptions behind this equivalence, see Wang, 71–82.


13. Looming over this issue is, of course, Romanticism’s relation to Marxism, the theoretical discourse that attempts to supplant the historicist’s perception of nominalist non-periodicity with a troping of history’s particular identity and value. Extending Redfield’s comments, we might then consider the different disciplinary representations of McGann’s book and Frederic Jameson’s *The Political Unconscious*, a work very much about the Modern, and aesthetic, ideology. While Jameson’s text does engage with Marxist theory in a more wide-ranging manner than McGann’s, Redfield’s point suggests another reason why *The Romantic Ideology* has always been more about Romanticism than Marxism while *The Political Unconscious* has always been more about Marxism than Modernism. As the disciplinary embodiment of history’s figuraiive dimension, Romanticism enables the quest in Marxism for historical value and
meaning, while simultaneously instilling an unavoidable sense of tropic drift within the project.

14. This dimension to Romanticism has always existed, of course, even before the early 1980s ideological critique by McGann and others. See Wang, 26–36.

15. For the most thoroughgoing attempt to historicize this proposition, see Chandler.


19. But see also n. 27.


21. It could be said that sec. 50 does away with the problem of conception and aesthetics altogether by further separating the acts of genius and imagination from those of taste and judgment to the point that the two sets of activities, while affecting
one another, remain completely different. There is a strain in this separation, however, to where the division acts less like part of a constative system and more like a trope employed to describe a much more complicated situation. The strain appears not only in the continued problematic presence of what genius is supposed to explain (the non-conceptual conception of beautiful art) but also in the odd way that taste, the province of the non-conceptual judgment of beauty, becomes more reflexive than genius. Secs. 47 and 48 demonstrate this self-consciousness by associating taste with the “diligence and learning” of mechanical art and genius with fine, or beautiful, art. Furthermore, in sec. 50, taste is specifically made more reflexive than genius, insofar as taste’s reflection upon the products of genius modifies, indeed disciplines, the imaginative process: “Taste, like the power of judgment in general, consists in disciplining (or training) genius. It severely clips its wings, and makes it civilized, or polished; but at the same time it gives its guidance as to how far and over what it may spread while still remaining purposive” (sec. 50, 188). Genius is placed in the position of a savage nature at odds with Kant’s earlier formula of genius as the mediation of nature giving rule to art, while, conversely, taste is made a civilizing force paradoxically defined by its intimate relation to a purposiveness earlier allied with nature. Thus, far from simply disappearing, the contradictions between human design and natural purposiveness crystallized in the problem that genius addresses are here distributed evenly along both sides of the distinction between taste and genius. For a discussion of the resonances of European empire within tropes of nature and civilization in the Critique, see Henry Schwarz, “Aesthetic Imperialism: Literature and the Conquest of India,” Modern Language Quarterly 61 (2001): 563–86.

22. See John H. Zammito, The Genesis of Kant’s Critique of Judgment (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1992) 131–47, for the view that Kant is actually arguing with Herder that the self-conscious studiousness of mechanical art is as important as, if not more so than, the genius of fine art. This thesis implies a certain circumscription in Kant of his more radical lines of inquiry, such as the notion of a pure or free beauty that Derrida explores. Regardless of whether a more philosophically moderate intent can be extrapolated from the Critique, my essay asserts a textual dynamic in Kant’s work that nevertheless puts into play the more volatile effects of his words on genius within and beyond the putative attempts of the Critique to limit or segregate them. See also n. 21.


a Kantian moment in Adorno’s _Aesthetic Theory_. The question remains, however, whether Adorno’s generation of critical reflection from aporia is a moment of truth. If that is the case, one could say that the movement of this generation is teleological, making aporia a necessary condition toward truth. In contrast, this chapter’s reading of the _Critique_ involves a genetic dynamic, whereby truth and falsehood are effects of the catachrestic nature of genius. But of course, this occasions (yet) another question: is the relation between these teleological and genetic movements dialectical or deconstructive? Indeed, as I bluntly ask at the start of part III, is the relation between the dialectic and deconstruction dialectical or deconstructive?


26. For the argument that genius is indeed the ability to make new sense, as opposed to nonsense, see Timothy Gould, “The Audience of Originality: Kant and Wordsworth on the Reception of Genius,” in Cohen and Guyer, 179–93.

27. This distinction anticipates the terms by which Kant later solves the antinomy of taste in the later section on the “Dialectic of Aesthetic Judgment.” In sec. 57 Kant associates the indemonstrable nature of the concept in the rational idea with the indeterminate concept of the supersensible substrate, insofar as that concept cannot, simply, be imagined. Thus, while an aesthetic idea reaffirms the estrangement between the aesthetic and conception, a rational idea introduces a more phantomlike sense of a concept, which becomes Kant’s resolution of the antinomy of taste, that a judgment of taste is both based and not based on concepts, insofar as there are two forms of conception, the determinate concept and the indeterminate and indemonstrable concept. But in sec. 49 Kant seems to be describing the predicament of determinate concepts that are indemonstrable.

Also, in different places the _Critique_ refers to “Spirit” as either a quality of the artwork or a talent of the creative human mind. This mobility could be said to replicate the tension between subject and object that runs through the _Critique_ and so much of Kant’s oeuvre, such as, most immediately, whether the mental judgment of a beautiful object is actually qualitatively different from the explicit focus on the sublime powers of the mind. See Zammito, 147.


29. Guyer’s translation depends on his transformation of the more neutral German “zu” into the more active preposition “of”:

Thus genius properly consists of the happy relationship, which no science can teach and no diligence learn, of discovering ideas for a given concept and further, finding the expression for these ideas that enables us to communicate to others, as accompanying a concept, the mental attunement that those ideas produce. (bold italics mine; 360)
J. H. Bernard’s intervention changes the referent of the happy relation altogether:

The mental powers, therefore, whose union (in a certain relation) constitutes genius are imagination and understanding. . . . Thus genius properly consists in the happy relation [between these faculties], which no science can teach and no industry can learn, by which ideas are found for a given concept. (Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, trans. J. H. Bernard [New York: Hafner, 1951] 160)

Pluhar’s translation, much like the German, preserves the ambiguity of the passage, where, literally, the “happy relation” exists only in the certainty of itself, and not its referent:

So the mental powers whose combination (in a certain relation) constitutes genius are imagination and understanding. . . . Genius actually consists in the happy relation—one that no science can teach and that cannot be learned by any diligence—allowing us, first, to discover ideas for a given concept, and, second, to hit upon a way of *expressing* these ideas that enables us to communicate to others, as accompanying a concept, the mental attunement that those ideas produce. (sec. 49, 185–86)

30. A reading that insists on the integrity of Kant’s aesthetic attributes as first and foremost *images* does not necessarily oppose my more linguistic analysis, however. In the terminology of W. J. T. Mitchell, Kant’s reliance on a vocabulary of images in describing the workings of an aesthetic idea points to the “totemic” nature of the philosopher’s project, his desire to animate (give Spirit to) the lifeless world, something very much like how the catachresis of genius and figure operates in my argument, as that which makes sense, or meaning, from nonsense. See his “Romanticism and the Life of Things,” *What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2005) 169–87. The other term in Mitchell’s historicist binary, the fossil, provocatively parallels Paul de Man’s counter-term to rhetoric, grammar, insofar as both demonstrate in their own way how the animism, or animation, of both totem and figure is the dynamism of a non-human thing. For a reading of catachresis as mechanically subtending Marx’s notion of abstract labor, and of de Manian grammar as an inhuman machine, see the next chapter.


32. Klein suggestively opposes the gift of Kant’s generous sun to light as theft in a poem by Baudelaire, pitting Hermes against Apollo, as it were. In distinguishing between *gift* and *theft* as two different systems of “pure giving” (39), Klein proleptically engages with Derrida’s later work on gift and ethics, whose own interrogation of the (non-)exchange of the gift retroactively comments on the categories underwriting “Economimesis” and Klein’s reading of it. See Derrida’s *Given Time: I, Counterfeit Money*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1992); and *The Gift of Death*,
trans. David Wills (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1995). Consider also how the predicament of Kantian genius, stretched between conceptual identity and imaginative infinity, also resonates with the challenge of justice that marks the aporia between the precept of law and the particular integrity of each specific demand for justice in Derrida’s “Force of Law: The ‘Mystical Foundation of Authority,’” Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice, ed. D. Connell, M. Rosenfield, and D. Carlson (New York: Routledge, 1992) 3–29. It could be said that my description of Kantian genius as the catachresis of figure worries from yet another angle the same impossibility that Derrida does, which he has troped as both a vertiginous generosity and unavoidable demand of justice; see also my discussion of Derrida’s take on Hamlet’s ghost in chap. 6.

33. Certainly, the question of what flows from what is repeated in its own peculiar way through the issue of translation, of, for example, what flows between and among the Critique and its English translators. Bernard translates Wilfhof’s lines (“Die Sonne quoll hervor, wie Ruh aus Tugend quillt”) as “The sun arose / as calm from virtue springs” (159). “Flow” has been replaced by “springs,” both of which conceivably flow, or spring, from the German quellen. But in either case questions of continuity, contingency, and self-integrity remain. Indeed, the structural flaw in Bernard’s parallelism—if calm springs from virtue, what does the sun arise from?—more explicitly restates the question implicit in the sun flowing as light and origin in Pluhar. For a pertinent discussion of another especially violent sun springing into action, see de Man, “Shelley,” 117–18.

34. For two different attempts to understand Kant’s relation to the social realm, see Bill Readings’s consideration of The Conflict of the Faculties in The University in Ruins (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1996) 54–61; and Hasana Sharp’s treatment of the Critique of Pure Reason in “‘We Are All Kantian,’” Crossings 3 (1999): 147–57.

35. Within the context of a conventional history of ideas one might point out that the content of Kant’s Romanticism—his thoughts on genius—is in fact part of the English eighteenth century, insofar as his ideas were very much influenced by the discussion of the term in eighteenth-century Great Britain. But, of course, this discussion was mediated for Kant by his own dispute with Johann Herder and the Sturm und Drang movement. In Kant the Romantic genius exists before British Romanticism and opposes what some have seen as a source of Continental Romanticism. This close reading has attempted to explore how Kant’s specific words speak to this predicament about the inherent contradictions in historical and national periodicity, a condition that at the level of figure we specify as Romanticism. For scholarship on the English genealogy of Kant’s thoughts on genius, see Otto Schlapp, Kants Lehre vom Genie (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Rupprecht, 1898); James Meredith, Kant’s Critique of Aesthetic Judgement: Translated with Seven Introductory Essays, Notes, and Analytical Index (Oxford: Clarendon, 1911); Walter Jackson Bate, From Classic to Romantic: Premises of Taste in Eighteenth-Century England (New York: Harper and Row, 1946); Engell; and Zammito.


2. In a word, Jameson’s quote about an eighteenth-century noumenon which “language cannot assimilate, absorb, or process” implies a scission between the nou-menal on the one side and language and the phenomenal on the other, whereas de Man will get from Kant (among others) a way to place language on the other side of the phenomenal, so that, arguably, Kantian materiality refers to how language cannot assimilate itself. In describing Kant’s noumenon as the “inward experience of con-sciousness,” de Man’s immediate point refers to how the Kantian sublime is, paradoxically, “a noumenal entity [that] has to be phenomenally represented (*dargestellt*)” (74).

3. There are, of course, a number of thinkers, such as Heidegger, Adorno, and Derrida, whose writings explore these issues, and who could just as well have provided access to the topos considered here. The goal of this chapter, then, is as much to clarify the specific rhetorical and conceptual operations of the specific writings examined as to suggest a more general overlapping of deconstructive and Marxist discourse. A possible comparison with particularly timely suggestiveness might contrast the role of the machine in this piece with the references to “the external, nonsensical, ‘machine’—automaticism of the signifier” of Pascal and the concept of “ideolog-ical fantasy” in Slavoj Žižek’s *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London and New York: Verso, 1989) 30–33, 36–37. Along those lines, see also Jacques Derrida’s remark on possible resonances among de Man, Lacan, and the Deleuzian “desiring machine” of the Anti-Oedipus (“‘Typewriter Ribbon: Limited Ink (2) (‘within such limits’),” in *Material Events: Paul de Man and the Afterlife of Theory*, ed. Tom Cohen, Barbara Cohen, J. Hillis Miller, and Andrzej Warminski [Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2001] 308–9). See also nn. 5 and 22. I am indebted to Tilottama Rajan for the phrase “technological unconscious.”


5. Perhaps unavoidably, this passage seems today pretty much joined to the historico-biographical coordinates of the young Paul de Man’s writings for the collabora-tionist paper *Le Soir* during World War II. For two helpful—that is, complicated—leftist responses to this situation, see *Postmodernism*, 256–58; and Ernesto Laclau, “Totalitarianism and Moral Indignation,” *Diacritics* 20 (1990): 88–95. See also Wang, 35–68. Moving in another direction, we might also consider the American translation of Jacques Lacan’s use of the Freudian *Wiederholungzwang* as “repetition automatism” in his famous “Seminar on ‘The Purloined Letter,’” *Yale French Studies* 48 (1973): 39, as well as that concept’s relationship to Lacanian intersubjectivity and his assertion that the “displacement of the signifier determines the subjects in their acts, in their destiny, in their refusals, in their blindnesses, in their end and in their fate, their in-nate gifts and social acquisitions notwithstanding, without regard for character or sex, and that, willingly or not, everything that might be considered the stuff of psych-ology, kit and caboodle, will follow the path of the signifier” (60). But see also Žižek’s
comment about how Lacan moves beyond the mechanical repetition of the “Semin-


tions of Theory (Minneapolis: U of Press, 1988) 121.


9. Karl Marx, Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, trans. Martin Mil-

10. Indeed, for Geoffrey Bennington, the machine in de Man necessarily means confronting the “nature of the ethical and the political,” which requires more than simply conceiving a “‘position’ on ethical and political issues” (Legislations: The Poli-
tics of Deconstruction [London: Verso, 1994] 149). For Bennington, de Man’s “appar-
tent ‘neutrality’ on such matters is no more and no less neutral than, for example, the question concerning technology” (149). The last section of this chapter could thus be seen as considering how Marx does not simply calculate an immediately intelli-
gible political position for his readers but also attempts this other form of engagement as well. See chap. 6 for a consideration of how Derrida’s own reading of Marx might be seen as thinking through the continuity and disparity between these very two movements.


13. The use of such terms does not necessarily imply a fundamental belief in the organic essentialness of preindustrial, capitalist society. Rather, they allude to the new questions of value, destiny, and worth associated with the vocational choices of a capitalist subject increasingly unmoored from the traditional roles and strictures of that earlier society. For an application of these issues to a twentieth-century moment of modernity, one still generated by the European history of Rousseau’s eighteenth century, see Jameson, Political, 249–50. But see also this chapter’s discussion of the interpretation of Marx’s exchange value as a corrosion of traditional, organic society.

14. Jean Jacques Rousseau, Oeuvres complètes, Les confessions, autres textes auto-
biographiques, ed. Bernard Gagnebin and Marcel Raymond (Paris: Gallimard [Bib-
liothèque de la Pléiade], 1959) 1:1036; cited in Allegories, 298.

