Britain's Bloodless Revolutions

1688 and the Romantic Reform of Literature

Anthony S. Jarrells

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Transferred to Digital Printing in 2005

To my parents

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Introduction: 1688 and the Romantic Reform of Literature

> These gentlemen of the Old Jewry, in all their reasonings on the Revolution of 1688, have a revolution which happened in England about forty years before, and the late French revolution, so much before their eyes, and in their hearts, that they are constantly confounding all the three together. It is necessary that we should separate what they confound.
>
> Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*

Britain's Bloodless Revolutions makes two claims about the relationship between the Revolution of 1688 and the literature of the Romantic period. First, the "bloodless" Revolution of 1688 served as a major context for understanding, supporting, challenging, and representing the French Revolution in print. Whether in news reports, the yearly summaries provided by the *Annual Register*, or works by Edmund Burke, William Wordsworth, Helen Maria Williams, Walter Scott, and many others, 1688 remained a touchstone of almost every discussion about the events taking place across the channel and about the significance of those events at home, in Britain. In the process the Revolution and Settlement of 1688–89 was itself rewritten for a post-1789 world. The events of 1688–89 had been reread and rewritten throughout the eighteenth century.[1] The outbreak of revolution in France provided an opportunity for yet another update of that earlier revolution.

The second claim argued in *Britain's Bloodless Revolutions* is that the post-1789 rewriting of 1688 helped give shape and purpose to a newly emergent category of literature. Romantic period writers found in 1688 a model for containing the threat of popular violence that had come to be linked with freedom of the press and freedom of association. The imaginative works that stand at the center of the Romantic period,

I'll suggest, were often written and received as a kind of bloodless revolution in themselves, one intent on eclipsing the violence of the past (1640s England) and averting it in the present (revolutionary France). Writers in the period not only wrote endlessly *about* bloodless Revolution, reinventing it in the process; they wrote *as* bloodless revolution, enacting this new form of politics and reinventing literature itself in the process.

The "and" in the title of this book is thus a coordinating conjunction that coordinates more than two things. It coordinates, for one, the revolution of 1688 and the debates about print, politics, and literature that dominated the end of the eighteenth century. The book asks how the events of 1688 were used and revised in talking about a more recent and threatening revolution. In this sense the "and" functions like the "and" in Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid: there's 1688 and there's late eighteenth-century debate about revolution, and here they are being partnered. The second—and bigger—of the book's claims is also signified in the "and." In this, the "and" refers back to the first half of the title: Britain's Bloodless *Revolutions*—that is, to the idea that there was more than one bloodless revolution. The first happened in 1688 when William of Orange replaced James II and the Stuart hold on power in England collapsed. The monarchy was subordinated to the parliament and the violence that plagued Britain's earlier revolutionary moment in the 1640s was in large part averted. The second revolution referred to is the emergence of a literary sphere that helped to consolidate the literate classes against the threat of popular violence following the outbreak of revolution in France. In this latter case, politics was subordinated to a national culture that defined itself against the violence and the values of revolution. So Britain had two "bloodless" Revolutions: one in 1688 and one at the end of the eighteenth century that culminated in the Reform Act of 1832 (and the end of the Romantic period). The first revolution was celebrated by the second even while the second worked to effect its own settlement with a new and threatening political climate.

But to speak of "revolutions" also points to a discrepancy in the title and to a tension that is a feature of much of the scholarship on 1688. The first half of the title uses the word "revolution": Britain's Bloodless Revolutions. The second half refers to 1688 and the Romantic *reform* of literature. Revolution, at least in our modern understanding of the word, suggests a violent break with the past, a new order, a complete change. Reform is less radical. It does not go to the root and dig up the weed, as it were. It prunes, redirects, and changes certain aspects of the organism while leaving the roots in place. Richard Price is a

reformist in that he sees 1789 as being France's own 1688—a positive step forward and an opportunity for the English to go back to their own revolution to see what might be updated, or reformed (abolishing the Test Act, for instance). Thomas Paine was more radical. For him, 1688 was no point of reference for the present. "The parliament or the people of 1688," writes Paine in *The Rights of Man*, "… has no more right to dispose of the people of the present day, or to bind or control them in any shape whatever, than the parliament or the people of the present day have to dispose of, bind or control those who are to live a hundred or a thousand years hence" (42). Going back as far as Magna Charta, Paine dismisses the English past and looks to the institutions and declarations that were being worked out in France and America—products of an age of reason—for better guides to Britain's future. The revolutions against Charles I and James II were against "the personal despotism of the men," Paine writes. In France, the Revolution was directed against "the hereditary despotism of the established government" (47).

The conservative press did not necessarily attend to the differences between reformist and revolutionary arguments. Both Price and Paine were dangerous in that they gave a kind of philosophical legitimacy to the violent attack on government being perpetrated across the channel. But the difference was important. Paine was tried and convicted—in absentia—by the government. Joseph Priestley's house and library were attacked by a "church and king" mob while authorities stood by. A speech by John Thelwall inspired government acts against speech and association. Meanwhile, William Godwin, whose books were more expensive and whose later reformist approach to literature was in many ways quite the opposite of Paine and Thelwall, was attacked in the press, though not directly by the government, and then allowed to fade into obscurity and irrelevance. Samuel Coleridge and William Wordsworth were also young radicals. They were friendly with Thelwall and Godwin and sympathetic to the republican ideals that underpinned the Revolution. The poetry and theories put forth by Coleridge and Wordsworth were criticized for their radical associations but also championed—as in the case of *Lyrical Ballads*—for possessing a proper moral perspective. That the literature of the period came to offer a reformist rather than a radical program for change—one that started and finished with the individual— did, I will argue, make a difference in how revolution was received in England. More than this, it made a difference in how literature was received.

The word "revolution" itself underwent a change at the end of the eighteenth century. Prior to the French Revolution, the word referred

primarily to a "return" or "recurrence." The *OED*'s first entry for the word relates its origins in astronomy: "the action or fact, on the part of celestial bodies, of moving round in an orbit or circular course." It was not until after 1789 that the word came to signify "the overthrow of the monarchy, and the establishment of republican government"—though the word was sometimes used to describe "an alteration, change, mutation" prior to this late eighteenth-century change in meaning. The *OED*'s eighth entry refers to English history and gives two examples: first, "The overthrow of the Rump Parliament in 1660, which resulted in the restoration of the monarchy"; and second, "The expulsion in 1688 of the Stuart dynasty under James II, and the transfer of sovereignty to William and Mary." 1688 is compared with 1660: in both cases the sense is of something returning, of restoration. So how did 1688, which is described as a revolution in the old sense of the term—as a return—come to be compared with 1789, the very root of revolution's modern sense?

It was not because of Edmund Burke. Although he has been credited as one of the first to use "revolution" in its modern sense—as a violent break with the past—he could make this argument only by declaring that 1688 was not a revolution. Burke argues that 1688 must be understood not with but against the French Revolution. In an argument often more literary than logical, Burke argues that the events of 1688 did not constitute a break with tradition but rather comprised an extreme attempt to maintain it:

> It is far from impossible to reconcile, if we do not suffer ourselves to be entangled in the mazes of metaphysic sophistry, the use of both a fixed rule and an occasional deviation; the sacredness of an hereditary principle of succession in our government, with a power of change in its application in cases of extreme emergency. Even in that extremity … the change is to be confined to the peccant part only; to the part that produced the necessary deviation; and even then it is to be effected without a decomposition of the whole civil and political mass, for the purpose of originating a new civil order out of the first elements of society. (105–06)

This will be discussed more fully in Chapter 1. Burke's view of 1688 as a restoration, as an act from above to prevent violence from below, would become crucial for writers like William Wordsworth who looked to return to something natural and something English following the violent turn of events in France. But the political ambivalence of 1688 made it an appropriate figure for writers across the political spectrum in

late eighteenth-century England. For while Burke offered a timely description of England's differences from France, there was much to be made of 1688's radical character as well. This radical reading originated in part from John Locke's *Second Treatise*, in which the right of the people to cashier kings was given a philosophical justification. The different readings were not necessarily antithetical, as the literature of the period in particular attests. In the spirit of compromise that 1688 modeled, many writers found a way to read and write it both ways.