15. But see also Derrida’s own reading of the machine in Allegories, where he actually points out how de Man says grammar and the machine are only “like” one another, a resemblance that exists in tension with other quotations by de Man that Derrida cites, which emphatically insist on the mechanical character of language’s
performative nature (“Typewriter,” 353–54). Derrida’s insistence on resemblance instead of identity is motivated by the desire to assert in *Allegories* the radical formality that de Man examines in his later writings, which in this case resists transforming the mechanical condition of language into any form of positive knowledge, or insight. One might argue, however, that a literal understanding of language as a machine duplicates, rather than overcomes, the problem of a radical instrumentality that *Allegories* dramatizes. The same might be said for how this singular literalization actually opens deconstruction to history, insofar as the status of this history as a serviceable, positive form of *technē* is far from clear, a predicament that, along with the question of resemblance, we will take up in the following chapters.

16. That both these options come from Kant, and that both differ in crucial, perhaps radical ways, simply speaks to the centrality of Kant to our own inescapably theoretical moment; see also the editors’ introduction in Cohen, Cohen, Miller, and Warminski (“A Materiality without Matter?” vii–xxv) and n. 16 of chap. 4. For one attempt to parse the different phases of Lacan’s thoughts on the real, and which also resorts to Kant in doing so, see Tom Dalzell, “Kant’s Nothings and Lacan’s Empty Objects,” *The Letter: Irish Journal for Lacanian Psychoanalysis* 39 (2008): 97–102.


18. This is not to say, of course, that Horkheimer and Adorno are nostalgic for use value in any simple fashion. See also chap. 8’s discussion of the relation of the commodity form’s purposeless instrumentality to other forms of non-purpose in Byron’s *Don Juan*.


21. For a discussion of this passage as a proleptic allegory of the commodification of social and economic theory after 1848, see Friedman, 169–70.

22. Another, more radically Hegelian reading of this passage would consider the objective knowledge of commodities and abstract labor a retroactive effect of the reconstructed historical memory of the subject under capital. In that sense Aristotle could not have had access to this knowledge, insofar as it is the outcome of an analysis that can only come from the position of a subject secured within the historical nexus of capital and commodity exchange. Within this scenario “popular opinion” is not a second-order effect, but the index of this nexus. As such, “popular opinion” has as much ontological weight as the slavery of Aristotle’s Greek society. Indeed, the relations of domination and servitude that inhere in Greek slavery, unequal labor, become under capitalism the fetishized relations among commodities and, conse-
quently, their owners. The fetishized social relations of commodities can only be
calculated, however, if their “common substance” exists, that is, the “popular opinion”
of equal labor—what “in reality” human equality actually is.

While securely imbedding abstract labor within the historical epistēmē of capital-
ism’s subject, this retroactive construction of the difference between that subject and
Aristotle is structured by the impossibility of answering when that difference—when
capitalism, in effect—occurs. (Similarly, Žižek asserts the impossibility of asking
when capitalism attains the self-realization that would dialectically lead to its end:
“When can we speak of an accordance between productive forces and relations of
production in the capitalist mode of production? Strict analysis leads to only one
possible answer: never” [Sublime, 52].) Abstract labor is the index of a historical dif-
ference that history cannot account for; insofar as capitalism’s retroactive memory
structures the very parameters of that memory, the moment before that memory
objectively begins becomes an impossible point in time. Abstract labor signifies capi-
talist (and Marxist) history as a simulation that needs no other prior history for either
its existence or its historicizing force. Abstract labor is the historical insight into capi-
tal’s procedures that is no less real than the waking origins of precapitalist history and
heterogeneous social labor. Rather than dialectically solving the rhetorical tensions
in Marx’s passage on Aristotle, an interpretation based on the retroactive remember-
ing of unequal labor, or slavery, ends up reemphasizing the robotic, catachrestic na-
ture of the remembering subject of capitalism in relation to its own history. See also
n. 3.

23. Louis Althusser, Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays (New York: Monthly

Chapter 4  •  Against Theory beside Romanticism

1. Such a “turn” has to be complicated, of course, by how much that very event was
theorized by New Historicism, Jamesonian Marxism, and other historicist arguments
of the 1980s. The underlying thesis of this chapter, however, is that one contemporary
outcome of such theorization has been the validation of the récit that remembers this
movement as simply a change from theory to history. In Romantic studies the theo-
rization of history in the 1980s is synonymous with McGann’s ideological critique;
for an account of that critique, see Wang, 70–106, as well as chaps. 2 and 6. See E. D.
Hirsch, “Against Theory?” in Steven Knapp and Walter Benn Michaels, Against Theory:


3. In a footnote Knapp and Michaels state that the “device of contrasting inten-
tional speech acts with marks produced by chance is a familiar one in speech-act
theory.” The question is whether this fact sufficiently resolves the question of meaning
raised by their example—the number of chance meanings (a concept that Knapp and
Michaels would dispute) that the wave poem generates, iterations all the more fore-
grounded by the explicit theme of contingency formulated in their note.


7. I’m grateful to Ian Balfour for this observation. The title essay of de Man’s book is also pertinent, of course, since one could also very productively interrogate the semantic relation between *resistance* and *against*; see Wlad Godzich’s thoughts on the former in his forward to *Resistance* (xii–xiii).

8. See also, however, de Man’s problematization of the literality of denomination in *Allegories*, 135–59; and Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe’s deconstruction of particular elements in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 1985), 103–4.

9. E. D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1967) 227–30, 238–40; Cleanth Brooks, “Irony as a Principle of Structure,” in *Literary Opinion in America*, 2nd ed., ed. M. D. Zabel (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951) 736; and F. W. Bateson, *English Poetry: A Critical Introduction* (London: Longmans Green & Co., 1950) 33, 80–81. As Deborah Elise White has pointed out to me, Knapp and Michaels’s argument really does not require the wave’s serialization of two separate stanzas, as one set of squiggles should be enough to make the argument about intention—a fact that confirms the overdetermined nature of “A Slumber” in the essay, as the poem’s iconicity rests in part on how different readings have all traditionally stressed the divide between the poem’s two stanzas. One might argue that the poem is an icon of interpretation precisely because of the divide.

10. As Alan Bewell notes, there is, for example, a long-standing recognition of the centrality of death in “A Slumber” and a number of other Wordsworth poems (*Wordsworth and the Enlightenment: Nature, Man, and Society in the Experimental Poetry* [New Haven: Yale UP, 1989] 188). See Bewell, 187–234, for a suggestive account of the anthropological “history of death” in Wordsworth’s writings, including “A Slumber” and “There Was a Boy.”

11. To talk also of some *thing*, of course, is to invoke another genealogy beside that of Knapp and Michaels’s, one that involves Heidegger more than Austin. Our most immediate point of departure, in terms of its simultaneous complication of both the linguistic and ontological, would be Paul de Man’s famous comparison of Lucy’s becoming a “thing” to Baudelaire’s falling man in “The Rhetoric of Temporality,” in *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1983) 213–14, 224; see also J. Hillis Miller’s reading of

12. For two treatments of this trope in de Man, see Chase, 82–112; and Wang, 49–68.

13. For one discussion of the essay’s place in the dialectical reading of Romanticism, see Wang, 40–46.


15. For a more precise formulation of the meaninglessness of “Marion” in de Man as the catastrophic discontinuity between the performative and cognitive aspects of language, rather than as simply the performance of meaninglessness, see Andrzej Warminski, “‘As the Poets Do It’: On the Material Sublime,” in Cohen, Cohen, Miller, and Warminski, 25–27.

16. See Derrida, “Typewriter,” 281. See also especially in Material Events the editors’ introduction (“A Materiality without Matter?” vii–xxv) and also Warminski, 8. Materiality is, of course, a difficult term in de Man’s later writing, most significantly in his posthumous Aesthetic Ideology; readers will see how this and the following chapters try to contribute to an understanding of the term and how that overlaps and diverges from other approaches, such as those presented in Material Events. For a complimentary discussion of non-material materiality in German idealism, see Rajan’s introduction to Idealism without Absolutes: Philosophy and Romantic Culture, ed. Tilottama Rajan and Arkady Plotnitsky (Albany: SUNY P, 2004) 1–3.

Finally, see “Shelley Disfigured,” for a moment (or, arguably, an event, in the way that Warminski has posited) that marks a change in de Man’s own use of the term, when he contrasts the “non-signifying, material properties of language” with a deeper understanding of figure as not being constituted by the “iconic, sensory, or if one wishes, the aesthetic moment” (114). What becomes clear is that the latter, radically disturbing sense of figure in the essay, the “madness of words” (122), rather than the sensory form of the signifier, is what materiality seems to expand upon in Aesthetic Ideology. The difference between phenomenal sensation and figuration is elaborated in a further passage relevant to our present discussion of the sensation of meaning as the resemblance of non-meaning to meaning: “The particular seduction of the figure is not necessarily that it creates the illusion of sensory pleasure, but it creates an illusion of meaning” (115). The present analysis puts force on the term “seduction” as a compulsion—but like seduction, without the originating presence of a human agency.

17. For a possible comparison of this notion of resemblance to the concept of semblance, the problematic condition of likeness, unlikeness, and deception used by Theodor Adorno, see his Aesthetic Theory, 100–107.


20. For the seminal Yale School (or pre–Yale School) engagements with the strangeness of the poem, see Hartman, 19–22; “Wordsworth and Hölderlin,” in *Rhetoric*, 51–54; and Paul de Man, *Romanticism and Contemporary Criticism: The Gauss Seminar and Other Papers* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1993) 74–95, 137–46. For perhaps the most theoretically literate recent reading of both “There Was a Boy” and “A Slumber” together, see Anne-Lise François, *Open Secrets: The Literature of Uncounted Experience* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2008) 158–70. As the title of her work implies, François's attempt to identify the “recessive action” of these and other literary works engages with a semantic strangeness similar to what our analysis confronts, although, arguably, the destination of her remarkable readings differs from ours, as they move to a hushed denuding of consequence released from sensation, as well as compulsion and trauma (1). In that sense, François's lyrical Wordsworth might be the most quietly sober version of the poet yet.


22. For a historicist reading that understands the mimic hootings through “the historical perspective of eighteenth-century language theory,” see Bewell, 209.


24. Compare this unmooring to how de Man claims that the poem’s double use of “hanging” tropes the spatial indeterminacy of correspondence itself, a situation that poetry can only hope to ameliorate through the gentle cushioning of sky by lake (*Rhetoric*, 52–54). Consider also Simpson’s suggestion of how this imagery connects the “loneliness of the living” to a “community of the lifeless” (*Wordsworth*, 166).

25. J. Mark Smith, “‘Unrememberable’ Sound in Wordsworth’s 1799 Prelude,” *Studies in Romanticism* 42 (2003): 502, 504. Compare to Hartman’s claim that the success of nature’s development of the boy’s mind rests upon how unaware he is of the process, where the unintentional consequences of the boy’s hooting are subsumed under the intention of a personified nature (19). To what degree, then, can Hartman's nature be retrospectively read as the figure of a figure, the personification of the placeholder for precisely the aporia this chapter discusses?

26. Readers usually see the poem, of course, in two parts, one about the lake and one about the town. See Bewell, 211.

27. At this point one could conceivably pass further into psychoanalytic discourse,
associating the sensation of meaning not only with the uncanny but also with one understanding of Lacanian *jouissance*, as, literally, “enjoyment-in-sense” (*jouï-sense*), especially insofar as one reads the poet’s compulsion as a way to organize his desire. See Žižek, *Sublime*, 43–44. The point of divergence might very well be one of emphasis and detail rather than of any complete break, insofar as the psychoanalytic especially focuses on how, in a way that resonates with the resistance of de Manian materiality to figuration, *jouissance* marks what the symbolic can’t assimilate, while the sensation of meaning stresses through the event of resemblance how figure is still generated by that non-assimilation, or resistance. See, however, François’s argument against the implications of reading “There Was a Boy” in terms of trauma, especially as first formulated in Hartman’s encounter with the work (162–68).

28. Aptly enough, the speaker might not have been able to face the tombstone because, during Wordsworth’s time, a grave might only have been a mound, since stone markers would only get in the way of sheep herds crossing the lands. The poet might have literally faced the earth as the grave of the boy. I am grateful to Paul Betz for this observation. For an explicit connection between the “death-in-life imagery” of Wordsworth’s poem and alienated market life, see Simpson, 222–23.

29. For a suggestive reading of some of these same issues through a Gadamer-inspired assertion of phenomenal, “lived experience,” see Smith, 506. But Smith also makes a distinction between physical sensation and what he calls the “mood” of the “intervenient” established aurally in Wordsworth’s poems (508). One might also see the sensation of meaning as a radically unstable, linguistic version of the problem that William Empson identifies in *The Prelude*, where Wordsworth’s use of “sense” ambiguously refers to either sensory or imaginative experience (*The Structure of Complex Words* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1989] 289–305). See also Jackson, 10, 82–83.

30. Such a document would be for Hirsch Wordsworth’s explanation in the preface to *Poems in Two Volumes* (1815) of how the poem describes the boy’s psychological state (see Brett and Jones, 299). The same could be said for those chapters in the *Biographia Literaria* that argue for the unmistakable style of Wordsworth, in terms of their applicability to Coleridge’s 1798 letter. My point would be that such recordings are unable to cordon off or limit the more uncanny resemblances generated between various writings and the semantic effects that follow; in that sense the difference between the 1815 preface and Coleridge’s letter as proof for the meaning of “There Was a Boy” (or between the *Biographia* and “Against Theory” as evidence for the meaning of Coleridge’s letter) is, ultimately, not so much about kind as about degree.


32. The ongoing vitality of this view can be seen in Colin Jager’s own recent engagement with “Against Theory,” in his elegant Kantian phrasing of Wordsworth’s power: “At the center of Wordsworth’s literary effect, then, is his extraordinary ability to place his readers in a world brimful of a purpose that can be felt but not pinned to a particular purposive agent” (*The Book of God: Secularization and Design in the Romantic Era* [Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania, 2007] 221). See also François’s description
of key Wordsworth works as “lyrics of inconsequence” (154), as well as Brian McGrath’s intriguing claim about the Wordsworthian vacillation between the extraordinary and the inconsequential in his “Wordsworth, ‘Simon Lee,’ and the Craving for Incidents,” *Studies in Romanticism* 48 (2009): 565–82.

33. This does not mean, of course, that pragmatism is not part of a transatlantic Romantic genealogy. For a treatment of the most vivid argument for this narrative—in the writings of Harold Bloom—see Wang, 147–48. Furthermore, the very fact of the long-held association of Romanticism with intentionality (or, more exactly, its aporia) speaks to why “Against Theory” has to be against Romanticism. See W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley, “The Intentional Fallacy,” in W. K. Wimsatt, Jr., *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* (Lexington: U of Kentucky P, 1954, 1967) 6.

34. For de Man’s own blunt consideration of intention without a subject, see *Resistance*, 94.


36. Arguably, one’s reading of Kant’s third *Critique* (see chap. 2) depends on one’s estimation of the distance between moral analogy and sensation of meaning.