Even now, the change in the word "revolution" has not led to a consensus on whether the events of 1688–89 were radical or conservative. From the eighteenth century to the relatively recent present, a "Whig-liberal" line on 1688 has often prevailed.[2] This reading of the Revolution situates it as a founding moment of modern British government. But Whig history suggests a teleological as well as a liberal model; a host of subsequent political changes are read back into this inaugural modern moment. Marxist historians from Marx himself to Christopher Hill have sometimes perpetuated this model by substituting "capitalism" for political "liberties," or economics for politics. On this reading 1688 represents a consolidation of upper and middle-class interests to preserve and advance a burgeoning capitalist economy. Indeed, Marx and Hill both see 1688 as nothing more than a palace coup—a check to revolution.[3] In late seventeenth-century England we find a potentially revolutionary moment in which revolutionary violence and radical change are averted. There have been varied and complex responses as to why this was the case: the "stupidity, tactlessness, impatience, and intransigence of James II," as Hill puts it; the "ultimate solidarity of the propertied class," and in addition the "recollection of what had happened forty-five years earlier, when unity of the propertied class had been broken"; William's determination to "have the title of king" and James' determination to have his head remain attached to his neck; overwhelming anti-Catholic and anti-French sentiment among the people; a rapidly expanding mercantile system that required freedom from the absolutist controls that had up until then helped to shore up its interests at home and abroad; and others.[4]

In his major study of the period, *English Society, 1688–1832*, J.C.D. Clark offers what he sees as a corrective to the persistence of Whig history. Clark spends quite a lot of time trying to move beyond the "economic reductionism" of Marxist historians like Hill and toward a view of the period that emphasizes the importance of political and religious institutions. His argument posits the *persistence of the ancient regime* in eighteenth-century England. Nevertheless, Clark's thesis offers a summation of 1688

that is similar to that of the Marxist critics he attacks—that is to say, for Clark 1688 was not a revolution in the modern sense. "The Revolution," he writes, "secured the hegemony of the (Anglican) aristocracy and gentry against the threat perceived to be posed by a (Roman Catholic) monarchical bureaucracy: in that sense, 1688 only preserved what 1660 was supposed to have re-established" (6–7). He concludes that "establishment theorists consistently laboured to minimise the extent to which 1688 represented a fundamental discontinuity" (7). The language of class is replaced with that of religion, but the resulting stance on the Revolution of 1688 is the same.

   Kathleen Wilson has called this a "new orthodoxy on 1688," one that opposes itself to a traditionally dominant Whig interpretation of history and on which "historians of both sides of the political spectrum seem to be able to agree" ("Inventing Revolution" 349). Wilson explains that,

> The series of events once heralded as the foundation of modern parliamentary democracy is now presented as but a troubled and confusing hiatus in patrician politics, unrelentingly "conservationist" in ideological and political effect, in which Whig and Tory leaders managed to rid themselves of an unacceptable monarch without recourse to the political or ideological extremism of Charles I's reign. (350)

But as Wilson goes on in her essay to discuss, the events of 1688–89 *did* come to be understood as revolutionary, whatever the intentions and principles of the original actors. This popular understanding in turn gave rise to a popular tradition of radical critique and action. For example, Wilson argues that in the context of later eighteenth-century appropriations of 1688, like those by rational dissenters such as Richard Price, "the ideological purchase of the Glorious Revolution had less to do with the historical reality of the event than with its almost mythical stature as an example of popular and nonviolent political change" (362). This can be seen with figures farther to the left, too—like Thelwall. As Lois Schwoerer explains, it was not even until the late eighteenth century "that the question of the character of the Revolution—was it conservative or radical?—became an issue" (Schwoerer 4).

   The outbreak of revolution in France provided an opportunity in England to update and to consolidate the meaning and values of their earlier revolution—or in some cases, to disregard it altogether. In the eighteenth century, at least, the full effect of the Revolution remained open. For Tom Nairn, this state represents a crisis that extends to the present. The fact that England's was the first revolution of its kind, he argues,

has meant that England itself has remained "transitional"—never fully breaking with the past, never fully arriving at the future. "The pioneer modern liberal-constitutional state never itself became modern," says Nairn: England never had a truly "modernizing" revolution akin to those experienced in Europe in the nineteenth century (22). The lack of a fully modern state apparatus meant that there was no "state-fostered technocracy (on the French model)," nor even an " 'alienated' intelligentsia (on the Russian model)" (22). Instead, the instrument of this peculiarly English progress was "the English intellectual class," which played "an unusually central and political role in promoting social integration" (22). For historians like Schwoerer, seventeenth-century print had a tremendous influence on effecting the Revolution of 1688. Contemporaries like Aphra Behn thought so too. "Oh strange effect of a seraphick quill!" Behn writes to Gilbert Burnet, whose pen had smoothed the way for William's accession. But for Nairn it would be an eighteenth- and nineteenth-century culture that would be instrumental in maintaining the unfinished character of England's revolution—in preserving the "essence" of "rule from above" and helping to prevent a properly bourgeois revolution.[5]

Nairn's thesis that 1688 was "unfinished" has not always satisfied historians—even fellow leftists. Critics like Nairn (and Perry Anderson) see in the unfinished character of 1688 and the failure of England to carry through with its own bourgeois revolution a root cause for a stunted, or incomplete modernity.[6] For Ellen Meiksins Wood, however, the character of the Revolution points to a society that did not need a revolutionary leap because significant steps had already been taken. "It is misleading," she writes, "to suggest that the emphasis on tradition reflects the persistence of 'pre-modern' remnants in the British state, while the French celebration of the Revolution expresses the sharp discontinuities between the absolutist state and post-revolutionary France. In a sense, the reverse is true" (76). For one thing, as Meiksins Wood points out, the post-revolutionary continental state was still rooted in an absolutist past—much more so, in fact, than English "political society" in the eighteenth century.[7] The notion of the modern state did not take hold as firmly in Britain as it did in France—in large part because it was not as necessary. Meiksins Wood argues that "symbolic substitutes are called upon to play an ideological role not required of them where the idea of the state itself is firmly implanted in the national consciousness." Writers like Wordsworth and Walter Scott came to play an important part in creating such symbolic substitutes, as discussed in later chapters. Meiksins Wood suggests that "In Britain these ideological

purposes are served by an apparently pre-capitalist symbolism, but this should not be taken to mean that the role assigned to this symbolism is determined by the pre-modern character of the British state" (34). Quite the contrary, this symbolic substitution reflects a more complete revolution in agrarian relations and class integration, one that did not require the centralization of a powerful state mechanism. The mixed character of 1688 is "modern" in the way that *Lyrical Ballads* can be said to be modern. And, I'll suggest, for some of the same reasons.

The bloodless Revolution stood as a model for this new state-culture relation—a way of preserving the past precisely as a means to move forward. What seems evident from a wide range of historical accounts, though, including the revisionist, neo-Marxist, and popular-historical approaches, is that revolutionary violence in 1688 was in part averted by an *institutional* change that subordinated the monarchy to the parliament and, together with the Act of Settlement in 1701, maintained the legitimacy of the monarchical tradition while barring Catholics—and more immediately, Stuarts—from becoming king. "Since James had made himself impossible," Hill explains, "and William was in control of the situation, the parliament's only problem was to find a suitable form of words" (220). It was to specific words like "abdicate" that political debates turned in 1689. And no doubt the Settlement and the emergence of parties at the time of the Exclusion Crisis produced a lot of words, as well as new writing about words (Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, for example). Writers throughout the 1790s, too, from all sides of the debate, found themselves returning to these words and to the events of 1688. Price's *Discourse on the Love of our Country*, a sermon delivered at the Revolution Society commemoration of the Glorious Revolution of 1688, favorably compared the two revolutions of England and France. And it was, of course, Price's sermon that served as a prime impetus for Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. The events of 1688 and 1689, those that went off and those that did not, serve not only as a useful comparison with the very similar situation of the 1790s, but in many significant ways, as the main historical and theoretical context, as well.