37. Or, “going mad with reason” as translated in Bernard, 116.

38. See Terada for the incisive point that seeing is always a figure, a placeholder for precisely our non-knowledge of what happens, semantically, cognitively, and phenomenally, when we see. See also Timothy Bahti’s formulation of how reading also appears beyond the far side of seeing, although ultimately in the mode of a sublime impossibility, in *Ends of the Lyric: Direction and Consequence in Western Poetry* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1997) 33–39.


40. This would also be the most productive way to recall Wimsatt and Beardsley’s famous dictum, “It is not so much a historical statement as a definition to say that the intentional fallacy is a Romantic one” (6).

Chapter 5 · The Sensation of the Signifier

I am grateful to Jerome Christensen for bringing Ferry’s poem to my attention.

1. “This movement from questions about the ontology of the text to an insistence on the primacy of the subject makes a single argument out of what I have in my own writing treated as two separate arguments and two separate projects. . . . So, although I did not in writing it understand *Our America’s* critique of identity to be in any significant way connected to the defense of intention in ‘Against Theory,’ the argument of the current book is not only that they are connected but that each claim entails the other” (Walter Benn Michaels, *The Shape of the Signifier: 1967 to the End of History* [Princeton: Princeton UP, 2004] 10). Unlike “Against Theory,” *Our America* plays no real role in *The Shape*; Michaels thus does not address a dissonance between both books’ historical arguments, insofar as *Our America* finds in American literature dur-
ing the interwar period a “nativist modernism” whose combination of culture and race provides the model for the postmodern, post-historicist identitarian politics that *The Shape* critiques. Thus, in *The Shape* Modernism is opposed to such politics, whereas in *Our America* Modernism is the historical expression of that very problem. For one suggestion of a historical arc that would consist of both a Modern (1920s) and postmodern (1960s) chapter to this dynamic, see Werner Sollers, “*Our America: Nativism, Modernism, and Pluralism: Review,*” *Modern Philology* 96 (1999): 552.

2. Kamuf speaks to this issue with her witty dubbing of the authorial agency behind “Against Theory” as “KaM” (4).

3. Still, see n. 1.


5. One could also certainly argue with Michaels’s view of the basically post-ideological nature of today’s global conflicts. Indeed, it’s difficult not to see the most recent Iraqi war as the occasion for ideology, vulgar or not, returning with a vengeance. When Michaels thus equates the War on Terror with the post-ideological, one wonders what exactly the term *War on Terror* is, or was. Or when media commentators spoke of this latest conflict in terms of civilization versus barbarism, it’s hard not to see the ideological nature of such statements, either using or eschewing Michaels’s definition of the term.

6. Indeed, the era before the post-historical fall of the Soviet Union would be the 1970s and early 1980s, when the time of *high theory* was precisely characterized by intense disciplinary argument within the academy. If academic study has since become balkanized, high theory actually denotes a time of universal disagreement in the humanities, including the one generated by “Against Theory,” that Michaels wants once again to establish.

7. Thus, while Michaels cites Judith Butler’s essay in her, Ernesto Laclau’s, and Slavoj Žižek’s *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left* (London: Verso, 2000), in order both to acknowledge and to dispute her own postmodern grappling with the universal, he does not consider what she and the other authors of that collection are formally doing, which is actively differing from and disagreeing with one another. In narrativizing such a stringent separation between difference and disagreement, Michaels must confer onto “Against Theory” the characteristics of an institutional origin myth, bringing argument back to literary studies: “The point of ‘Against Theory’s’ call for the end of theory . . . was to give [readers at the end of history] something to disagree about” (80).


10. Compare Michaels’s critique of Hardt and Negri’s “poor” with Ernesto Laclau’s


12. Conceivably, this would be a more difficult observation to make about the historical argument in *Our America*; it is precisely the theoretical argument in *The Shape* that opens Michaels’s present book to this charge.

13. This is not to say that sensation and feminism are essentially connected—just that sensation, as well as the body, are made intelligible by various narratives of gender, historical and otherwise. See Redfield, *Politics*, 34–40.

14. For an extended discussion about how the aesthetic is thus not simply ideology but the site of its own self-referential impasse, see Redfield, *Phantom*, 1–37. For a vigorous argument that de Man’s thought is precisely not about the instantiation of the subject, see Rei Terada, *Feeling in Theory: Emotion after the “Death of the Subject”* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2001), 48–89.


16. In a Marxist materialism, of course, materiality is not about matter but the signification of social relations. For an incisive critique of the implicit idealism in such materialism, see Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, “Post-Marxism without Apologies,” in Ernesto Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time* (London: Verso, 1985) 97–137. See also chap. 4, n. 16, and chap. 6.

17. A similar difference occurs in Michaels’s summary of Derrida’s language of the “mark” as yet another example of a physical materiality that can only be experienced, not understood, insofar as Michaels ignores how Derrida’s argument about the mark with John Searle and his earlier engagement with J. L. Austin are fundamentally connected to his overlapping critique of the phenomenal character of language in Edmund Husserl. See *Margins*, 155–73, 307–30.

18. I am grateful to Jonathan Culler for this observation.

19. Michaels also looks at the essay “Form and Intent in the American New Criticism,” focusing on how de Man sees the text in New Criticism as a sensory natural object (a stone) as opposed to an intentional object (a chair) (106). There does seem to be continuity between the non-teleological status of the stone and that of Kant’s ocean. But, in using this as proof of de Man’s early investment in a physical materiality, Michaels ignores both de Man’s critique of this sensory object in New Criticism and the essay’s reworking of the notion of intention in Heideggerian terms.

20. One might wonder if it is that easy, or whether the wave’s action highlights what is equally unintelligible on Mars, the discovery of what looks like the *entire first stanza* of “A Slumber” on the planet’s sand or rock face. See also chap. 4, n. 9.
21. “This is the difference in Smithson’s terms, between the view of a quarry and the (‘great artist’s’) ‘glance’ that turns the quarry into a map. Where the view is entirely dependent on where the viewer is—the view is a relation between the viewer and what he or she sees; the view is how things look to a certain person from a certain position—the text or map is its opposite. Two people in two different positions will see two different views; two readers in two different positions will read the same text” (104). Jameson’s own postmodern use of “cognitive mapping” could also make us ask what the non-status of perspective is when we are viewing a map of our own subject position (Postmodernism, 51–54). The meaning of a map does change according to our location, if it is a map of that location.

22. One might observe the same about the very relation between maps and non-maps, or texts and objects: that discerning something as a map and not something that simply looks like a map depends on your particular perspective, on getting close or far away enough to see which it is. Conversely, to discern the resemblance between a noise and the name “Marion,” we orient ourselves around the very meaning of that name. In one instance, meaning depends on perspective, while, in the other, resemblance depends on the very perspective of meaning. Michaels might counter that once you’ve decided that a map is a map it stays a map, no matter where you position yourself. But if you leave and return, deciding whether what you see is that map or something that resembles it again depends on your perspective.

23. This correlation would be more apt than the one that Michaels employs that conflates de Man’s materiality with the physical world presented in David Abram’s deep ecology argument, The Spell of the Sensuous (New York: Vintage, 1996). When Michaels thus claims that the argument for no meaning is the same as one for many meanings, he is correct, although not because of the joining of idealist skepticism and relativism. The evacuation of human meaning, what anchors calculation, is simultaneously a generation of resemblances that is incalculable.

24. The effects of such materiality are also associated with the performative nature of Derrida’s mark, another extension of the argument about de Manian materiality made by The Shape. But see then Warminski’s description of the materiality of Rousseau’s mouthing of “Marion” as more exactly the catachrestic discontinuity between the performative and cognitive aspects of language, rather than as simply the performance of meaninglessness (Cohen, Cohen, Miller, and Warminski, 25–27).


26. Framing is specifically opposed to the non-framing implication of the Derridean mark as formulated in Limited Inc (112). Michaels thus does not engage with Derrida’s own discussion of artistic framing in The Truth of Painting, especially Derrida’s
association of the frame with the logic of the supplement (193–200). Indeed, the question of the supplement does not inform any of Michaels’s critique—including his association of “Il n’y a pas de hors texte” with deep ecology’s claim that the world speaks. The absence is notable, given how Michaels’s own desire to separate meaning from sensation depends on an intelligible distinction between inside and outside, as well as not seeing separation for what it is: a figure. In associating Derrida with the end of frames, Michaels also conflates deconstruction with the pragmatic relativist argument that contexts determine meaning. See however, Jan Mieszkowski’s argument with Stanley Fish over this very point (Labors of Imagination: Aesthetics and Political Economy from Kant to Althusser [New York: Fordham UP, 2006] 2–4). Finally, there is the question of what is occurring when Michaels makes Fried’s essay about art and framing the intention of the iconic “1967,” a term that, by generating a host of historical semantic effects, enacts the very dynamic that Michaels’s frames are supposed to resist. If this is Michaels’s intention, it is also the intention of the supplement.

27. This moment exemplifies a tension in the book between the instrumental and the constative, where arguing whether something is true or false seems to be the same as arguing whether something is good or bad. In contrast, see Laclau and Mouffe’s assertion that the fact of subordination by itself is not the same as social antagonism (Hegemony, 154).

28. “Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past” (Tucker, 595). See also n. 33. One might also consider how this problem of facing either nature or history might also be the dilemma of reading science—about how the argument in “Against Theory” against “intentionless meaning” reproduces the debate between the theory of evolution and the practice of creationist design (Jager, 220–27).

29. Indeed, the aphasic scientist that Michaels cites in Robinson’s trilogy, who sees “shapes without the names” (Green, 349), is also the character most associated with the study of history (Green Mars [New York: Bantam, 1994] 189–92; Blue Mars [New York: Bantam, 1997] 481–84). He is also not the deep ecologist; that is another character with whom he spends much of the three books intensely debating. The appeal to a nonhuman Mars is thus part of a much larger practice of political argument that characterizes the Martian culture represented in the books. The theme of history in the trilogy, as well as Jameson’s influence on Robinson, has been widely noted; see Carl Abbott, “Falling into History: The Imagined Wests of Kim Stanley Robinson in the ‘Three Californias’ and Mars Trilogies,” Western Historical Quarterly 34 (2003): 27–48; and Robert Markley, “Falling into Theory: Simulation, Transformation, and Eco-Economics in Kim Stanley Robinson’s Martian Trilogy,” Modern Fiction Studies 43 (1997): 773–99.

30. Undergirding Michaels’s claims, especially visible in his argument against slave reparations, is the provocative assertion that politics and historicism should be separated. The question then becomes whether Michaels actually wants to turn all social issues into ones of ethics, and how much the later Derrida’s writings on ethics and justice could have impacted on such a formulation. See, for example, Derrida’s
discussion of the tension between past precedence and present justice in “Force of Law” 3–29.

31. Thus, in his reading of Shoshana Felman’s argument about testimony and de Man’s wartime journalism, Michaels seizes upon the word “like” in her statement that reference as a form of absence returns “like a ghost,” asserting that, as such, the deconstructive object of non-meaning is not, and does not need, the New Historicist ghost, which in the former functions as a supererogatory figure (“like”) (141–46). See Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History (New York: Routledge, 1992) 267. A contrasting reading would focus on “like” as the very operation of figure-as-ghost, the spectral mise en abyme of reference; ghosts are not simply on one side of reference but the act of reference. Also, whether all New Historicists would recognize themselves in the simplified model of experiential memory that Michaels extrapolates from Stephen Greenblatt is, of course, open to debate.

32. Derrida’s Specters of Marx, with its own complex rendering of the performative injunction from Hamlet, immediately comes to mind as one study that would have complicated Michaels’s summary. Redfield’s Phantom Formations would be a further example of a work whose ghostly language does not assume a resolute divide between the figural and the literal. For a discussion of this predicament with regard to Derrida’s own presence in Romantic studies, see chap. 6.

33. Within another context and along another coordinate, Michaels is much more nuanced about this capitulation: “The ascription of interests to a money economy (or, for that matter, to a disciplinary society) is only a figure of speech or a mistake, personification or pathetic fallacy. At the same time, however, as literary critics—and as critics in particular of [American] naturalism—we can hardly dismiss this mistake, this particular figure, as merely one among others. For according to the logic of naturalism it is only because we are fascinated by such mistakes—by natural objects that look as if they were made by humans—that we have any economy at all” (Gold, 178–79). In this account the personification of nature and of the bourgeois economy as well ultimately provides the grounds for distinguishing between what persons are and are not; yet such an end is also entangled with the constant “mistake” of personification, a fascination that appears more pervasive and important for human society than the distinction itself, as it is purified in Michaels’s reading of his Mars example. In this passage Gold outlines a predicament for study, whereas The Shape describes a mistake that must be corrected. Indeed, the Foucaultian-inspired description of the economy in Gold resembles the problem of history that this chapter relates: “the desire to personify the economy is the desire to bridge the gap between our actions and the consequences of our actions by imagining a person who does not do what we do but who does what what we do does. As it happens, there is no such person” (179). The question is whether the “desire to personify” resides in “no such person” as well. That Wimsatt and Beardsley’s complement to the pathetic fallacy is the Romantic mistake of the intentional fallacy also explains why the polemic in “Against Theory” and The Shape is also an argument against Romanticism.

34. See Virginia Jackson, Dickinson’s Misery: A Theory of Lyric Reading (Princeton:
Princeton UP, 2005) 100–117, for her complementary argument about the wave poem as an a priori hypostatization of the lyric poem, as well as for her provocative reading of de Man's own lyricization of theory. If for Jackson the wave poem is about the reading of literature as the lyric, for me the wave poem is about the reading of literature as Romanticism—two formulations that are by no means mutually exclusive. See also Jager's argument about how “Against Theory” also engages with Romanticism, insofar as Knapp and Michaels are “replaying a debate [now conceived between evolutionary theory and creationism] that has its roots in a positing of divine intentionality that goes by the name of the argument from design. Even more particularly, they inherit a version of the design argument inflected through romantic-era literature; not only Wordsworth's ruminations on what it means to be conscious of intention but Barbauld's meditations on design as a distinctive set of practices” (224).

35. Such a dynamic is, of course, not simply the same as Wordsworth's own politics, both pro- and post-Girondin.

Chapter 6 · Ghost Theory


3. It should be clear that, even without adding the concept of compulsion to this list of terms, the spectral legacy of Freud entangles itself within any such discussion. I approach this predicament more explicitly in the final section of the chapter.


7. With regard to Marxism, consider Fredric Jameson's startling admission about
use and exchange value in “Marx’s Purloined Letter,” in Sprinker, 46. With regard to Romanticism, consider Marc Redfield’s discussion of Romanticism as the quintessential phantom event: “Romanticism occurred—when, exactly, is forever uncertain, because Romanticism altered our understanding of temporality” (Politics, 34).

8. For the key discussion of genre as a mode, see Jameson, Political, 101–10.

9. See Ronald Paulson, Representations of Revolution (1789–1820) (New Haven: Yale UP, 1983) 213–47. The gothic narratives of Romantic revolution and Romantic commodification are, of course, not necessarily separate. See Clery for a consideration of how much eighteenth-century supernatural fiction registers the historical trauma of the change from the imaginary of a feudal landed property to a paper economy.