The question emerges, though: who sang the glories of the Glorious Revolution—and how? If 1688–89 marked a revolution in the minds of the people at the time then in what kinds of generic clothing was it accoutred? Via what kinds of representation was the scope of the Revolution limited? In short, who were the Marvells or Miltons, or the Davids of 1688?[8] Defoe? Today we may think of Defoe as a "literary" figure. But at the time he would have been thought of as little more than

a party hack. Most of his writings were published anonymously. The great literary figure of the period, Dryden, was a Catholic and a Jacobite, and he suffered a loss of court offices upon the accession of William and Mary. He was not exactly laureate material after 1689.[9] Pope and Swift, in the next generation, were Tories, and used their pens to castigate the corruption of a Whig oligarchy under Walpole. They could hardly be considered as upholders of a Revolution that sought to curb the powers of church and monarch alike—especially following the death of Queen Anne and the Hanoverian succession in 1714, after which the party of the church and monarch, the Tories, lost what little power remained it.[10]

According to Steven Zwicker there was in fact no "Literature" of the Glorious Revolution:

> … if we look to the ways in which literary culture reflected and enacted the revolutionary moment we might be surprised by the indifference of the literary record to the fact of the Revolution. The standard histories of English literature, even studies of Augustan writing, hardly acknowledge the events of these months. … It is hard to think of a political crisis in this century so unremarked in literary form. ("Representing the Revolution" 165–66)

Zwicker goes on to discuss how the accession of James I saw Shakespeare's *Macbeth*; how national debate in 1659 saw Milton enter the fray; how the Exclusion Crisis became the subject of Thomas Otway's *Venice Preserv'd* and Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel*. But there is no literary monument to 1688, he suggests, other than Dryden's *Don Sebastian*; and this too, like the work of Behn, is better understood as a monument to the departed James.

Zwicker offers several reasons for the literary silence following 1688: the connection between high culture and the Stuart monarchy; "the remarkable passivity of the nation"; the fact that the scars of the mid-century civil wars still showed and that the people were not about to reopen them.[11] The Glorious Revolution, finally, was glorious not for its wars—its heroic exploits and brave deeds—but rather for the absence of war. "Sir Robin ran away," sings "brave" Sir Robin's balladeer in a song from Monty Python's *The Holy Grail* that might equally be suitable in theme for the 1688 Revolution: "when danger reared its ugly head, he quickly turned his tail and fled. …" James fled and parliament smoothed over the details of William's succession. The stuff of good songs, in other words, was missing. But if we cannot find a conformity between the late-seventeenth-century view that what had passed was indeed a revolution

and Marx's (as well as others') later assertion that 1688–89 signaled only the terminus of an earlier revolution, then perhaps we can at least remark that the lack of a revolution literature at the time reflects not simply a revolution without bloodshed—a "bloodless" revolution, as it eventually came to be heralded—but a revolution that conforms to a second popular meaning (in 1688) of the word "bloodless": that is, one without a literature to bring it "to life."

I suggest that there was in fact a literature of the Glorious Revolution but that it took over a century for it to emerge. The Revolution of 1688 was in many respects a defensive gesture that nevertheless went forward to produce some very progressive changes. Its character as a revolution is belated: its path was paved after not prior to the event itself. While the interests of a new trading class were consolidated with those of a more traditional landed aristocracy to prevent a violent civil war, it would be these nascent "middle-class" interests that would go on to claim the Revolution and the increased political and economic power it opened up. This effort came to a head at the end of the eighteenth century, when violent upheaval threatened the nation again. The "organic" intellectuals of the middle class—to use Gramsci's term[12]—made 1688 fully their own by re-enacting it as a defensive gesture. At the very time that Schwoerer claims the political nature of the Glorious Revolution became a subject of debate—in the period we think of as "Romantic" and which was in many ways defined by a famously bloody revolution taking place in France—"literature," which was a significant part of this process, emerged wearing the unruffled garments of 1688–89 and in the hopes of producing a similar effect: bloodless-ness. That literature could play a role in keeping things bloodless, I argue, depended precisely on bringing the former, pallid revolution to life in the 1790s.

The question of why revolution did not happen in 1790s England has produced a variety of complex and highly debated responses: (1) the Pittite repression signified by the treason trials of John Thelwall, Horne Tooke, Thomas Holcroft, and others (and the threat of which forced William Godwin to withhold his 1794 preface to *Caleb Williams* from publication) along with the "gagging" acts of 1795 and the suspension of *habeas corpus* twice between 1795 and 1801; (2) the "church-and-king" mobs and an increasingly prevalent anti-Jacobin press that brought fear and terror into real and suspected Jacobins; (3) a more coherent middle class, or, more fluidity between the various levels in the class hierarchy; (4) an economy more advanced than that of other European countries, like France or Germany;[13] or perhaps, as Edmund Burke would have us believe, the "cold sluggishness" of the English character, its "sullen

resistance to innovation" (*Reflections* 181). My own addition to this list draws much from the historical work out of which came many of these responses. Yet it runs contrary to a more traditional *literary* approach that posits that the English failure to duplicate the French Revolution on its own soil resulted in an internalization of doubt and fear that manifested itself in the revolutionary literature of that period.[14] I argue that literature did not simply manifest this failure but instead helped to occasion it.

   This is, at least, how it seemed to many writers and readers at the time. To go back and read the writing of the 1790s—and especially the writing about writing—is to see a literature coming to life not through an imaginative escape from the political conditions that surrounded it but rather through a heightened engagement with those very conditions. Indeed, writing was thought to bear a large responsibility for such conditions. Burke was not alone in singling out the "political men of letters." On the one hand, writing comprised a serious threat to the nation; on the other, it served as a prime means of defence against that threat. Pitt's "gagging" acts, for example, targeted association as well as speech— a grouping that makes explicit the link between print and popular violence. At the same time, these political conditions became part of the material out of which much of the literature of the time was constructed— from the rather overt political gestures of T.J. Mathias' *Pursuits of Literature*, George Canning's "New Morality," and Godwin's *Caleb Williams* to the more subtle political inflections of Wordsworth's poetry or Scott's historical romances. Not all writing was literature, however; and it was this consolidation—this newly constructed category—that helped to discipline print and by extension the kinds of acts that certain forms of print were said to produce. Our modern notion of literature was conceived as part of this larger move away from violent revolution. It helped to shape a specific notion of change and of a nation grounded in the "mixt" and "bloodless" character of 1688.

   The ambivalence over the political status of 1688 and the government it gave rise to extends to what became its defining feature: bloodlessness. 1688 did become a model for popular, non-violent reform, as Wilson suggests. But just as Wilson argues that this had little to do with intentions and actual outcomes so too does the "bloodless" claim have little solid grounding in historical fact. The institutional change that I have referred to in 1688–89 was intimately connected to the development of a modern state apparatus, and this state apparatus rested upon violence. Its very essence comprises the most basic definition of violence: coercive force. In the late eighteenth century such bloodiness on the part of the state manifested itself in the Pittite repression of suspected radicals,

as well as in the brutal putting down of the Irish uprising of 1798. The Peterloo massacre of 1819 is another, later example that comes to mind. The bloodless-ness of 1688, as many have pointed out, was a powerful myth. As Ian Gilmour puts it,

> The convenient myth of [1688's] non-violence, the fact of its virtual bloodlessness and its limited changes all served to perpetuate it. Above all, it worked: the English state was less inefficient than its rivals. At the same time 1688 blotted out its predecessor: for the next seventy-five years few expressed the radical or democratic ideas of the earlier English Revolution. (37)

Gilmour concludes that the Revolution had its roots in "mob violence" and that this ugly association "had to be suppressed" in the eighteenth century. Thelwall, who unlike Paine found in 1688 a radical current to be kept alive at the end of the eighteenth century, had no illusions about the means of that Revolution. He writes in 1795 that "… whatever advantages resulted from the Revolution in 1688, (though Whig historians boast that it cost no blood) it has deluged not only great portions of the British Empire, but the whole of Europe with blood for near a century."[15] As evidence he lists the wars with France, the "long train of battles, cruelties, and horrors" in Ireland, and the Glencoe massacre in Scotland—a massacre "which, in my opinion, fixes an indelible stain upon the memory of William." More recently Murray Pittock has remarked that "it was in Ireland that the 'bloodless' Revolution proved the biggest lie, not only in terms of the thousands of Wild Geese that left to fight for France and the hundreds of thousands that followed them, but also in simple casualty figures, Aughrim (1691) being quite possibly the bloodiest battle ever fought in the British Isles" (44).