10. Here is the passage:

And in such way I wrought upon myself,
Until I seemed to hear a voice that cried
To the whole city, “Sleep no more!” To this
Add comments of a calmer mind—from which
I could not gather full security—
But at the best it seemed a place of fear,
Unfit for the repose of night,
Defenseless as a wood where tigers roam.
(The 1805 Prelude, bk. 10, 75–82)


15. See Laclau, New Reflections. Laclau’s post-structuralist and post-Marxist theory
is first most fully adumbrated in his and Chantal Mouffe's *Hegemony*. The spectral character of Burkean second nature could, of course, also be approached through the category of ideology; see Chandler, *Wordsworth’s*, 216–34. See also the last section of this chapter.

16. For Christensen’s own deployment of the gothic and the spectral in Byron, see his *Lord Byron’s Strength*, 300–363.

17. See, for example, Aijaz Ahmad, “Reconciling Derrida: ‘Specters of Marx’ and Deconstructive Politics,” in Sprinker, 88–109. See also Derrida’s response to Ahmad in that same collection, “Marx” (213–69).

18. Stuart Hall, *The Hard Road to Renewal: Thatcherism and the Crisis of the Left* (London: Verso, 1988). This is by no means to conflate Derrida with either Laclau or Hall, or Laclau’s use of hegemony with Hall’s for that matter. It is, however, to note the way Laclau’s and Hall’s senses of hegemonic politics are both inflected with the ghostly premises of deconstruction. For Laclau’s own sense of that connection, see his review of *Specters*, “The Time is Out of Joint,” *Diacritics* 25 (1995): 86–96.

19. For another institutional fable also covering Romantic studies, see Wang, 4–7. For a discussion of the institutional history of deconstruction and ideological demystification in Romantic studies, see chap. 2.

20. I, of course, take this term from the title of Jerome McGann’s field-defining work, *Romantic Ideology*.

21. The *locus classicus* of this engagement is arguably Paul de Man’s “Shelley Disfigured”; in retrospect, the uncomfortable power of de Man’s essay’s interrogation of history lies in his use of a writer associated with revolutionary rather than reactionary history. For two readings of that political difficulty, see Pyle, 94–128; and Wang, 37–68.


23. One notable exception would be Thomas Pfau’s recent *Romantic Moods*, which tracks the social affect of the Romantic era through both its revolutionary and post-revolutionary phases.


26. Somewhat surprisingly, Žižek does not explicitly engage with perhaps the most controversial point of Derrida’s reading of the fetish in Marx, how the religious
does not simply signify the superstitious but also “informs, along with the messi-
anic and the eschatological, be it in the necessarily undetermined, empty, abstract,
and dry form that we are privileging here, that ‘spirit’ of emancipatory Marxism
whose injunction we are affirming here, however secret and contradictory it appears”
(166–67).


28. Evincing his own version of revolutionary and epistemological sobriety, Marx
writes, “The social revolution of the nineteenth century cannot draw its poetry from
the past, but only from the future. It cannot begin with itself, before it has stripped off
all superstition in regard to the past. Early revolutions required world-historical rec-
ollections in order to drug themselves concerning their own content. In order to arrive
at its content, the revolution of the nineteenth century must let the dead bury their
dead” (Tucker, 597; my emphasis). But see in Specters Derrida’s own reading of these
lines, how having “the dead bury their dead” is the most fantastic proposition there
is, and therefore how the Brumaire tries to counterconjure away a logic of historical
simulacra that, regardless, “has never stopped happening to what is called Marxism”
(116). See also Deborah Elise White’s chapter on the Brumaire from her forthcoming
book project, Revolution’s Date: Carlyle, Marx, Hugo (unpublished).

29. Jameson, Political, 23–58. It is an open question, of course, whether Jameson’s
use of the Althusserian concept of the absent cause merely makes explicit a referential
ontology already in Althusser’s theory. See Althusser, Reading Capital, 186–89.

30. To explicate the way that the ideological exposure of class struggle actually
leads to the “inherently incomplete, ‘non-all’ character of historical materialism” (28),
Žižek quotes Étienne Balibar’s observation that the “idea of ideology was only ever a
way ideally to complete historical materialism, to ‘fill a hole’ in its representation of
social totality, and thus a way to constitute historical materialism as a system of ex-
planation complete in its kind, at least ‘in principle.’ ” “Politics and Truth: The Vacil-
Žižek gets the concept of antagonism from Laclau and Mouffe, Hegemony, 122–27.
While Laclau and Mouffe would not dispute Žižek’s explanation of the term, it’s un-
likely that they would contest my characterization of antagonism as a spectral event.
For their use of Derrida, see Laclau and Mouffe, 88, 111–12, 146. See also Laclau, “Time.”

31. “The ‘Marxist theory of ideology’ would then be symptomatic of the perma-
nent discomfort Marxism maintains with its own critical recognition of the class
struggle” (Balibar, 173–74).

32. See, however, the provocative argument for a future Romantic ethics embed-
ded within the contradictions of corporate capital in Christensen’s Romanticism at the
End of History.

33. The question of other points of social antagonism that exceed the Marxist nar-
rative is exactly Spivak’s own issue with Specters; see her “Ghost Writing,” Diacritics

34. “The time is out of joint.” (Hamlet, I. x. 188, in Evans, 1151). Epigraph for
Specters.
Chapter 7 • Lyric Ritalin


6. Chandler’s elegant reading of the “Ode” in his conclusion to *England in 1819* identifies two levels of figuration in the “Ode” distinguished by their contrasting levels of intelligibility (532–41); in that sense, Chandler and I share the same tactic of exploiting the Modernist critique of the figural clarity of the “Ode” for our own aims. The ways in which his argument about the poem’s troping of historical causality both diverges from and converges with my analysis will become clear as the chapter progresses. Looking at a number of British and European writers, although not Shelley, Pfau sees the Romantic lyric recording the social moods of especially two moments in Romanticism’s crisis of modernity: the trauma of the Napoleonic era and the melancholy of stalled, post-Napoleonic history (*Romantic Moods*, 69–70, 227–46, 313–15). Zimmerman’s interest in the historical contours of the Romantic lyric particularly
focuses on historically situating the lyric within a public mode of interaction with large reading audiences; for an erudite survey of the ways the Romantic lyric has been understood and taught, see her first chapter, 1–37.

7. “Shelley’s Speed” is in fact the title of a fascinating chapter in William Keach’s Shelley’s Style (New York and London: Methuen, 1984), which considers how critics have evaluated the presence of this trait in Shelley’s poetry (154–83). After a notably sensitive examination of the formal properties in Shelley’s poetry that convey the notion of speed, Keach identifies the “speed of the mind” as the primary condition that Shelley’s speed tries to elucidate (183). This chapter’s following assertion of a sublime cognitive as well as perceptual failing in the historicity of the “Ode” might be seen as exploring what categories appear next past the outpacing of the “mind” in Shelley’s poem.

8. See chap. 10, n. 3.

9. F. R. Leavis, Reevaluation: Tradition and Development in English Poetry (Westport: Greenwood, 1975) 207. As Leavis earlier writes disparagingly, “Shelley’s genius was ‘essentially lyrical’” (207)—the point for us is to see that as precisely the same scandal of mind that Leavis dismisses, while discovering an entirely new set of implications radiating out of this particular critique.

10. For one recent and comprehensive study of the revolutionary sublime in Shelley, see Cian Duffy, Shelley and the Revolutionary Sublime (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005).

11. Harold Bloom, Shelley’s Mythmaking (New Haven: Yale UP, 1959) 65–90; and Jerrold E. Hogle, Shelley’s Process: Radical Transference and the Development of His Major Works (New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1985) 1–27, 205–7. Interestingly, Bloom actually has no real defense against Leavis’s specific critique of the “blue surface of thine aery surge,” saying simply that Leavis’s “challenge enters the category of the fantastic; and no reply to it is possible, except that I would claim that no poetic figure will stand pressing past a certain point” (80). The question, of course, is whether the “Ode” is actually doing the pressing, in the service of its own fantastic history.


Notes to Pages 169–173

ed. Mark Lussier, *Romantic Circles Praxis Series* (February 2007) www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/buddhism/index.html. The idea of flux in a Shelleyan landscape is, of course, not new; see, for example, Roberts’s Lucretian take on this idea (430).

15. For a recent attempt to theorize what a Deleuzian intervention into Romantic studies might mean, see the collection of essays in *Romanticism and the New Deleuze*, ed. Ron Broglio, *Romantic Circles Praxis Series* (January 2008) www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/deleuze/index.html. As the title of the volume suggests, there is more than one Deleuze that can underwrite such an intervention.

16. For the purposes of this chapter, I would thus distinguish this linguistic sense of figure from the more precise sense of the term “Figure” that Deleuze employs and distinguishes from both “figuration” and “the figurative” in his study of the paintings of Francis Bacon in *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2002) 11–19, 79. This is not to say that a profitable comparison of the de Manian and Deleuzian figure/Figure does not wait to be made.

17. This question of temporality is, of course, best allegorized in de Man’s “Rhetoric”; the question of the non-conceptual dimensions of the lyric underlies Adorno’s “Lyric.” See Kaufman’s “Lyric Commodity” for a further discussion of the lyric and the non-conceptual.

18. I am grateful to Brian McGrath for pointing out the contrasting semantic actions in “cleave” to me, the ambiguity of which Shelley highlights by having the “powers” neither “cleave” onto something, nor “cleave” from something, but “cleave themselves into chasms” (lines 37–38; my emphasis).


20. See Chandler’s assertion of how *England in 1819* extends and complicates Lukács’s paradigm by applying his theory of European military massification to post-Napoleonic Britain (41–42). One might also want to compare the lyric speed of the “Ode” with the more properly “traumatic” lyric writings of 1800–1815 that Pfau identifies, when at “the heart of that disturbance lies the recognition that no one, however peripheral to the economic and geopolitical upheavals of the Napoleonic and early capitalist era, can escape being implicated in this inchoate and threatening welter of modernity” (21).


22. That the liminality of this new historical space is denoted by the term “Europe” demonstrates, of course, how enclosed this space still really is. Indeed, the creation of Lukács’s “Europe” could be seen as helping enable what Saree Makdisi sees as the Romantic imperialist regulation of uneven development that coordinates the temporalities of non-Western peoples with the hegemonic narrative of European history (*Romantic Imperialism: Universal Empire and the Culture of Modernity* [Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998]). But the simultaneity of space in the “Ode” could also be seen as the necessary creation of a synchronic template allowing for the non-hierarchized, decentered ensemble—outside and beyond “Europe”—of a number of different diachronic planes. Regarding the exclusive character of Lukács’s analysis, see also Chan-
dler’s similar point about the implicit gendering of Lukács’s mass agents as men, not women (42).

23. This gesture should not be confused with Rajan’s suggestive formulation of how Lukács “sees in Romanticism the beginning of a lyricization of narrative which culminates in the Modern novel” (“Death,” 202). She is referring to his pre-Marxist The Theory of the Novel (Cambridge, MA: MIT P, 1971), where the diffuse, ephemeral quality of lyricism is primarily associated with the limitations of expressive, subjective interiority, the opposite of what I am arguing is occurring in this passage (112–31).

24. “History is therefore not a temporal notion, it has nothing to do with temporality, but it is the emergence of a language of power out of a language of cognition” (Aesthetic, 320). Might not the sublime voyage of the wind (the materiality of a “language of power”) outpacing a fainting sense (a “language of cognition”) be one allegory for this emergence? For a notably cautious response to de Man’s statement, see Derrida, “Typewriter,” 319–20. Consider also Jacques Rancière’s claim that “there is history because no primeval legislator put words in harmony with things” (The Names of History: On the Poetics of Knowledge, trans. Hassan Melehy [Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1994] 35). One might also compare this chapter’s reading of Shelleyan historical space with Rancière’s meditation on historicizing the Mediterranean (77–89).

25. This unstable reflection of the past ruins would thus be, with all the implications of epistemological volatility, the optical counterpart to Shelley’s description of poets in “A Defense of Poetry” as the “mirrors of the gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present” (Reiman and Fraistat, 535).

26. Alain Badiou, Being and Event (New York: Continuum, 2007) 170–83. See also Peter Hallyward, Badiou: A Subject to Truth (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2003) xxvi–xxvii. To make this connection is neither to ignore Badiou’s problematic relationships to both poetry and Deleuze (Badiou, 123–29; Hallward, 174–180) nor to overlook Badiou’s hostility toward a mystified, auratic Romanticism (Theoretical Writings, trans. Ray Brassier and Alberto Toscano [New York: Continuum, 2004] 22–25). Given Badiou’s own notion of the subject, the problem outlined in this chapter of the subject necessarily (formally) being the genesis of historical (revolutionary) truth might very well be no problem at all. Associated with what I’m arguing the first portion of the “Ode” expresses is Jerome Christensen’s formulation of how the “commis-

sion of anachronism romantically exploits lack of accountability as the emergence of unrecognized possibility” (Romanticism, 11). I’m grateful to David Rettenmaier for bringing this quote to my attention.

27. See also, however, Wasserman’s claim of a difference between the passive elements of the first two stanzas and the more active elements of the third stanza (248).

28. Here is the passage:

If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed
Scarce seemed a vision . . . (lines 47–51)

30. I am contrasting Lacanian desire with Jean Paul Sartre’s thoughts on objective need in The Critique of Dialectical Reason I: Theory of Practical Ensembles, trans. Alan Sheridan-Smith (London: NLB, 1976) 79–83, 217. As David L. Clark has kindly reminded me, one response to this problematic might be a certain Heideggerian impatience with the German idealist tradition of even talking about subjects and objects, insofar as that action necessarily imports “a fundamental anthropology back into philosophy” (Clark, in correspondence). One might in fact see the lyric speed of the “Ode” as being fueled by a similar impatience, which attempts to outwit, or outpace, its own I-Thou rhetoric while ultimately being hemmed in by the formal structuring of such an address. Such a formal impediment might then be as necessary an imposition as the sensation of meaning’s tropological sidestepping of the language of subjects and objects; in that sense, whether any language—Heideggerian, de Manian, or Keatsian—achieves the circumvention that the “Ode” tries to poetize remains, from this poem’s particular perspective, emphatically unresolved.

31. Without ever abolishing the wind as a genuine ontological identity, Wasser- man gestures toward this dilemma in his own language concerning the increased agency, or freedom, of the poet (247–51). The seminal application of Martin Buber’s concept of the I-Thou relationship to the “Ode” remains Bloom’s (73–90).

32. As Wasserman in his own terminology asserts, “In part [the concluding question of the “Ode”] is consistent with the fact that he is petitioning a higher authority than himself; but essentially it reflects the fact that there is no inherent guarantee that man will not continue to deflect the operations of the Power by his will” (251). I am also thinking of Wasserman’s locus classicus on Romantic subjectivity, “The English Romantics: The Grounds of Knowledge,” Studies in Romanticism 4 (1964): 17–34.

33. Along these lines, one can also contrast the way that Helen Vendler sees “To Autumn” orchestrating time and space in a smooth unfolding with how we have argued that the “Ode” creates its sense of global history out of the uneven, volatile evocation of these same phenomenal categories (244–45).