When we talk of the Revolution's "bloodless" character, then, we have to be careful to specify that it was *revolutionary* violence that was averted, and not all uses of force (state violence, for example). In his *Keywords*, Raymond Williams explains that,

> Violence is often now a difficult word, because its primary sense is of physical assault, as in "robbery with violence," yet it is also used more widely in ways that are not easy to define. If we take physical assault as sense (i) we can take a clear general sense (ii) as the use of physical force, including the distant use of weapons or bombs, but we have then to add that this seems to be specialized to "unauthorized" uses: the violence of a "terrorist" but not, except by its opponents, of an

army, where "force" is preferred and most operations of war and preparation for war are described as "defence."

Williams' definition points to the politically charged nature of the term "violence"—when and how it is employed, and by whom—and highlights the fact that "violence" is rarely talked about in relation to a government or state power. In the eighteenth century there is hardly a better example of this than in Burke's writings on the French Revolution: in Burke, violence is attributed to the revolutionaries but not to the government they were fighting to bring down.[16]

The relationship between the state and violence, while perhaps "suppressed" in official accounts, was well understood by eighteenth-century writers. Swift, Gay, Blake, Gray, Godwin, Thelwall, Charlotte Smith, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Wollstonecraft—all recognized the arbitrary and violent foundations upon which government legitimacy often rested. "To defend the Bible in this year 1798 would cost a man his life," Blake writes in a note about Richard Watson's *Apology for the Bible*; "The Beast and the Whore rule without controls."[17] The treatment of Paine and the treason trials of a few years prior had taught Blake that language itself was subject to government control. His poem, *The French Revolution* (1791), was withheld from publication—mostly likely out of fear of prosecution. This was, as David Erdman argues, "a decisive failure for Blake," who might have connected with the larger public he so badly needed. Several years later, in 1803, Blake himself would feel the reach of authority—for defending his garden, not the Bible. He was acquitted of the charge of treason but the experience left him shaken. "Law itself," writes a recent biographer, Peter Ackroyd, "[became] a dark region for Blake, to be placed within his complex mythology" (252).

Like the state, though, the poets were not above a little suppression—or literary license—of their own. Wordsworth's poetry, as discussed in Chapter 2, recreated the experience of terror—the effects of passing through it—in part so that its lessons could be learned without recourse to actual violence. The revisions to *The Prelude* and some of the later poetic output work to suppress Wordsworth's own identification with revolution. Blake's *The French Revolution* covers the initial days of the Revolution but leaves out the event which was to become synonymous with it: the storming of the Bastille. The poem ends not in Versailles, amidst the horrible scenes described by Burke, but instead in Paris: " ... without a soldier, silent, for the noise was gone up / And follow'd the army, and the Senate in peace, sat beneath morning's beam" (ll. 305–06). Blake may have left the famous scene out in order to

address it more fully in the second book of the poem.[18] But as Erdman suggests, "Blake's manipulation of episodes emphasizes the primary demand for peace by making it appear that tyranny's 'war-breathing army' must be removed before the forms of oppression symbolized by the towers of the Bastille can be demolished and before social demands can be taken up" (Erdman 164). In *The French Revolution* it is the violence of the state, not the revolutionaries, that is emphasized—the "tower named bloody" (l. 33); the "old veterans of France, breathing red clouds of power and dominion" (l. 20).

Blake, however, is in many respects the exception to the rule described in *Britain's Bloodless Revolutions*. Blake's poetry is intimately connected to the world of eighteenth-century politics and society. Indeed, his poetry represents an attempt to change the world of eighteenth-century politics and society for the better. But Blake's is a world that resists institutions of any kind, even ones with reformist intentions. When in *Jerusalem* Blake's Los exclaims, "I must create a System, or be enslav'd by another Mans / I will not Reason and compare: my business is to create" (9: 20–21), it is the "create" part of the plan that must be emphasized—not the "system" part. In Blake's world "create" and "system" are opposites. In the eighteenth century it was precisely the "business" of system to reason and compare.[19] One can create a system, but once that system is a system it stops being creative. Systematic thinking is one of the "mind-forg'd manacles" that in "London" (1794) are associated with institutional power (the church, the state, marriage). To struggle with the confusing syntax and paradoxical word-associations in "London" is already to be outside of the systematic links described in the poem. Like many who would come to be classed as "Romantic," Blake pursued a path of literature that tended away from Enlightenment categories. But this did not lead him into the same retreats as many of the other Romantics.

For many Romantic-period writers *were* able to separate system and institution. In fact, they looked to literature as an alternative institution to the state, one that might bloodlessly assimilate the popular will for change and create a space of compromise between the people and the state. In Coleridge's Clerisy, Wordsworth's poet, Godwin's philosophical romance, and Helen Maria Williams' letters, we see an attempt to shape an alternative institution against the violent tendencies of the state and the people alike. System, as David Simpson has argued, was theoretical, cosmopolitan, French.[20] But to institutionalize something was to make it national—to make it English. Indeed, the nation offered several models that might be looked to in forging an institutional space for literature. Not all of them were equally attractive.

In the quote that heads this chapter Burke complains that the political reformers have conflated the events of the 1640s, 1688, and 1789. "It is necessary that we should separate what they confound," he writes. The world of eighteenth-century letters was experiencing a similar "crisis" (Paul Keen's term), in part for related reasons. The encyclopedic impulse of the Enlightenment, while intent on the process of separation, or disciplinarity, as it is now called, nevertheless maintained a very open category for "literature," one where many kinds of writing were confounded, as it were.[21] The Romantic categorization of literature as a largely individual and imaginative realm emerged from what Keen describes as a kind of retreat from "… the violence of the French Revolution and … a state campaign to suppress seditious writing" (20). As with the question of revolutionary violence in 1688, "literature" has in fact been the subject of many contentious debates itself, stretching from the period under consideration, the late eighteenth century, right up to our present disciplinary moment. My argument builds upon the work of Keen, Raymond Williams, Alvin Kernan, Clifford Siskin, Jonathan Kramnick, and others, who posit a change in the concept of literature dating from the mid-to late-eighteenth century.[22] "Literature," writes Kernan "is the correct historical term for the print-based romantic literary system centering on the individual creative self, that extended from the late eighteenth century to the present …" (9). Briefly, the argument suggests that while "literature" took on varied and often ambiguous meanings throughout the eighteenth century, in the period leading up to and following the French Revolution the term began to be thought of more specifically as imaginative writing—be it prose fiction or poetry. The subsequent attempt to forge a specifically English Literature—that is, to select the best of such writing—resulted in anthologies of past literary works, collected editions of novels, and a profusion of essays and criticism helping to delineate and shape this new category. The shift from an expansive, Enlightenment-based print culture to a private, imaginative realm of literature served to redirect the powerful effects of print and to subordinate politics to culture.