34. James O’Rourke, Keats’s Odes and Contemporary Criticism (Gainesville: UP of Florida, 1998) 177. As O’Rourke observes about “To Autumn,” “There is neither first person pronoun nor Wordsworthian deictic, no ‘here’ that would mark the speaker’s presence” (167). Other readings that observe the non-subjectivity of “To Autumn” include Walter Jackson Bate, John Keats (Cambridge, MA; Harvard UP, 1963) 581; Geoffrey Hartman, The Fate of Reading (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1975) 124–46; and, most recently, Jacques Khalip, Anonymous Life: Romanticism and Dispossession (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2009) 55–56. The poem’s non-subjectivity has thus figured in Bate’s humanist celebration of the piece, to Hartman’s claim that “To Autumn” enacts an English or Hesperian overcoming of the Eastern consciousness associated with the Greek Hebrew traditions of the sublime poem (126), to Khalip’s estimation of Keats


36. O’Rourke refers to the “images of levitation [that] . . . uncover a fundamentally new kind of relationship between nature and consciousness” that de Man formulates in his essay “The Intentional Structure of the Romantic Image” (*Rhetoric*, 14). It should be noted that I am focusing on only one stage of O’Rourke’s argument, which in its entirety is perhaps one of the most complex and subtle readings of “To Autumn” in quite some time, an extended meditation of the poem’s “gift,” its resistance to becoming the instrumental object of both humanist readings and ideological critiques (177).


38. As Allen Tate famously writes, the poem is “a very nearly perfect piece of style but has little to say” (*Essays of Four Decades* [Chicago: Swallow P, 1968] 264). See O’Rourke, 144, for a listing of other mid-twentieth-century observations similar to Tate’s about the poem’s sensory nature.

39. For Vendler, however, the labor of autumn and of humans has to remain distinct (257). Interestingly, Vendler’s claim that the poem poetizes the radical ambiguity between necessity and desire pushes her study nearer to a dialectically materialist analysis than has been previously realized (288). One might also say the same of the relation of the following reading to her argument for the main trope in the poem, that of “plenitude” or “enumeration,” insofar as commodification might be defined as the simulation of plenitude, beyond human intent (266).

40. Bees actually *can* survive winter very well, although when one combines the thanatopic character of Keats’s poem with the traditional literary motif of the bees’ unawareness of their mortality, it’s difficult not to see “To Autumn” associating their death with the impending winter, which would add even more pathos to the single-mindedness of their activity. That bees have also emblematized the storing of scholarly memory would in this reading simply broaden the activity of commodification to the estranged products of intellectual labor, including, obviously, Keats’s own. See Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1982) 38–39. I am grateful to Brian McGrath for this reference. For a survey of the tropes of honey and the viscous in Keats, see Ricks, 133–42. See also Vendler’s clearly more ameliorative sense in “To Autumn” of Keats as the poet of “socially productive labor” (284). Finally, see Marshall Grossman’s discussion of bees and work in both Milton and Marx in “The Fruits of One’s Labor in Miltonic Practice and Marxian Theory,” *ELH* 59 (1992): 77–105.

41. But see also O’Rourke’s own contention that the poem goes beyond the “appropriative economy that imposes second nature everywhere” (170).
42. We might then wonder what the relation is between the poem as the story of commodity production and the poem as, in Hartman’s reading, the nationalist Hesperian transformation of the Eastern ode. Might the English countryside origin of the goods in “To Autumn” be a blind for a more complete representation of British commodity production at this moment, which Hartman’s generic narrative both displaces and more fully enacts? Might such a displacement gesture toward the workings of empire that involve the transmutation of foreign (“Eastern”) material into nativist (“Hesperian”) goods?


44. Levinson’s *Keats’s Life of Allegory* describes the “deadly arrest” in “To Autumn” as analogous to the formal resistance that the odes, unlike the romances, incite against a culturally materialist reading; in my account, however, such “arrest” would actually align with the poem’s depiction of a world of commodities separated from the temporal activities of human use (30). For a sustained engagement with Levinson’s seminal work, see chap. 10.

The more explicit precedent for my reading is Jones’s highly suggestive piece. Like Levinson, Jones also links the troping of the commodity form in Keats to a biographical response to the anxieties and pressures of the literary marketplace. But Jones and I converge in our understanding of the objects in “To Autumn” as exuding a non-human shelf life beyond either production or consumption. See also Pfau’s suggestive description of Keats’s poem, with its “insistent juxtaposition of sensual plentitude and barren emotions, a pungent material world encoding a denatured psyche” (341).


46. I am thinking of, for example, the fascinating account of Hazlitt’s discomfort over becoming involved in the Cockney School struggle to stage Mozart in London in Gillen D’Arcy Wood’s *Romanticism and Music Culture in Britain, 1770–1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010) 118–50. This indeterminate relation to commodification colors not only Cockney aesthetics, I would argue, but also the cultural and political positions of other Romanticists as well as theoretical debates in our own time; see chap. 8. For a skeptical treatment of the Hunt coterie’s association of politics with pleasure, see Gilmartin, *Print Politics*, 195–226; for the claim that Hunt and Keats were involved in a commodified, bourgeois aesthetics of pleasure, see Ayumi Mizukoshi, *Keats, Hunt and the Aesthetics of Pleasure* (New York: Palgrave, 2001) 10–38, 171–83.

47. For a recent, subtle meditation on the vatic character of Blake’s language, see Ian Balfour, *The Rhetoric of Romantic Prophecy* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2002) 127–72. See also Bloom, 65–69, for the classic formulation of Shelley and Blake as poets-as-prophets.
48. This is not to imply, of course, that Lukács did not have his own account of commodity reification; indeed, the idea would be unintelligible without his own analysis of modern life under the commodity form. See his *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, trans. Rodney Livingston (Cambridge, MA: MIT P, 1986) 83–149.


50. See Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (New York: Columbia UP, 1961); for Williams of course, the wager of this revolution is precisely not its entanglement with, and enframing by, commodification.


52. In his Lucretian reading of the spark imagery in both the “Ode” and the “Defense of Poetry,” Roberts sees the former circumscribed by a “purely personal, almost despairing desire for revolutionary capability,” while the latter is characterized by a “calm assurance that ‘all high poetry’ inevitably contains the ‘sparks’ that will unwrite the present and rewrite the future” (323). Roberts’s Lucretian sense of the spark in the “Defense” as some atomistic fragment scattered in the present but proving “central to some future, perhaps radically different understanding of the [Shelleyan] text” (321) would thus converge with Franta’s conception of the futurity of mass reading that Shelley envisions for his writings (*Mass*, 111–36). It could be argued that this chapter attempts to see in the “Ode” the same radical volatility of the future that Roberts finds in the “Defense”—so much so, however, that the lyrical affect of the poem’s prophetic stance is the very opposite of a “calm assurance.” In its vertiginous prophetic stance the “Ode” could also be seen to approximate a hyperkinetic version of what Žižek calls a “parallax view” (*Parallax*, 4–13); see also chap. 9.

53. Of course, in one future of Shelley’s writings, the fate of his “leaves” has been anything but indeterminate. As Neil Fraistat has shown, the viability of Percy’s poetry as a market form markedly shaped Mary Shelley’s editorial conception of his *Posthumous Poems* (“Illegitimate Shelley: Radical Piracy and the Textual Edition as Cultural Performance,” *PMLA* 109 [1994]: 409–23). The strength of the “Ode,” then, lies in its resistance to what already has been determined, to a future reification of the poet’s work that constitutes a distinct part of our own (literary) past. That that past might not be the future of the “Ode,” or, for that matter, ours, is precisely what the dislocations of the poem pry open, and obsessively insist upon.

54. In making this contrast, I have intentionally left open the question of the sublime nature of “To Autumn”; one could very well argue that it is sublime, not by its overcoming of the physical senses, but by the cognitive vertigo it induces precisely through its embrace of a pervasive phenomenal sensation divorced from a locatable subject. My interest, however, has been not so much in the truth of either poem’s sublimity as in the way the dynamics of one notion of the sublime helps clarify the
conflicted way the “Ode” relates to a vatic historicism. For some suggestive comments about the sublimity of “To Autumn,” see Hartman, 127.

Chapter 8 • No Satisfaction


2. Two studies germane to both the high theory / cultural studies question and the field of Romanticism would be Tilottama Rajan’s critique of cultural studies as a mode of knowledge in collusion with the forces of techno-administrative capital (“Wake,” 67–88) and the Romantic Circles Praxis Series volume Philosophy and Culture, ed. Rei Terada (June 2008) www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/philcult/index.html. For one response to an earlier version of Rajan’s essay, see Orrin N. C. Wang, “The Embarrassment of Theory,” Literary Research / Recherche Littéraire 18 (2001): 36–44. As Rajan’s essay indicates, the perceived tension between theory and cultural studies seems most readily acute in the writings of (literary) theorists. See also Michael Riffaterre, “On the Complementarity of Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies,” in Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism, ed. Charles Bernheimer (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1994) 66–75; as well as, both in Bernheimer, Peter Brooks, “Must We Apologize?” 97–106; and Jonathan Culler, “Comparative Literature, At Last!” 117–21. The immediate context for Riffaterre’s, Brooks’s, and Culler’s arguments is the question of the relation between cultural studies and comparative literature, the latter of which obviously has its own multitiered relation with Romantic studies. Culler has since worked out in extended fashion his argument about rearticulating the relationship between theory and literature in The Literary in Theory (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2007).


4. See, for example, Janet Stabler, “Byron’s World of Zest,” in Morton, Cultures, 141–60.

5. For an account of all the immediate historical references to cannibalism available to Byron for canto 2, see Gigante, 118–24. For Gigante, the behavior of Juan’s cannibalizing crewmates is enmeshed in the cultural symbolic of taste, making canto 2 a key example of how “Don Juan is a calculated outrage to taste. [Byron’s] critique is directed not only at the transcendental taste that Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey were trying to create but also at the reigning consumer taste for food, women, and other commodities that characterized a society in which discretionary choice was
enabled by the rejection of taboo desire” (124). While very much involved in the same topos of “consumer taste” as Gigante’s study, this chapter attempts to see Don Juan as unsettling the distance between the commodity form and its critique, a predicament that underwrites the poem’s own interruption of the graphic drive of cultural studies by philosophy as theory in canto 1.


7. Lord Byron, Don Juan, ed. Jerome McGann, vol. 5 of The Complete Poetical Works (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986). The sharks in canto 2 thus resemble Fredric Jameson’s and Slavoj Žižek’s overlapping understanding of the shark in Steven Spielberg’s film Jaws, as the ravaging limit of, or on, any symbolic meaning (Signatures of the Visible [New York: Routledge, 1990] 26–27; Enjoy Your Symptom, 133–34). The connection is not simply playful, insofar as it demonstrates how this section’s use of the real is in continuity with the discussion of the term in chap. 6, as not only the content resistant to symbolization but also the formal destitution of the symbolic’s own network of meaning.


10. Don Juan of course famously refines this formulation in canto 11, by ostensively distinguishing between the need to write (“I wrote because I felt my mind was full / And now because I feel it growing dull” [14.10]) and the desire to publish:

But “why then publish?” There are no rewards
Of fame or profit, when the world grows weary.
I ask in turn—why do you play at cards?
Why drink? Why read?—To make some hour less dreary.
It occupies me to turn back regards
On what I’ve seen or pondered, sad or cheery;
And what I write I cast upon the stream,
To swim or sink—I have had at least my dream. (14.11)

Desire and need are in fact muddied in a way that converges nicely with consumer drives (“To make some hour less dreary”) even as the ultimate horizon of the market is rejected (“There are no rewards / Of fame or profit when the world grows weary”). Manning asserts that these lines conceive of publishing as a way to “combat [Byron’s]
own melancholy,” which would be the psycho-biographical version of this market dynamic, our constant attempt to use the commodity form to ward off the inevitable atrophying of our drives—the world that grows weary (234–35).


13. Juan’s distance from such a plot is also reemphasized later in the poem, with the possibility that Juan might “with some virgin . . . [take] to regularly peopling earth” being only one among several options that the narrator muses upon when considering Juan’s fate (11.89). But see also Jerome McGann’s reading of Juan and Haidée’s “second principle of life” as the social world created by their Edenic fall in his Don Juan in Context (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1976) 152.

14. Sigmund Freud, Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality, trans. and rev. James Strachey (New York: Basic, 1975) 97; quoted in Rey Chow, Sentimental Fabulations, Contemporary Chinese Cinema (New York: Columbia UP, 2007) 123–25; and Sha, 1–50. See also Leo Bersani, The Freudian Body: Psychoanalysis and Art (New York: Columbia UP, 1986) 34. The argument in Sha’s Perverse Romanticism profitably and intriguingly parallels this chapter’s own, with Sha’s focus not on the commodity form but on the historical entanglement of the non-instrumental in both Romantic scientific and aesthetic discourse. His chapter on Don Juan thus concentrates on “situat[ing] Byron in the context of puberty and Brunonian medicine” and asserting how in the poem the “radical instability of the body makes it an insecure foundation for sexual identity and even gendered hierarchy”; Byron “thus makes the Epic epicene, lacking fixed gender characteristics or violating accepted gender roles” (14).

15. Such an insurgency could thus readily be interpreted through Sha’s paradigms—by seeing Brown’s Juan as beautiful, passive, and young, as the very image of pubescent latency containing a multiplicity of non-instrumental sexual energies or, strictly speaking, perversities.

16. See also chap. 3’s discussion of how the abstract labor underwriting commodity value functions as a mechanical catachresis—a purposeless instrumentality.

17. Theories of the Romantic object, or thing, have themselves garnered much attention of late. See, for example, Judith Pascoe, The Hummingbird Cabinet: A Rare and Curious History of Romantic Collectors (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2006). The physically material character of Byron’s writings is also aptly signaled by Robinson’s description of the poet as “fundamentally empiricist” (11). See also chap. 4, n. 11. But see also Bill Brown’s suggestive distinction between objects and things (“‘Thing Theory,” Critical Inquiry 28 [2001]: 1–22).

19. One genealogy of cultural studies in the United States that overlaps with but also diverges from my account is that of multiculturalism and identity politics; for a consideration of the politics of that genealogy, from the perspective of the tropology of a spectral intention, see chap. 5. Certainly, Byron scholarship on Orientalism and empire intersects with this aspect of cultural studies; for a recent, provocative example of such work, see Colin Jager, “Byron and Romantic Occidentalism,” in *Secularism, Cosmopolitanism, and Romanticism*, ed. Colin Jager, *Romantic Circles Praxis Series* (August 2008) www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/secularism/index.html.

20. I am not claiming that Marxism and anthropology are mutually exclusive terms, or that the social and physical are neatly distinct, or that Marxism itself is not riven by different positions on consumption and the commodity form. I would still assert, however, the anthropological and Marxist as two imbricating modes of thought that are proleptically emblematized in the early cantos’ origin stories of (commodity) culture. For a discussion of the tension between the social and the physical in the material, see chap. 6.


22. This scene’s reification of food and guests via their “masquerade” thus anticipates canto 11’s more famously remarked-upon epistemological musing on “And, after all, what is a lie? ‘Tis but / The truth in masquerade” (11.37). Indeed, the relationship between the two moments in the poem can be understood as precisely expressing the (dis-)continuity between the fact of reification and the indeterminacies, both epistemological and ethical, of error.

23. For Stabler, Byron’s “world of zest” points to how his “foodiness is less to do with large-scale oppositions between mind and body or philosophy and history . . . than it is with minute adjustments of seasoning” (157). My argument, then, attempts to return Byron’s topos of consumption to that very world of “large-scale oppositions” — to consider the formal dynamics of how the Byron of cultural studies, of body and history, is interrupted by the Byron of theory, of mind and philosophy.

24. The eating lesson of canto 15 could thus also be the dark other, or grim logical consequence, of the prescriptive philosophy of John Brown, who was the main influence behind Byron’s physician, George Pearson (Sha, 243); one principle of Brown’s medical theory was the belief that the debilitating effects of too much gustatory and other types of stimulation could in fact be ameliorated by more somatic excitement; as Sha writes, Brown theorizes a “capitalist fantasy” that suggests the “cure for high living, at least in terms of diet, [to be] more high living” (270).


26. A current permutation of this issue would be questions within and without digital studies about where that field might go, and how that direction might affect the humanities. See also Rajan, 67–88, for the claim about how cultural studies extends, rather than critiques, global techno-administrative society.

28. For some, of course, genealogies of the body are as or more pertinent to understanding cultural studies than the account that this chapter adumbrates. See, for example, J. Hillis Miller, “Crossroads of Philosophy and Cultural Studies: Body, Context, Performativity, Community,” in Terada, “Philosophy and Culture,” para. 1–15.


31. William Wycherly, *The Country Wife*, IV.ii. 35–36, ed. John Dixon Hunt (New York: Norton, 1973) 81. I am grateful to Laura Rosenthal for this reference. This quote and Nyrop’s chapter on “Love Kisses” (29–75) would thus qualify Edward Shorter’s claim that from “the middle ages to the end of the nineteenth century there are remarkably few references to deep kissing in either literature or folklore” (*Written in the Flesh: A History of Desire* [Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2005] 123). Christopher Ricks also notices the reticence in Byron’s graphic displays, especially when contrasted with the description of kissing in Keats; Ricks, however, sees Keats as a rare example of such mimetic enthusiasm, and Byron as exemplary of a line of more graphically reluctant erotic poets that includes Chaucer, Marlowe, and Dryden (68, 104–5). But we might still ask whether the punning of *Don Juan* and a conception of print literature beyond high poetry complicate the literary history that Ricks depends on for his comparison.

Elsewhere, Haidée *does* use her tongue, but in a much more circumspect punning manner, teaching Juan her language: “And words repeated after her, he took / A lesson in her tongue” (2.163). We might be tempted to see this as the difference between find-
ing pleasure in the play of the signifier and finding it in the signified, while recognizing the non-eternal character of this distinction.


33. In both the Sultana’s harem and Catherine the Great’s court, kissing is also absent, although arguably with different resonances than in the early cantos. For the Sultana kissing revolves around the question of Juan’s obsequiousness, whether he is willing to kiss her toe. Graphic consummation is transferred to the plot involving Juan and Dudú’s ambiguous night together, which, curiously enough, like the non-kiss of Juan and Julia, isn’t very graphic at all. In Catherine’s case, eros seems already in medias res, far from the genetic structures of both the Julia and Haidée episodes. See the chapter’s last section for the argument about how the non-kiss returns in a new variation at the end of *Don Juan*, through the exclamatory appearance of Lady “Fitz-Fulke!” I am grateful to Delores Phillips for first pointing out to me the question of the kiss in the early cantos.


35. The famous anonymous *Quarterly Review* article about *Don Juan*, possibly written by Southey, is apposite for two reasons. First, the class anxieties of the piece, expressed through concern over the dissemination of the pirated editions to the lower classes, locate the obscene nature of Byron’s work not simply in the poem but in its shifting reception by different readerships. The essay claims that the lower classes, unlike elite readers, will not be able to ignore the pornographic elements of the poem; however, the very language of the writer used to describe such obscenities (“indecencies” and “images [that] pamper a depraved imagination”) makes it unclear how literally present such elements are in Byron’s poem, and how much they are the result of a certain class-formed, interpretive disposition. Second, the writer also decries how some of the pirated editions come with “obscene engravings”—a predicament that could mean either that the pirated copies are amplifying a pornographic potential already in the poem or that the copies need to supply that graphic, literal imagery, because it actually isn’t in *Don Juan*. The supplementary status of the pirated editions therefore might very well be the necessary ingredient by which we can say that anything erotically graphic actually occurs in Byron’s text ([Robert Southey?], “Art VI.—Cases of Walcot V. Walker; Southey v. Shewood; Murray v. Benbow; and Lawrence v. Smith,” *Quarterly Review* 27 [1822]: 127–28; quoted in Colligan, 439).

In part, this is the question of how much linguistic punning (of which *Don Juan* is lewdly full) constitutes (porno-)graphic display. For a consideration of some such punning in the early cantos, see *Fiery Dust*, 295–97, and also McGann’s notes for *Don Juan* in *Complete* (678); see also the chapter’s last section. Such a question does not preempt, of course, the possibility of punning and graphic display occurring in the
same text, something to which the title of Wycherly’s play attests. For a discussion of
the sexual wordplay throughout Byron’s poem, see Sha, Perverse, 246–84.

36. Likewise, as a simultaneous literal and figurative action, “consent” could also
evince the undecidable knot between de Manian grammar and rhetoric (Allegories,
9–10).

37. Giorgio Agamben, Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life (Stanford: Stan-
ford UP, 1998) 1–5. Cottom seems to be getting at something similar with his sublima-
tion narrative and his statement about how in “Western cultural history” the “kiss . . .
establishes life” (180–81).

convergence among hers, my, and Sha’s studies. I am grateful to Jonathan Auerbach
for this reference.

39. See also Sha’s consideration of the later pun on an “end” in canto 5 and its rela-
tion to both sexual and narrative, or serial, ambiguity (253). Sha cites Jonathan David

40. This correspondence is not, of course, of the exacting, jesuitical variety, in-
sofar as it’s highly problematic to insist that the aesthetic language retrieved from Don
Juan is also fully disengaged from an agreeability of the senses.

41. See also, however, Daniel Tiffany’s highly intriguing suggestion about study-
ing culture not through such an ontologically secure topos, but through the more
epistemologically obscure Leibnizean monad, in “Club Monad,” in Terada, “Philoso-
phy and Culture,” para. 1–22.

42. Interestingly, Mary Ann Doane sees the resolution of Zeno’s paradox by the
kiss in early cinema as instantiating, among other things, the doxa of heterosexual
sexuality (The Emergence of Cinematic Time: Modernity, Contingency, the Archive
through Juan and Julia’s interrupted kiss and the polymorphous perversity of canto
1’s puns can then be seen as an earlier, alternate resolution to this particular predica-
ment in modernity. I am indebted to Deirdre Lynch for this reference.


44. See de Man’s well-known discussion of irony, parabasis, and Friedrich Schlegel
in “Rhetoric,” 218–19.

45. See, for example, the implications of Riffaterre’s and Brooks’s arguments for
the singularly decontextualizing identity of literature as literariness (70–71, 103).
Riffaterre does stress how literariness can characterize other discursive forms, such as
“a work of history, of philosophy, or even law” (70), although his point is how such
texts then survive as literature. In the case of both Riffaterre and Brooks, literariness
never worries the literal event of literature per se.

46. Indeed, literariness in “Resistance to Theory” seems to presage the violence
of de Manian materiality that is realized in the later Aesthetic Theory: “Literature in-
volves the voiding, rather than the affirmation, of aesthetic categories” (Resistance,
10). If de Man himself could be held as a model for the argument for a literature that
could withstand the claims of cultural studies, the implications of his writings still
Notes to Pages 216–220

seem to go beyond the disciplinary retrenching of borders that has occurred since the 1990s. Arguably, the cultural studies position that factually states the end of literature and the high theory position that argues with that empirical supposition are both acting out in different ways a much too literal reading of de Man. For a sense of the cultural studies argument that Riffaterre and Brooks are responding to, see “The Bernheimer Report, 1993: Comparative Literature at the Turn of the Century,” in Bernheimer, 39–47. See also Culler’s suggestion that we should “reground the literary in literature” and “go back to actual literary works” in order to understand the postmodern proliferation of the literary in other humanistic modes of knowing (Literary, 41–42). This heuristic argument, however, assumes that the expansion of the literary is simply or mostly the consequence of scholarly will, and not about the question of whether “actual literary works” exist in a manner that readily separates them from works that perform the literary in some invalid, but still recognizable, way (my emphasis). Finally, see chap. 10, n. 24, for Marjorie Levinson’s formulation of the difference between the literary and literature, one that also complicates Culler’s confidence in the actuality of certain literary works.

47. Christensen in fact reads the injunction to “Fitz-Fulke!” as a “homlier declassed variant of the ‘Carpe Diem!’ topos” that appears earlier in the poem as advice from the narrator to Juan (342; 11.86).

48. Paradoxically, as Williams’s study of the Hollywood kiss shows, the graphic display of an image doesn’t necessarily resolve the issues of continuity, substitution, and elision that both complicate and ground the narrative intelligibility of the represented act (288–340). As parabasis, synecdoche, or other implicit relation, Williams’s cinematic kiss might very well make us further ask, when is an image not a figure? From his own perspective, Cottom formulates a similar problematic, noting how to "offer a kiss is implicitly to articulate the entire body, as one articulates a statement, into a series of parts and relationships systematized with a view to social and metaphysical orders" (204).

Chapter 9 • Gothic Thought and Surviving Romanticism

in Zofl oya and Jane Eyre

1. For a recent critique of this form of Romanticist writing, one that explicitly understands the problem of ideology through the question of idolatry, see Simon Jarvis’s nuanced Wordsworth’s Philosphic Song (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007). The divergent paths Jarvis and I take will soon become apparent; one question that we can nevertheless ask of Jarvis’s subtle book has to do with his argument that we, like Wordsworth, should replace the binary between idolatry and idol breaking with the one between non-life and life. While this chapter begins, like Jarvis, with a questioning of ideology, we might still wonder how the opposition between non-life and life escapes the question of ideological value. See also the wide-ranging discussion of the nature of idolatry in Mitchell’s What Do Pictures Want?


5. See Charlotte Brontë, “Editor’s Preface,” *Wuthering Heights*, 1850 ed. Cited in Peterson, 21–24. One could, of course, argue that many of Foucault’s analyses are motivated by the desire to distinguish themselves from the Marxist reading of ideology. See, for example, Leila Silvana May’s vigorous critique of Nancy Armstrong’s particular blending of Marx and Foucault, “The Strong-Arming of Desire: A Reconsideration of Nancy Armstrong’s *Desire and Domestic Fiction*,” *ELH* 68 (2001): 274. One might observe, however, that Foucault’s own referencing of the term ideology is itself contradictory, and that, insofar as Foucault is still in some manner committed to the category of class, he is still committed in some way to ideology—which is not to assert any simple homogeneity between the Marxist and Foucaultian project.

6. Amanda Anderson, *The Powers of Distance: Cosmopolitanism and the Cultivation of Detachment* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2001) 36–46. Anderson’s explicit examples are actually Victorian women authors, such as the Brontês, rather than their characters; her point is how literary critics view these writers as figures “who seem not only to instantiate modern power but to manipulate if not inaugurate it” (42).

7. One could, for example, see the text actively participating in the evolution of the Victorian realist novel through a process not unlike ideological containment: by the domestic regulation or literal extinguishing of its more unstable, Romantic gothic elements—the Byronic, then chastened, Rochester and the mad, then immolated, Bertha Mason. Yet Virginia Woolf’s famous critique of Charlotte actually focuses on the supposedly inopportune intrusion of the gothic laugh of “Grace Poole” into Jane’s most explicit, proto-feminist yearnings, seeing the laugh as a sign of the artistic and biographical containment of Charlotte (“young, cramped, and thwarted”) by historical circumstances (*A Room of One’s Own* [New York and London: Harcourt, Brace, & World, 1929] 72–73). A half century later, Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar view Bertha as Jane’s “truest and darkest double” who must die in order to enable Jane’s narrative of empowerment to fulfill itself (*The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* [New Haven: Yale UP, 1979] 360–62). Nancy Armstrong similarly views the high gothic, Romantic drama of *Jane Eyre* as precisely the sign of the ideological binding of a new privative bourgeois subjectivity defined by its mysterious, ahistorical desires (*Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* [New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1987] 186–213). But from another, equally well-known critical position, Cora Kaplan takes seriously the contemporaneous charge of political subversion leveled at *Jane Eyre*, seeing in the passages diminished by Woolf a revolutionary Romanticism that cannot help connect, no matter how fleetingly, political insurgency and feminist concerns (*Sea Changes: Essays on Culture and Feminism* [London: Verso, 1986] 170–75). In Gayatri Spivak’s classic reading of the novel, that rebellion is itself contained by the inability of the novel to register its own gothic control over Bertha Mason and the colonial history underwriting its plot (“Three Women’s Texts and a Critique of Imperialism,”

More recently, Heather Glenn locates the exaggerated affective pitch of *Jane Eyre* not in any high elite Romantic formation but in a middle-class Byronism and, most important, the mass culture of the romance annuals saturating England during the first part of the century; in doing so, Glenn qualifies the supposed revolutionary ethos of *Jane Eyre* but also reasserts the proto-feminist concerns of the novel through its debt to a mass cultural form of Romanticism as commercial entertainment (*Charlotte Brontë: The Imagination in History* [Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 2002] 102–43). Finally, Daniela Garofalo intriguingly argues that the gothic eros between Jane and Rochester enables a nineteenth-century sense of liberalism that appears to demand equality while actively seeking mastery and hierarchical norms (*Manly Leaders in Nineteenth-Century British Literature* [Albany: SUNY P, 2008] 137–53).


11. Adriana Craciun, “Introduction: Charlotte Dacre and the ‘Vivisection of Virtue,’” in *Zofl oya; or, The Moor: A Romance of the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Adriana Craciun (Peterborough: Broadview, 1997) 9. See also, however, George Haggerty’s argument for a strong connection between *Zofl oya* and Radcliffe’s *The Italian* through an erotics of maternal loss (“Mothers and Other Lovers: Gothic Fiction and the Erotics of Loss,” *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 16.2 [2004]: 157–72). In contrast to Haggerty, this chapter will focus on perhaps the more obvious divergences between Dacre’s and Radcliffe’s plottings, especially as exemplified in a contrast between *Zofl oya* and *The Mysteries of Udolpho*.

13. For the most extensive meditation of the relation of Romanticism and superstition, of Romanticism as both the overcoming of superstition and the superstition that must be overcome, see Deborah Elise White, Romantic Returns: Superstition, Imagination, and History (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2000).


15. Wollstonecraft’s presence in Zofloya has been noticed before, although in a variety of ways. For a contrast between the writers’ warnings against excessive sensibility, see Craciun, 13; for the idea that Zofloya might get much of its critique of court culture from Wollstonecraft, see Gary Kelly, English Fiction of the Romantic Period, 1789–1830 (Burnt Mill, Harlow: Longman, 1989) 106; for the view that Dacre is critiquing Wollstonecraft’s putative belief that women must take on masculine strength, see Beatriz González Moreno, “Gothic Excess and Aesthetic Ambiguity in Charlotte Dacre’s Zofloya,” Women’s Writing 14, no. 3 (2007): 432; for an extended consideration of the unfortunate influence of the mother in Zofloya as a parody of Wollstonecraft, see Hoeveler, 143–45. Radcliffe’s Laurenti is also, of course, shaped by her misbegotten upbringing.