This distinction between (Enlightenment) writing and literature is crucial. For there was, of course, a lot of writing that followed the events of 1688–89. Two genres that seem to have flowered in the wake of 1688 are the essay—specifically, the periodical essay made famous by Addison and Steele—and the novel. The latter especially was not considered literary at the time. Both however became staple genres of the Romantic period. Indeed, the genre of the novel should be one of the candidates for being *the* literature of 1688.[23] "These novels," says Terry Eagleton of Samuel Richardson's fiction, "are an agent, rather than mere account,

of the English bourgeoisie's attempt to wrest a degree of ideological hegemony from the aristocracy in the decades which follow the political settlement of 1688" (4). In its largely protestant emphasis on straightforward language, individualism, and middle-class morality, the novel enacts the character of the Revolution of 1688. That the Revolution ushered in a new period of growth in trade and stability, in addition to the rage of party and corruption, and that a new reading public emerged in the coffeehouses of London and Edinburgh, speak of the novel being the genre most tied to the Glorious Revolution—for it is the novel that most truly represented these things.[24] That it did not always outwardly sing its praises does not take away from the fact that the stories it narrates are stories that stem from 1688. It was, as John Barrell explains, one of the genres that was "concerned to represent the diversity of English society more fully … than any literature produced before 1700" (19). What is more, the novel became a truly literary genre in the Romantic period— in part through the work of Walter Scott, Anna Barbauld, and Jane Austen. "What had been 'dangerous' or literarily and morally suspect," says Homer Brown, "was now [in the early nineteenth century] respectable as literature" (168–69).[25] Indeed, the literature that we think of as "Romantic"—Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron—adopted and rendered more literary certain very novelistic conventions (individualism, straightforward style, the valorization of the quotidian and a "panoramic view of society" (Barrell 19)). *Britain's Bloodless Revolutions* will look at several key moments in this process.[26]

Another way to describe this process is to say that certain kinds of writing and certain effects of writing were institutionalized as literature. This can be seen in the anthology projects of the early nineteenth century, projects that worked to include the novel in the category "literature": for example, Scott's introductory essays for the Ballantyne Novel series or Barbauld's "On the Origins and Progress of Novel-Writing," which introduced *The British Novelists* set. It can also be seen in the poetry, prefatory essays, and criticism of the time, all of which worked to exclude other kinds of writing—the gothic, for example, or "philosophical romance." But as with the status of 1688 in late-eighteenth-century Britain, this institutionalization was itself ambivalent. What worked as literature, as I discuss in subsequent chapters, often took certain features of writing and excluded others; or it took certain aspects of political debate and separated them from material change. Wordsworth takes Paine's people, so to speak, but not his politics. Scott capitalizes on the romantic aspects of Jacobitism without giving legitimacy to anti-Hanoverian violence. In other words, the institutionalization of certain

kinds and certain effects of writing as literary often helped to neutralize the dangerous aspects of print even while employing them to heighten the effects of literature on its readers. As Wordsworth says in his *Essay, Supplementary to the Preface* (1815), "To be moved ... by a passion, is to be excited, often to external, and always to internal, effort" (251). This passion may be the result of the effects Wordsworth achieves in using "the real language of men" in his poetry. But a mechanism must be in place so that the external effort "often" produced does not lead, as it does in Paine, to revolution. That mechanism is "literature"—or "genuine poetry" as Wordsworth calls it.

In a recent book on "the policing of culture in the Romantic period," Jon Mee makes what I see as a similar point regarding the "discourse of enthusiasm." Mee argues that as enthusiasm took on a more secular meaning—from religious error to "passionate pursuit"—it became "an object of discursive practices of regulation" (3):

> The kinds of statements that constitute this discursive formation ... operated across the long eighteenth century to identify something that was taken to transgress the boundaries of the emergent bourgeois public sphere, although ... enthusiasm became less something to be prohibited and excluded than regulated and brought inside the conversation of culture. (3)

This regulation of the discourse of enthusiasm was effected through literature. Literature helped to discipline the unruly elements of print and in the process helped to keep them alive. It is one of the ironies of this study that many of the reformist writers who stood on the side of the people—like Thelwall, for example—were unable in the end to translate the radical political energy into their literary productions. Many of those writers whose politics separated them from mass movements—Wordsworth and Scott, for example—were nevertheless able to find innovative ways to reproduce the energy and even the danger of popular politics in a literature that was conceived in opposition to the real changes such politics threatened. Godwin straddles this divide in interesting ways and for this reason he is a central figure in this study.

But capitalizing on the radical energy of mass movements is not the same thing as completing in literature what could not be completed in society, as some have argued.[27] Far less does the literature of the Romantic period complete the ideals of 1789 than it continues the "unfinished" project of 1688. "The true 'glory' of the Revolution [of 1688]," writes Trevelyan, "lies not in the minimum of violence which was necessary

for its success, but in the way of escape from violence which the Revolution Settlement found for future generations of Englishmen" (4). Romantic-period writers "found," in Trevelyan's terms, "a way of escape from violence." Their literary productions work to reproduce a similar effect, and as such contributed to the large-scale effort to forestall revolutionary change.

In positioning literature as an institution capable of producing rather than merely reflecting social change, I am not attempting to place myself within certain kinds of more recent scholarship that would make language or the text an autonomously determining agent.[28] The work of both a new historicism and a new cultural historicism, as well as a more recent anti-Whig historiography, has been immensely useful to me in understanding, in Clifford Siskin's words, "writing's ability to produce … change" (*Work* 3). I am not as ready, though, as some of these scholars to forego the social and economic links to the language of the political. It is in part for such a reason that I have taken up the term "institution," finding in it a way of discussing both literary-political and socio-economic relations without giving way to what Fredric Jameson has called "a prolongation of the procedures of 'homology' which eschews homology's theory and abandons the concept of 'structure.' "[29] For Jameson, postmodern theory works via a principle of "immanence," or a "suppression of distance." He asserts that "elegance here consists in constructing bridge passages between the various concrete analyses, transitions or modulations inventive enough to preclude the posing of theoretical or interpretive questions" (188). Looking at the emergence of capital "L," Literature in terms of an institutional change allows me to make comparisons between such a change and a prior institutional change in politics without abolishing the distance between, say, government and literature—or rather, by bridging this distance via a theorization of what links them: their *institutional* status. Such an approach does not collapse all distinctions by rendering everything a "text"; rather, it understands texts as they themselves came to comprise a kind of institution.

The periodization-scheme of the argument, too, works as a kind of bridge, one that brings together periods often understood as being at odds with one another: the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, Enlightenment and Romanticism, pre-modern and modern. I want to suggest that Romantic-period literature can be better understood in its points of contact with the earlier period and not solely in terms of constituting some kind of radical break from it. Indeed, to posit the bloodless Revolution of 1688 as a founding context for the literature of the Romantic period is to break from traditional assumptions that

Romanticism constitutes a break from the various genres and conceits that comprise eighteenth-century writing.

One effect of this new periodization is to better fit the developing genre of the novel into the larger narrative of the development of literature. The output of such writers like Defoe, Manley, Haywood, Richardson, and others often finds a much easier link with the concerns of Romantic writers like Wordsworth, Coleridge, Wollstonecraft, Godwin, and Scott than with their contemporaries, Pope, Swift, Gay, and even Addison and Steele. These concerns include an attention to what Ian Watt calls "formal realism" (an increased attention to the individual and to plots that develop in relation to the individual's interior states, to specific times and places and to realistic description),[30] and to what Michael McKeon calls "questions" of virtue and of truth—that is, to questions concerning the relationship between the individual and society and to questions relating to the representation of experience.[31] In other words, one does not need to regard the literature of the late eighteenth century as a shift away from the Augustan ideals that held sway in early-eighteenth-century England; one can instead see it as rendering literary the various ideals in common that emerged in the novels and political writings of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century.[32] Just as the Augustans themselves often looked back to previous political and literary order as an example against which the present time might be measured, so did those writers that helped to shape literature as we know it today look away from the bloodshed of France's Revolution and toward Britain's own revolutionary and not so distant past. It probably goes without saying that neither did this uncritically.

In addition to standard theories about what separates post-1688 literary output and the writing from the late eighteenth century onwards, the very idea of a "bloodless" revolution can be understood to be in tension with certain conceptions of Romanticism, Enlightenment, and the various breaks that are usually said to constitute modernity. Such tensions allow one to posit a kind of *stalled* enlightenment, whereby the radical break that emerges in French revolutionary language and Enlightenment theory from Kant to Adorno or Foucault is in Britain accommodated and assimilated into a narrative of tradition, common sense, "Englishness."[33] As discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, certain revaluations of Enlightenment in Britain have suggested that the contribution of British thinkers not only served as a foundation for the modern world (I'm thinking here of Roy Porter's recent book, *Britain and the Creation of the Modern World*), but that these contributions, while perhaps leading to violence and revolutionary change abroad, laid the foundation for more gradual,

peaceful change at home. Is it a coincidence that both reform and Enlightenment were *regarded* (and often continue to be regarded) as bloodless in Britain? If not, then something—or several things—helped to control or redirect the effects of each. One of these was literature—a literature that celebrated and re-enacted bloodless Revolution. I hope to keep in the forefront of my study the following two points: first, the core context of 1688 for understanding how both revolution and reform were received and (re)produced in late-eighteenth-century England; and second, the framework of a violent history of control for understanding the emergence of the very thing we still desire to limit in large part through periodization: Literature.

Britain's Bloodless Revolutions is broken down into two parts. Part I, "Violence and the Pursuits of Literature," contains three chapters. Each chapter looks at a particular instance where literary pursuit becomes tied up with finding a bloodless solution to the problem of political violence.

In my first chapter I look at popular responses to the bloodless Revolution of 1688 and at how those responses form both a foundation for national solidarity and a threat to that very foundation. As historians like Kathleen Wilson have demonstrated, 1688 was often understood as a model for popular reform—a model that kept the violence of the mid-seventeenth-century civil wars at a safe distance. However, while 1688 was a Revolution defended on many fronts throughout the eighteenth century, the supposed voice of the people granted by this Revolution became more and more synonymous with violent revolution—especially after 1789. The Revolution of 1688 comprised an institutional change that subordinated the monarchy to the parliament. In the eighteenth century, the job of checking those parliamentary powers fell to the press— or what was popularly conceived of as "the voice of the people." But what happens when this voice itself threatens to get out of control— when it becomes too powerful? I argue that the disciplinary boundaries negotiated at the end of the eighteenth century helped to contain the threat posed by writing. These boundaries subordinated the *political* voice of the people to the *cultural* voice of the nation.

In Chapter 2 I look at how certain kinds of writing came to be associated with violent revolution. T.J. Mathias' *Pursuits of Literature*, articles in the *Monthly*, the *British Critic*, the *Anti-Jacobin*, Edmund Burke's *Reflections*, the anonymous writer of "the Terrorist System of Novel Writing"—in all of these literature is made an overtly political issue. Some types of writing were seen not only to sympathize with violent revolution, or even to foment violence, but actually to comprise violent acts in themselves. Matthew Lewis' Gothic novel, *The Monk*,

for example, was described as "state parricide." Writers such as John Thelwall, William Godwin, and even Samuel Coleridge were castigated as Jacobins—the equivalent of today's terrorists. This association in many respects forced writers of the period to take sides, so to speak, on the question of violence. For example, Coleridge provided an etymology of the word "Jacobin" in the *Morning Post* of 1802. In his lectures on Shakespeare he compared Shakespeare's "organic" form with the "mechanic" or systematic form of French literature. These happen to be the same categories that Burke uses in his *Regicide Peace* letters to compare a peaceful England with a violent France. In his Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth distances himself from system, the Gothic, and revolution. He uses the language of Paine—that is, the language of common people—to develop a position on revolution that seems much closer to Burke's. His "lyrical ballads" link an individual with a popular form, and in doing so narrow the political space of poetry to the point where it is not wide enough, in a sense, for the people to gather. Wordsworth, I argue, takes the language of the people and returns it as the language of the self.

Chapter 3 turns to the work of a writer in many ways very different from Wordsworth—William Godwin—and shows how the two held similar positions on the problem of violence. I argue that against his 1793 definition of literature as a public sphere of letters, Godwin turned to an individuated sphere of literature as a way of instituting a gradualist model of non-violent change in opposition to more collective-based models like those advocated by the London Corresponding Society. Godwin was a famous systematizer at a time when systems were associated with materialism, rationalism, France, and violence. In the 1790s, following his *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*, Godwin moved away from system and took up the essay and the novel. But no matter how much he insisted that his fundamental principle was non-violent (and non-collective) change, he could not escape the condemnations of his work that characterized it and him as a violent revolutionary. While political opposites in many ways, Godwin and Wordsworth arrive at a similar theory of literature—that is, they agree on literature's function with regard to social change. But Godwin's "Jacobin" novels are less successful than Wordsworth's lyrical ballads at resolving the issue of violence and change. This is not because Godwin's novels were Jacobin. Rather, while at the level of content his novels aim to write violence out of the picture, the form his novels adopt shows the impossibility of removing the violence from political institutions. It is this tension, I suggest, that makes his novels such a rich access point to the period today.

But Godwin was not the only writer to conceive of literature as a political institution that might challenge or even replace the state. In Chapter 3 his writing is compared with that of two writers for whom the claim that government had insinuated itself into the domestic space would have come as no surprise. Helen Maria Williams and Mary Wollstonecraft examine the relationship between the domestic and the political and pay particular attention to the common element in each: violence. Both suggest that the political advances of 1688 and 1789 achieved little with regard to the lives of women. For Williams, the arbitrary violence associated with the ancient regime, domestic tyranny, *and* Robespierre's Terror is embodied in *la lettre de cachet* that serves as a prison order for her Baron du Fosse's son. Opposed to this is the epistle—including her own *Letters from France*—that connects the interior states of readers and writers. Wollstonecraft's work in the 1790s shows how in literature women writers were able to posit the embodiment of certain political ideals that were excluded from institutions upheld and overthrown by revolutions at home and abroad.

In the second section of the book, "From the Bloodless to the Romantic Revolution," I use the particular case of Scotland and the novel to chart a longer sweep in the century, one that culminates with the English Revolution of 1688 becoming both a "British" and a non-violent form of change.

In Chapter 4, I look at two Scottish responses to 1688—one violent, the other not. I argue that the place of Scotland within the United Kingdom following the Act of Union in 1707 rendered it unique in contributing both a British version of an English Revolution—1688—and a British form of narrating this British-ness: the novel. The first occurs in the work of Scottish Enlightenment thinkers: William Robertson, David Hume, Adam Ferguson, and others. Unlike Enlightenment on the continent, Scotland's Enlightenment was conducted from within the institutions of church and university. In addition, Enlightenment thinkers pitted themselves against the violence and critique of institutions that defined that other eighteenth-century response to 1688: Jacobitism. Jacobites looked to overthrow the Settlement of 1689 and, in many cases, the Union of 1707. But where the military threat posed by Jacobitism ended in 1746 with Cumberland's victory at Culloden, the Jacobite hold on culture continued well into the century. Figures like David Hume, William Robertson, and Adam Ferguson worked to relegate the pre-1688 society championed by the Jacobites to a distant, dark, and violent past. In contrast they extolled the civility of post-1688 Britain and offered a competing British culture to that of Jacobitism—a culture of "disciplines" within which "literature" played a central role.

   The two competing discourses of Jacobitism and Elightenment are synthesized in the novels of Walter Scott. In novels like *Waverley*, for example, Jacobitism reemerges not as a critique of 1688 but as a vehicle for upholding it. The distance between Scott and the Jacobite violence of 1745 allows him to use Jacobitism for the Enlightenment ends of upholding post-1688 institutions—this time against that other nasty "ism" of the age: Jacobinism. In addition, Scott's editorial and critical work helped to institutionalize that eighteenth-century genre, the novel, by rendering it literary—in a sense completing the disciplinary work of his Enlightenment forbears. In Chapter 5 I look at how Scott's fiction represents the end of both a narrative and a political process in the eighteenth century. Unlike Godwin, who found a political model in the civil wars of the 1640s, Scott's novels successfully recapitulate in form and content the Revolution and Settlement of 1688–89. In doing this, they work to preserve certain institutions (as did the Scottish Enlightenment writings) while rendering institutional this novel mode of preservation.