16. For Rousseau, of course, the trick is to replace such vanities with “natural coquetry.” See Emile, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1979) 370–73.


18. For Wollstonecraft, of course, young women reading romances is still better than them reading nothing at all (183–84).

19. For an extended discussion of this passage in Wollstonecraft, see Wang, Fantastic, 130–34. See also Craciun, 22–25, for another argument about Rousseau’s presence in Dacre, although this time in terms of how Dacre rewrites Rousseau’s views on female sexuality.

20. For a discussion of Reflections as a gothic text, see chap. 6. See also Gary Kelly’s observation regarding the ubiquity of the Burkean sublime in Dacre’s text (106). On the presence of Burke and Rousseau in second-generation Romantic writings, see Wang, 58–59.

21. The British association, within and beyond Burke, between the French Revolution and gender anxiety has been well documented; see Mitchell, Iconology, 143–44; and Neil Hertz, The End of the Line: Essays on Psychoanalysis and the Sublime (New York; Columbia UP, 1985) 160–91. See also Porter, English, 115, for an observation about the leading role of English women in bread and food riots throughout the eighteenth century. Consider also Hoeveler’s intriguing claim that, in creating Victoria’s mother, Dacre tempts us to think that she “blames adulterous mothers for causing all the social and political turmoil that . . . resulted in the French Revolution” (144).
22. For a survey of the generation of anti-Jacobin novels produced during the 1790s whose ideological design was much clearer, see Kelly, 59–69.

23. Perhaps predictably, the “good” characters in Zofloya, the noble Henriquez and the angelic Lila, are amazingly bland; as Craciun asserts, Dacre makes Lila and others like her “asexual martyrs as repugnant and inhuman as their destroyers” (28). With regard to Zofloya, it could be argued that he presents another gendered side to the racialized double bind enveloping Bertha Mason: the containment of her monstrosity and the presiding influence of his demonic intent prevent both from attaining the status of a Europeanized subjectivity. Insofar as he does acquire power and agency as the text progresses, it could still be argued that the focus remains on Victoria; there is a gravitational pull (as for Bertha with Jane) to see him as Victoria’s double, even as a hyperbolic, racialized version of devious Jacobin monstrosity. (Burke, of course, did not hesitate to racialize the French revolutionaries, comparing them to “American savages” [80].) Victoria’s transformation into Zofloya also arguably blunts the heterosexist, racialized frisson of her succumbing to his triumphant will; the text auto-immunizes itself, as it were, sacrificing the eros of male aggression in order to defend against a total sexual triumph by the non-European other. For our purposes, the point is how in many ways the text makes Zofloya a secondary consideration when thematizing the question of agency. For one study of race in Zofloya, see Hoeveler, 149–50, 156–57.


31. As Glenn points out, idolatry “was a commonplace in nineteenth-century England, used—both flippantly and seriously—to denote that excessive love of the creature against which the Scripture warned” (244). This sense of the term also exists, of course, in Berenza’s revolutionary attachment to Victoria. For a reading that explicitly ties the language of idolatry in Jane Eyre to Victorian anti-Catholic discourse, see Maria LaMonica, Masked Atheism: Catholicism and the Victorian Secular Home (Columbus: Ohio State UP, 2008) 33–94.

32. Perhaps complicating the text’s coincidence between gender and political rebellion that Kaplan sees, Jane actually somewhat teasingly refers to Rochester’s
“impetuous republican answers” (308). Trying, however, as in the case of Berenza, to turn Rochester into an example of the misguided Enlightenment philosophe seems much more difficult to do. Similarly, as much as Jane constantly tries to image human nature (including her own) through her drawings, it seems a stretch to equate her attempt with simply the abstract philosophizing of a Berenza, although a Victorian version of the need to moderate her own senses in some normative way does seem key to Jane’s happiness.

33. Indeed, Jane actually outdoes Varens, since Varens only leads Rochester to believe that he was her “idol” (172). Varens would thus seem more agile than Jane in dealing with the idolatry of the sex-cash nexus underlying a relationship with Rochester; whether Jane and Rochester transcend that nexus at the novel’s conclusion, or whether Jane’s own idol breaking ultimately means something like Varens’s agility—these appear to be some of the questions that the text’s own ambivalent energies ask.

34. As Helena Michie argues, such dressing up was integral to the process of consumption that defined Victorian wedded feminine subjectivity: “Upper middle-class honeymoons, replete with their consuming rituals of tourism, sex, and shopping, produced, when successful, a different woman in a different body and different clothes, who answered with new knowledge to a new name” (“Under Victorian Skins: The Bodies Beneath,” in A Companion to Victorian Literature and Culture, ed. Herbert F. Tucker [Oxford: Blackwell, 1999] 420–21). Quoted in Glenn, 94; the shadowy feminine existence that Glenn argues conduct books produce, and which the wispiness of Jane’s new bridal clothing highlights, is thus very much in continuity with the real/not real existence of the commodity object. For an earlier study of the objectification of intersubjectivity in Jane Eyre, done within the context of gendered relations, see Margaret Homans’s “Dreaming of Children: Literalization in Jane Eyre,” in her Bearing the Word: Language and Female Experience in Nineteenth-Century Women’s Writing (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1986) 84–99.

35. We might also wonder from this perspective whether the novel employs such nineteenth-century scientific discourses as phrenology in order to distinguish the intimate, visual knowledge of a loved one from the particular abstractions of commodity reification. The scientific study of a face would thus promise a relation to the image not dominated by the forces of “glittering” exchange. See Shuttleworth, 3–4, 57–70, for an argument about how the science of phrenology ultimately led to a gothic sense of mystery about the human subject; we might wonder, then, if such sciences found themselves eventually leading back to the mystery of the commodity form, of human reification, without quite being able to articulate that fact. For another study of phrenology in other texts by Charlotte, see Nicholas Dames, Amnesiac Selves: Nostalgia, Forgetting, and British Fiction, 1810–1870 (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001) 76–124. See also n. 42.

36. Žižek, Parallax, 4–13. See also Mitchell’s reading of the rhetoric of iconoclasm in Marx’s analysis of both ideology and the commodity form in Iconology, 160–208.


40. For the argument that Rochester’s wounded body actually allows the conclusion to be read as yet another chapter of Jane’s ongoing seduction, see Garofalo, 148–51.


42. An intriguingly alternate approach to mine would be to take this scene’s references to electricity and physical occurrences seriously, and thus to consider Rochester’s communication as not a supernatural event but one of early Victorian science and telepathy. It remains an open question, however, whether replacing the empirically supernatural with the empirically scientific resolves the tensions between the supernatural and religious. For an extensive discussion of the question of natural religion in the Romantic portion of the nineteenth century, see Jager, Book of God. For a thorough look at the trope of electricity as a socially connecting force in Victorian poetry, see Jason Rudy, Electric Meters: Victorian Physiological Poetics (Athens, OH: Ohio UP/Swallow, 2009). For one of the first attempts to connect Charlotte’s writings to the gothic, see Robert B. Heilman, “Charlotte Brontë’s ‘New Gothic,’” in From Jane Austen to Joseph Conrad: Essays Collected in Memory of James T. Hillhouse, ed. Robert C. Rathburn and Martin Steinmann, Jr. (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1958) 118–32. Heilman doesn’t read Jane Eyre as a gothic because of its supernatural resonances, however; he does so because of the “mysteriousness” of the emotions the novel explores (131), in a way that anticipates Armstrong’s own study.

43. We might then wonder if, as scholars have recently argued, nineteenth-century Great Britain becomes increasingly beholden to the sensations of the embodied subject as the locus of social truth, whether this history is at least in part the playing out of this figured relation between perceptual and ideological deceit. See Gallagher; and William A. Cohen, Embodied: Victorian Literature and the Senses (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2008).

44. From a de Manian position of course, this problem replays the crucial distinction between ideological mistake and linguistic error; for a full discussion of how these choices have structured the field of Romantic studies since the 1970s, see chap. 2.


46. Laclau and Mouffe, Hegemony, 122–27. See also the discussion of antagonism in chap. 6.

47. While adamantly resisting any conflation of the historical events registered, my activation of the figure of survival very much parallels what Sara Guyer investigates
in *Romanticism after Auschwitz: Cultural Memory in the Present* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2007) 1–23. Equally pertinent is the anecdote that Jameson uses to respond to the question of “life in Moscow during the darkest days of the 1930s and 40s,” how “Abbé Siéyès’s answer to an analogous question about the period of the Terror during the French Revolution might be the appropriate one. ‘What did you do during the Terror?’ ‘I survived’” (Introduction to Lukács, *Historical*, 5).

**Chapter 10 • Coming Attractions**


Given this chapter’s attempt to consider Keats’s sensational qualities in continuity with his visual culture, it is worthwhile to recall the well-known description of Keats and Shelley from Hallam: “They are both poets of sensation rather than reflection. Susceptible of the slightest impulse from external nature, their fine organs trembled into emotion at colours, and sounds, and movements, unperceived or unregarded by duller temperaments. . . . Other poets seek for images to illustrate their conceptions; these men had no need to seek; they lived in a world of images; for the most important and extensive portion of their life consisted in those emotions, which are immediately conversant with sensation” (Matthews, 267).

4. Byron to John Murray, 9 September 1820, in Matthews, 129.

5. Levinson, Keats’s Life, 1–38; and James K. Chandler, “Hallam, Tennyson, and the Poetry of Sensation: Aestheticist Allegories of a Counter-Public Sphere,” Studies in Romanticism 33 (1994): 534. For the most sustained argument for the intentionally oppositional character of the Cockney School, see Cox, particularly his point about the complications that ensue when thinking of the Hunt coterie simply in terms of class (48–49). For two different studies that both conceive of Keats’s relation to the Cockney School and Leigh Hunt as the source of liberal political inspiration, see O’Rourke and Friedman. For a discussion about Keats’s odes and commodity consumption, see Jones; see also chap. 7. Finally, for the suggestive argument that Keats’s formal and sensational qualities speak as much to a proto-Adornoesque avant-garde position as a proto-Benjaminian modern one, see Kaufman, 354–84.

6. Derrida’s famous reading in Of Grammatology of Rousseau and masturbation as the “dangerous supplement” can be understood as using this association to characterize the simulated nature of écriture (141–64).


9. Edward Bulwer, The Siamese Twins; quoted in Altick, 1. As both the list of exhibitions and title of Bulwer’s work illustrate, the London shows expressed a Foucaultian scrutiny of the body as well as a keen optic sense of colonialist empire; as the nineteenth century progressed, moreover, the display of the noble savage changed into one of the racialized, atavistic subject of anthropological science (Altick, 268–87). See also n. 26.

10. See also, however, the argument in Cray’s Techniques that Renaissance modes of observation associated with the camera obscura differ markedly from nineteenth-century techniques of viewing, especially those associated with the 1830s stereoscope.

11. W. J. T. Mitchell, Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1994) 114–15; Galperin, 19–33. For the argument that situates this relation within the specific historical context of the conflict between “Romantic, expressive theories of artistic production” and “a new commercial visual-cultural industry of mass reproduction, spectacle, and simulation,” see Wood, 1–15. Yet see also Galperin’s claim about how the traditionally “Romantic opposition of the verbal and the visual as expressive and mimetic media” actually “obfuscate[s] . . . those larger cultural imperatives (or, as the case may be, imperatives against culture) that are demonstrably cross-generic and sufficiently prolific that a literary artifact may in the end have more in common with a Diorama or a photograph than with a painting” (30). My argument about Lamia is that the poem takes this commonality quite seriously, especially in terms of the commercial, recreational moving image.

12. For one in-depth look at the Keatsian dialectic between moving word and still art, see Grant F. Scott, The Sculpted Word: Keats, Ekphrasis, and the Visual Arts (Hanover and London: UP of New England, 1994). See also Ian Jack, Keats and the Mirror of Art (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1967). Scott observes that Keats’s art subjects “are not originals but reproductions, copies, restorations” but also argues that the poet’s ekphrasis is “about moving the visual object from its original residence into the house of words and restoring and revivifying it.” But Scott also believes that in “trying to move closer to the original works of art, Keats only establishes all the more distance from them and hence his modernity” (19). My suggestion is that for Keats the display of the “original” art piece is already to some degree informed by the visual modernity of London’s shows.


14. Great Britain thus differed greatly from both France and Italy, where the museum and art display had a much longer and more secure history. For a discussion of how the specifically English history of museum instability might have affected Keats’s “Ode on a Grecian Urn,” see Wang, Fantastic, 19–23.

15. The foregrounded center of Martini’s engraving, as well as the center of the crowd’s attention, is the Prince of Wales, a fact that says much about what viewing art meant for the participants at such an event.
16. Altick, 415. Haydon’s attempts were less than successful, as Keats’s own viewing of the Marbles was in very lowly conditions, as until 1831 the British Museum kept them “in two frame sheds adjoining Montagu House, firetraps which would have seen the precious booty destroyed if they had ignited” (Altick, 415). At one point the British zoos were the hottest tickets in town; as Altick wryly notes, Hunt’s sympathy with the plight of the Regent’s Park Zoo animals might have had something to do with his own two years behind bars for libeling the Prince Regent (415).

17. Benjamin Haydon, Benjamin Robert Haydon: Correspondence and Table-Talk (London: 1876) 2:293; quoted in Altick, 404.

18. On seeing the panorama, Keats writes, “I have been very much pleased with the Panorama of the ships at the north Pole—with the icebergs, the Mountains, the Bears the Walrus—the seals the Penguins—and a large whale floating back above the water—it is impossible to describe the place” (The Letters of John Keats: 1814–1821, ed. Hyder Edward Rollins [Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1958] 2:95). His 1820 citing of the phantasmagoria is especially suggestive. Writing to Fanny Brawne about his health, Keats reports, “I rest well and from last night do not remember any thing horrid in my dream, which is a capital symptom, for any organic derangement always occasions a phantasmagoria.” (247). For Keats the phantasmagoria is ubiquitous enough to work as a figure for his own mental state, the “horrid” symptom of his possible “organic derangement.” (Altick also mentions references to the phantasmagoria in Byron and Martineau [219, 233].) Keats’s usage evinces a knowing sense of the popular phantasmagoria, whose images were oftentimes that of spirits, ghosts, and ghouls. The letter’s blending of mind and phantasmagoria also has tantalizing implications for any account of Keats’s imagination. When Ian Jack, for example, notes how the figures in “Ode on Indolence” differ from those on a true vase in that they move, the critic’s point is that such movement could only happen in Keats’s imagination (246). But what if the imagined revolution of the urn’s figures knows itself through an optical toy like the rotary lantern (the lanterne vive) and its cut-out shadows? Keats’s correspondences also refer to the days spent sleeping recovering from an accident that generated the ode’s ambience, a situation that would not be the last time a psychic state was mediatized in a specific fashion, something given more edge by the poem’s particular content, its putative rejection of the waking world of literary commerce and entertainment, the potential situation of the poet as “pet-lamb in a sentimental farce.” Rather than simply demarcate a boundary between the waking social and dreaming interior worlds, the in-between semiconscious state of the rotary lantern would indicate a more complex, and ambiguous, dialectic between private bourgeois and commercial existence. For an extended discussion of the relation of the phantasmagoria to the Romantic and nineteenth-century mind, see Castle, 43–61. See also n. 29.

19. The Portland vase was, of course, one possible model for Keats’s ode. So Lord Hamilton’s proprietary relations literally connect the realms of commercial and aesthetic exhibition, as well as stress the economies of gender and sexuality involved in this type of display.

20. Cox’s argument is that Keats explicitly tries in his ode to restore to art the
Benjaminian “aura of the classic . . . beyond the diminution of [art’s] power through endless imitation” (155).


22. For an in-depth examination of gothic drama as “perhaps the first indisputable example of what we call ‘mass culture,’ an artistic configuration that becomes formulaic and gratifies a large cross-section of the population of a nation,” see Paula R. Backscheider, *Spectacular Politics: Theatrical Power and Mass Culture in Early Modern England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1993) xiii, 149–223. The formulaic may be construed as one of high literature’s others, and Keats’s virtual relation to culture as foregrounding the uncomfortable ambiguity inherent in that relationship. For one study of the relation between theater and Romanticism, see Julie A. Carlson, *In the Theater of Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994); for ones on the relations among theater, Keats, and the Hunt circle, see Bernice Slote, *Keats and the Dramatic Principle* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska P, 1958); and Cox, 123–45.


24. The very phrase “Looking into” implies the visual nature of this mediation, as if to accomplish this literary experience Keats must first look into the physical object that is Chapman’s book. This sense of mediation is already implicit in traditional praise for the allusive studiousness and technical accomplishments of Keats’s verse. But see also Levinson’s claim about the virtual character of Keats’s literariness, the degree to which he “produces a writing which is aggressively literary and therefore not just ‘not literature’ but, in effect, anti-Literature: a parody” (5). Indeed, Keats’s intense awareness of the different ways that culture (including “literature” but also the plastic arts) is produced further suggests reading his work as a commentary on the straddling of various forms of cultural labor. See also Pfau’s overlapping argument
about how Keats’s poetry can be understood as a reflexive critique of the dominant sense of the literary during his time (315).

25. See chap. 1, n. 15; see also Chandler’s point about the oppositional quality of “cockney sensationalism” (534). For pertinent, earlier discussions of a sensational immediacy that connects both Romantic and present-day visual culture, see Galperin’s description of the “return of the visible” as a “visible world—accessible to the material, bodily condition of sight and thus prior to idealization”—[that is] manifest in certain texts, including verbal texts, of the British Romantic period” (19), as well as his elaboration of this condition in terms of both the “particular” and Walter Benjamin’s ideas of “distraction” and “the archaeology of the cinema” (24–29, 32–33); and Wood’s “shock of the real” (2–7, 219–23). How the issue of pornographic immediacy might comment on the debate about the relation between cinema and digital media is a highly intriguing one; it might imply more of a continuity between the two than disparities between the mediums now suggest. For two different meditations on the relation between cinema and new media, see Garrett Stewart, Framed Time: Toward a Postfilmic Cinema (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2007); and D. N. Rodowick, The Virtual Life of Film (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2007).

26. For a study of the impact of the panorama on nineteenth-century bourgeois consciousness, see Stephan Oetterman, The Panorama: History of a Mass Medium, trans. Deborah Lucas Schneider (Cambridge, MA: MIT P, 1997). The panorama, with its depiction of past and current world events, is also conceivably the site of an imperialist optics. For a discussion of this specific aspect of the panorama, see Russell A. Potter’s review of Oetterman’s book in Iconomania: Studies in Visual Culture (1998) www.humnet.ucla.edu; see also n. 9. See also, however, Galperin’s argument for the more indeterminate, non-hegemonic effects of the panorama and diorama (34–71).


29. If the figures in “Indolence” literally seem to revolve, the figures in the “Urn” are on a round, continuous surface, which when (mentally, if not actually) turned could act like a pre-cinema optic toy, giving the illusion of moving images. The eternal nature of the “mad pursuit” on the urn would then not so much be static as perpetual, a harbinger of the furious motion characterizing the large number of chase scenes reflexively allegorizing film’s own kinetic abilities in early cinema. I am indebted to Jonathan Auerbach for this observation; for an exploration of such chase scenes in early film, see his “Chasing Film Narrative: Repetition, Recursion, and the Body in Early Cinema,” Critical Inquiry 26 (2000): 798–820. See also n. 18.

30. This negotiation underpins, of course, many of our meta-narratives about the modern. Habermasian modernity, for example, depends on vehemently distinguishing between the abstraction of a disinterested public sphere and the sensation (visual or otherwise) of mass capitalist life. For a relevant critique of that distinction, see Michael Warner, “The Mass Public and the Mass Subject,” in Habermas and the Public
Sphere, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge, MA: MIT P, 1994) 377–401. For an intense exploration of how the opposition between sensation and abstraction, or the “tyranny of the eye” versus the “tyranny of conception,” creates the reflexive space for a “subjectivity-in-default or in distraction,” see Galperin, 1–33. My work abuts on but also diverges from Galperin’s seminal study insofar as I use Lacan’s concept of the gaze to question the reification of subjectivity that occurs when Lamia’s visibility is conceived in terms of an agency.


32. Levinson makes the further distinction of seeing Lamia progress from the commodity form to, under the eyes of Apollonius, the more undifferentiated state of the money form.


34. “The ‘Enclosure of the Capucines,’ under the regime of the Directoire, became the meeting place of idlers, wanderers, prostitutes, and those in search of entertainment or a pleasant rendezvous. It was a cruel irony: under the Ancien Régime the convent had been noted for the austerity and extreme severity of its rite” (Mannoni, 159).


39. Insofar as theater might deconstruct this opposition, film can be said to exist already in theater.

40. Affiches, Annonces, et Avis Divers, 121 (20 January 1798) 2224; quoted in Mannoni, 150. The ad belonged to Étienne-Gaspard Robertson, who “was one of the earliest practitioners in France of Galvanism” (Mannoni, 150). For a treatment of the themes of animism and science in Keats’s poem, see Gigante, “Monster,” 433–48.
41. In that sense this passage seems to partake of a peculiar “Cockney sublime,” an appropriately distorted version of the high Romantic principle in Burke and Kant. Lamia is neither large nor distant; nor is she in shadow or immediately dangerous in the manner of other forces of nature. She is entirely within Hermes’s (and the reader’s) frame of vision, which she does not disrupt. Seemingly well proportioned, she should be beautiful. Yet she is not. She cannot be quite seen, and attempting to do so is far from pleasant, a dynamic that very much replays the Cockney stylistics derided and applauded by different readers of Keats.

42. The light source and lenses would be on one side of the screen, while the audience would be on the other. For a full description of how the phantasmagoria worked, see Mannoni, 104–75; and Altick, 217–20. The fact that the screen separated the phantasmagoria audience from the lantern contributed to the view that the show occulted its optical techniques; see n. 58.

43. Paul Endo, “Seeing Romantically in Lamia,” ELH 66 (1999): 115. Sound also works as a putative “reality” principle, as the “thrill / Of trumpets” (2:27–28) that incites Lycius to think about displaying Lamia in her wedded social form, much like the aural “bell” of the word “forlorn” that tolls the poet back to his “sole self” in Keats’s “Ode to a Nightingale” (Stillinger, 281; lines 71–72).

44. See, for example, Michel Chion, Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen, trans. and ed. Claudia Gorbman (New York: Columbia UP, 1994). I am grateful to Celeste Langan for this reference.


46. A recent analog to both Lamia and Medusa would therefore be the little android boy in Steven Spielberg’s film A.I., whose gaze of loving desire unnerves both his biological mother/owner and the movie audience precisely to the degree that there is nothing behind it; the desire of the young protagonist is that of an inanimate object, literally a filmic image. The power of the film lies in its splendid failure at resisting this knowledge, a narrative schizophrenia that replays the dissonance between Spielberg and the film’s original creator, Stanley Kubrick. Also pertinent would be Derrida’s comment regarding the pharmakon of classical philosophy, how “bewitchment (l’envoûtement) is always the effect of a representation, pictorial or scriptural, capturing, captivating the form of the other, par excellence his face, countenance, word and look, mouth and eye, nose and ears: the vultus” (Dissemination, trans. Barbara Johnson [Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1981] 140).

47. Lamia’s radical distortion would then also resonate with Lacan’s more particular treatment of anamorphosis as the “phallic ghost,” a visual sign in dialectical relation with castration, the gaze, and the objet petit a (Lacan, 88–89). As Lacan says
of the *objet petit a*, “this serves as a symbol of the lack, that is to say, of the phallus, not as such, but insofar as it is lacking” (103). See likewise the discussion of Lamia as the “penised lady” in Clarke, 576–77. See also n. 59.


50. Lacan’s attendant notion of mimicry is also applicable here: “Mimicry reveals something insofar as it is distinct from what might be called an itself that is behind. The effect of mimicry is camouflage, in the strictly technical sense. It is not a question of harmonizing with the background but, against a mottled background, of becoming mottled—exactly like the technique of camouflage practiced in human warfare” (99). The nymph is invisible in that she is hidden neither by nor behind part of the visible country landscape; she is a mottled stain on and of the landscape.

51. In line with Kaufman’s argument about the Adornoesque quality of Keats’s formalism (380–81), one might argue that the poem’s resistance, or failure, to narrate itself beyond its own reification is precisely what incites the critical thought necessary to imagine a world beyond commodification. In Adorno this reification could refer to art’s resistance to commodification, but also, as in the present chapter, to its realization through the commodity form. See Theodor Adorno, “The Schema of Mass Culture,” in *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, ed. J. M. Bernstein (London: Routledge, 1991) 67. But see also nn. 58 and 61.

52. Endo applies to Lycius’s actions Mulvey’s associations of voyeurism with linear time, and narrative with sadism: “Sadism demands a story, depends on making something happen, forcing a change in another person, a battle or will and strength, victory/defeat” (Mulvey, 21–22).

53. “Along with motion, the spatiality and very reality of the images of these later devices can not be detected as illusions by the eye” (Tom Gunning, “Introduction,” in Mannoni, xxvi). Gunning refers to the discussion of optical toys in Crary’s *Techniques*.

54. For Auerbach the reflexivity of such early films comes from a “nostalgia for the autonomy of the single shot” and a resistance to the implied narrative of the films’ “more dynamic linearity” (809–10).

55. For Levinson this “covert triangulated desire” is most immediately about the “monstrous collusion of Lycius’s sensuous this-worldliness with Apollonius’s conceptual idealism” (284). See also n. 30.


58. Mannoni, 144; Jamin and Richer, 480. For an account of the patent battle between Robertson and Léonard André Clisorius, which tells much about the contradictory representations of the phantasmagoria as both secretive magic and open science, see Mannoni, 165–73. The association of the phantasmagoria with the secretive occultation of its own principles continued into the twentieth century with Adorno’s use of the term as a figure for the mystification of the production process: the phantasmagoria is the “point at which aesthetic appearance becomes a function of the character of the commodity. As a commodity it purveys illusion. The absolute reality of the unreal is nothing but the reality of a phenomenon that not only strives unceasingly to spirit away its own origins in human labor but also, inseparably from this process and in thrall to exchange value, assiduously emphasizes its use value, stressing that this is its authentic reality, that it is ‘no imitation’” (Theodor Adorno, In Search of Wagner, trans. Rodney Livingstone [London: Verso, 1981] 261). See Crary for a discussion of how in the 1830s the stereoscope individualized the epistemological secrecy of the phantasmagoria for separate viewers, “transforming each observer into simultaneously the magician and deceived” (Techniques, 133). See also nn. 51 and 61.

59. See, for example, Daniel P. Watkins, Keats’s Poetry and the Politics of the Imagination (Rutherford: Farleigh Dickinson UP, 1989) 147. More germane to the present study is the relation between gaze and “evil eye” discussed in Lacan, 115–19. Lacan narrates a distinction (and similitude) applicable to Lamia and Apollonius, a division that the poem also temporalizes through its progression from nature to Corinthian civilization: “For it is insofar as all human desire is based on castration that the eye assumes its virulent, aggressive function, and not simply its luring function as in nature” (118). But it could also be argued that the commodity form in Lamia collapses this allegorized distinction between the natural and commodified realms, making the visual dialectic between Lamia as lure and Apollonius as predator the synchronic condition of capitalist modernity, rather than the diachronic progression of modernity out of nature. More precisely, Apollonius’s aggressive optics would be patriarchy’s own awareness of the baleful effects of the commodity form, the phallic suspicion that every Lamia might actually be a Medusa, a living thing whose lure turns men into (castrated) things—an aggressive, visual logic that patriarchy’s suspicions can only compulsively anticipate and repeat.

61. Levinson refers to Apollonius, Lamia, and Corinth as agencies who are “producers of material” (282). But she also refers to their shared abilities as forms of magic; to the degree that labor in the poem is magic—seemingly effortless and almost immediate, at least for the agent—*Lamia* bars or demurs further inquiry into any story of production that might exist before the poem’s experience of itself as a commodified image. That being said, we might also reformulate the question of production in *Lamia* as one about the resemblance between the opacity of social desire and the social materiality of the real, with materiality being equal parts de Manian and Marxist, as suggested by chap. 6. Such an equation would occasion its own choice, then, between seeing the poem’s opacity as the very disruption of the symbolic of capitalist consumer modernity and viewing that same event as the symbolic limit of the dialectically materialist assertion of production as the origin of history; in *Lamia*, at least, this decision remains suspended in the very form of the commodified image that dominates the poem. But see also nn. 51 and 58.

**Coda • The Embarrassment of Romanticism**


2. For example, the movement from print to electronic scholarly publishing could very well mean the streaming of podcasts of interviews and more polished talks, or essays. Aside from intriguingly highlighting the role of performance in our intellectual research, podcasts conceivably bring scholarly writing out of both the conference room and the confined space of activity that printed material demands into the mobile world of the MP3 player. Taking my invocation of “philosophical” writing seriously, then, what is the status of *thought* that one can engage with while driving a car, raking leaves, making dinner, or going for a run?

3. “Keats is a miserable creature, hungering after sweets which he can’t get; going about saying ‘I am so hungry; I should so like something pleasant!’” Quoted in Matthews, 35.

4. It should be noted that Readings’s Heideggerian phrasing is neither simply nor even pessimistic, and that it doesn’t imply the wished-for recovery of some prior state of non-fragmentation (166–79).

5. Along with his commitment to the sensory, this lingering over the embarrassing is precisely why it’s difficult to talk consistently about Keats’s Romantic sobriety.

6. Mitchell’s consideration of the totemic character of Romanticism is part of a larger consideration of “bad objecthood” prevalent in Western discourses; although he doesn’t pursue this line of thinking, we might then say, given its relation to “bad objecthood,” that the structure of affect involved in Romanticism’s persistence is at least in part embarrassment (*What Do Pictures Want?* 188).
8. “Poets are the hierophants of an unapprehended inspiration, the mirrors of the gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present, the words which express what they understand not, the trumpets which sing to battle and feel not what they inspire: the influence which is moved not, but moves” (Reiman and Fraistat, 535).