Part I
Violence and the Pursuits of Literature

1
Why Literature—not the People—Rose

> ...The cause of the people and the cause of the government, who are represented as thus anxious to suborn their creatures to write against the people, are not the same but the reverse of one another.
>
> William Hazlitt, "What is the People?" (1818)

The rise of Literature

The past decade of literary study witnessed a host of arguments concerning the making of the English canon and the rise of Literature with a capital "L." From changing reading habits to the displacement of religion, from an expansion of print to a "disciplinary" displacement of philosophy, eighteenth-century critics have posited a variety of answers to the question of how and why literature rose when it did.[1] In one sense, this may be a continuation of a trend in eighteenth-century studies particularly, one whereby critics chart the rise of this or that in eighteenth-century Britain: the novel, the public sphere, the people, the domestic woman, liberalism, capitalism, civility, literature. But in another sense, it marks a critical self-consciousness about the profession itself, one that seeks to answer for the present crises of the discipline.[2]

We all have learned to be suspicious of "rise" scenarios. Yet I would like to retain the metaphor. For one thing, rise scenarios themselves have become a fixture of the discipline. For another, the notion of something rising suggests something else below—something to be risen above. In this category too, the "not risen" or the down and dirty, we find a host of subjects that have been usefully explored by eighteenth-century critics: war, the economy, famine, work, slavery, domestic violence, crime, expansion—the list goes on. In this chapter, I explore the

relationship *between* the rise of literature—or at least a certain Romantic conception of it—and one aspect of the down and dirty (so to speak) that literature rose above. That is, I am most interested in what was already there and how that already-there is a vital part of what we know as literature. The first of these that I discuss is writing.

Put simply, literature arose from writing. By this I mean two things: first, literature rose above mere writing to become good writing, or the best writing. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries a massive growth of writing was disciplined by newly emerging literary boundaries.[3] Anthologies, essays, editions, and prefaces helped delineate what was good writing and separated such writing from the hoard of novels, broadsheets, essays, pamphlets, etc., that confronted the contemporary reader. In addition, literature no longer signified letters generally, as, say, Hume might have meant the term, but referred specifically to imaginative works. Raymond Williams, for example, argues that "Literature was specialized towards imaginative writing within the basic assumptions of Romanticism" (*Keywords* 186). As discussed, there was a shift in the late eighteenth century from a Enlightenment-based, public sphere of letters to a more individualistic, imaginary sphere of Literature. The question is, why? What factors caused such a shift?

Secondly, writing itself was on the rise in the late eighteenth century. Seventeenth-century England may have seen an explosion of print, especially during those times when the regulation of printing lapsed due to civil unrest and political upheaval: in the 1640s, for example, or during the Exclusion Crisis. But the late seventeenth century saw nothing like the complete saturation of print that defined late-eighteenth-century Britain. "England in the 1790s," explains Terry Belanger, "was a well-developed print society; in the 1690s, especially once we leave London, we find relatively little evidence of one."[4] This change in the *quantity* of print resulted in a *qualitative* change that helped to give us our current conception of literature. More print led to different kinds of print and to new categories for sorting it all out. Hierarchical and disciplinary boundaries helped to control growth where censorship and libel laws forbidding seditious intentions could no longer cope with an ever-increasing outpouring of printed texts. Following a line of thought developed in the work of Michel Foucault, we might say that the point was not to forbid writing, but rather to encourage it in certain directions—to "incite" discourse, not action.[5]

With this rise in print came also a rise in the political stakes. For writing had always been a political tool. Yet it was a tool that could be employed by enemies of government as well as advocates. In his *Observator* of 1681,

for example, Roger L'Estrange claimed of the general tumult among the people that " 'Tis the *Press* that has made 'um *Mad*, and the *Press* must set 'um *Right* again. The Distemper is *Epidemical*; and there's no way in the world, but by *Printing*, to convey the *Remedy* to the Disease."[6] For L'Estrange, a licensor of the press, printing was a technology that was especially prone to abuse. But after trying to legislate a variety of stern measures for stricter control of the press, he here expresses a "can't beat 'em then join 'em" solution; he seeks to re-establish political stability via the very tool that had, as he himself suggested, undermined it.[7] L'Estrange's use of the disease metaphor is shrewd: for the implication is that a small amount of right thinking will be sufficient to activate the common-sense antigens needed to thwart the radical ideals being disseminated in print. A similar strategy is adopted by writers like Hannah More or the anti-Jacobin press more generally at the turn of the next century. More did not simply attack the "Rights of Man" printers and Jacobin writers as, say, Edmund Burke did. Instead, she did what they were doing, and in many cases, did it better.

Thus the political uses of print were well established by the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century—even well before that. The charter for the Stationers' company was established by Mary Tudor in 1557 in order "to serve as the English government's most effective tool for control of the press."[8] Later writers like Bolingbroke could wage print was on politicians like Robert Walpole and poets like Alexander Pope could compose poems about the hacks who were knocking down his door in hopes of getting a hearing and then knocking down his personal life in their disappointment at not getting one.[9] Lois Schwoerer argues that the Glorious Revolution itself was a battle of books—or at least broadsheets. "Tracts, prints, and commemorative medals appeared at every important step in the Revolution of 1688–89," Schwoerer says. And "as a publicist," she continues, "James II was no match for William III."[10] Through printed works like the *Declaration of his Highness William Henry, Prince of Orange, of the Reasons Inducing him to Appear in Armes in the Kingdom of England for Preserving of the Protestant Religion and for Restoring the Lawes and Liberties of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, William was able to win the battle of public opinion and achieve a bloodless victory over James. As writers from Bolingbroke and Swift to the present have noted, 1688 marked not only a change in monarch and government, but a change in the way politics worked.

So what is the connection between these two, good writing and a lot of writing? More to the point, what was the political deployment of writing as literature? I have suggested that the increase in writing led to

a difference in kind, a difference we call "literature." Much of the literature we call "Romantic" can read like an escape from the political—different from "writing" or "print" not only in degree but in kind. But to rise above writing is not the same thing as rising above politics. I argue throughout *Britain's Bloodless Revolutions*, in fact, that the separation from writing was itself a political act, one often cast in terms of a rise above politics. Literature, as new historicist critics in particular have been shrewd in pointing out, was political in a different kind of way.[11] In order to further explore this different politics I look at a *second* thing that literature had to rise above in the eighteenth century: the people. "The people" were linked to writing in a couple of ways: first, following the Glorious Revolution and Act of Settlement, writing became a kind of *extra-institutional* voice of the people, "the people" themselves being defined in the eighteenth century by their exclusion from governing institutions.[12] Second, by the late eighteenth century, writing would come to occupy the similar threat against the state as the people—namely, the threat of violence. What I call the *problem* of the people was formulated and fought out in large part through writing between the 1690s and the 1790s. Insofar as this problem became one of writing itself, the rise of literature can be understood as an attempt at a solution.[13]

The problem of the people

A good place to begin understanding the problem is with what has been called the Revolution debate. Not thought of as primarily a literary debate, the controversy surrounding the Revolution was nevertheless as much an argument about style, form, and the sublime as it was about reform, representation, and violence. In addition, the debate provided the terms and language through which poets and novelists could speak about their age. For example, Godwin compares Burke's "modern" style with Rousseau's and then uses the one to dispute the other in terms of political content. This complicated relationship is captured in Godwin's tragic character from *Caleb Williams*, Falkland, who shares more than a few traits with Godwin's political nemesis. Wordsworth would offer a largely Burkean argument about revolution but he would cast it in the language of "real men"—Paine's language, that is. If literature offered a possible solution to the problem of the people then it stands to reason that the problem itself—and the terms of the debate about the problem—will be included as part of the material out of which this literature was made. Blake's use of the word "charter'd" in the first two lines of "London" can

refer not only to a street or to a river being marked for commerce, and thus to one source for the pervasive sense of individual oppression in the poem. The word choice also refers to the revolution controversy, to what kinds of exclusive and inclusive rights were granted to "the people" by the Magna Charta and the Declaration of Right.[14] These terms are outlined in the famous Burke–Paine debate.

In his grand survey of the rise of working-class consciousness, E.P. Thompson argues that Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* (part I published in 1791, part II published in 1792) was one of the central pillars of the English working-class movement. "Bunyan and Paine, with Cobbett and Owen," writes Thompson, "contributed most to the stock of ideas and attitudes which make up the raw material of the movement from 1790–1850" (*Making* 31). Paine's text helped to give voice to laboring people and as such had a tremendous effect not only on the formation of a more solidified English working class—a textual effect that quite literally changed the world—but also on the classes above that sought to lessen this effect, eradicate it, and eventually, to assimilate it. Paine took debates over reform beyond the constitutional limits imposed by previous writers and made popular a case for change based on reason, conscience, and "self-evident" truths. Thompson explains that "for a plebian movement to arise, it was essential to escape from these [constitutional] categories altogether and set forward far wider democratic claims" (*Making* 88). Although Edmund Burke talked more in terms of tradition generally than he did of the constitution specifically, it was against Burke's argument privileging the "dead" that Paine asserted the rights of the living:

> I am not contending for nor against any form of government, nor for nor against any party here or elsewhere. That which a whole nation chooses to do, it has a right to do. Mr Burke says, No. Where then *does* the right exist? I am contending for the rights of the *living*, and against their being willed away, and controlled for, by the manuscript assumed authority of the dead; and Mr Burke is contending for the authority of the dead over the rights and freedom of the living. (*Rights* 42)

For Paine, any contract made between a people and a form of government must be made anew by each generation, not passively accepted because of the assumed authority of tradition.

Burke and Paine differ in the way they argue nearly as much as they differ in the content of their arguments. In *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), Burke called upon a classical rhetorical tradition as well as

on historical example to make his point that tradition was something to be respected and adhered to: an example against which the whims and innovations of a few modern thinkers should never succeed. Burke mixed this, however, with an epistolary style that has oft been described—not least by Paine himself—as more literary than logical.[15] Paine writes,

> I cannot consider Mr Burke's book, in scarcely any other light than a dramatic performance; and he must, I think, have considered it in the same light himself, by the poetical liberties he has taken of omitting some facts, distorting others, and making the whole machinery bend to produce a stage effect. (*Rights* 59)

Paine was not the only one to make such a critique. Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Man* (1790), the first of many responses to Burke, points to Burke's excessive sentimentality as the marker of his literary style.[16] In many ways a work of imagination itself, it is no surprise that *Reflections on the Revolution in France* was treated to some substantial literary criticism by those "political men of letters" it sought initially to castigate. Burke renders politics an issue of style, often by substituting the latter for the former. "To make us love our country," he writes, "our country ought to be lovely."

   Paine, though, chose a simpler style with which to address his audience, even offering to "interpret" for his readers Burke's "learned jargon." His style was more in line with that of the "political men of letters" that Burke refers to disparagingly—men, Burke complains, that "are rarely averse to innovation" (*Reflections* 211). Simple, direct, methodical, systematic: these are some of the ways to characterize Paine's style, a style that mimics what David Simpson describes as "Paine's belief in an ideally simple or only minimally mediated relation between natural and civil rights" (55). Today we may think of Paine more for his message than for his delivery, especially when he is pared against the eloquence of Burke. But in the early 1790s, it was in large part the style and delivery that gave his message such force and made it so dangerous. Unlike, William Godwin's *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*, for example, which was published in book form and made far too expensive for the laboring poor to afford and supposedly far too learned for them even to understand, Paine's *Rights of Man* was published in pamphlet form, and thus made for easy access and wide circulation. As Thompson points out, "it was clearly stated [at Paine's trial] that the cheapness of the abridged editions was an aggravation of the offence" (*Making* 108).

Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* and Paine's *Rights of Man* were not only powerful pieces of writing; they were powerful pieces of writing that were published at the end of a century when writing itself had undergone and effected a kind of revolution. It was in the eighteenth century that writing became, in the words of Clifford Siskin, "a powerful part of the everyday life of the nation" (*Work* 2). In the eighteenth century, writing, like politics—and eventually *as* politics—became a dominant subject of writing. This was no coincidence. As John Bowles remarked in 1798, "[The reformers] well know … that discussion, in the unlimited sense in which they claim the right, and in excess to which they mean to carry it, is a powerful engine for the subversion of government—a mighty lever, sufficient, if judiciously applied, to overturn the social order of the world."[17] One notes the confusion between the words "excess" and "judiciously"—as if the social conditions of the time necessitated excess as part of judiciousness. In Bowles's words, though, it is clear that by the 1790s certain kinds of politics and certain kinds of writing had become closely linked to one another. Too much inclusion with regard to either one was thought to lead to trouble.

But the press, like the constitution, was seen as both a touchstone of English liberties—too important to curb in any way—and as a powerful checker to the king: something to keep government in line. "The spirit of the people," exclaimed Hume, "must frequently be roused, in order to curb the ambition of the court" ("Liberty" 3). This was both a benefit and a result of English freedom as it prospered under a "mixt" form of government. The press was part of a system of checks and balances, whereby "jealousy" underpinned a "mutual watchfulness" among competing institutions and factions. At the same time, however, Hume goes on to say that "the unbounded liberty of the press, though it be difficult to propose a suitable remedy for it, is one of the evils, attending those mixt forms of government" ("Liberty" 3). The press itself, Hume suggests, is capable of ambition. The increasing spread of print posed a problem that offered no easy solution.

In a society increasingly becoming a print culture, Burke's *Reflections* sold an astounding 30,000 copies—astounding, that is, until we remember that *Rights of Man* sold an unprecedented 200,000 copies.[18] If it has been generally acknowledged that print had been on the rise throughout the eighteenth century, then Paine's *Righs of Man* came at a moment when this rise had gone out of control. Whether it was Paine's text that single-handedly produced this change is not the point. Rather, the example of Paine's text makes a certain change visible. It was bad enough that Price was addressing a crowd of learned men on the points

of comparison between 1688 and 1789 and on whether England might follow France and reform its constitution. But Paine had crossed a line in bringing the Revolution debate to the people. To the reformers—and to the Enlightenment more generally—it had become clear that something might be done via writing. To others, it became equally clear that something would have to done about all of this writing.

How, then, did writing come to be figured as a major political problem in late-eighteenth-century England? And what did literature have to do with this? My answer to these questions is that writing became more and more a political problem as it became more and more linked to "the people"—that is, to discussion "in the unlimited sense," as Bowles puts it in the quote earlier. As such, it had to be controlled. One of the ways this was achieved was, paradoxically, through further growth. More specifically, it was achieved through the growth provided by disciplinary boundaries, like that offered by literature, to control this proliferation.[19] J.G.A. Pocock suggests that the effort from below to reform parliament—an effort that was played out largely in and by print—while "nothing like the creative constitutional experimenting of the founding fathers," was nevertheless "more embittering than any undergone by the Americans, and it is possible to imagine that it might have led to more revolutionary conclusions" (*Virtue* 275). Why it did not lead to such conclusions is a question I hope to answer in part by suggesting, strange as it may sound, that it was literature, and not the people, that rose. Print in a sense stood in for the people. The threat of an out-of-control print culture was similar to that of the people: namely, violence against the state. At the end of the eighteenth century this threat was in part neutralized by a different kind of revolution—a bloodless revolution: one that helped to bring forth a newly categorized, and newly canonized, literature.

Paine's *Rights of Man* provides a good example of the link between print and people; for as was pointed out earlier, when Paine was tried *in absentia* by the British government (for treasonous writings) part of the offense was that unlike other texts written by radicals, *Rights of Man* was disseminated in cheap form, making it available to a much larger audience and thus all the more dangerous. It was said with much horror that even a "child's sweetmeats" had been wrapped in a page from Paine.[20] Before fleeing to France to avoid incarceration, Paine penned a letter to be read at his trial. Writing, here, literally stood in for him. In his letter, as Thompson explains, Paine argued that a verdict against him "… would signify in reality a verdict against the rights of the people of England" (*Making* 109). As the letter stood in for Paine, so Paine stood in for the rights of the people. Paine was not, it would seem, the only one

to make this connection. His arguments were deemed dangerous by the government precisely to the extent that the people themselves became more and more aware of such an identification.

The danger resided in the fact that the lower orders were thought incapable of governing their behavior even without radical ideas informing their actions. "Unable to govern themselves," writes Paul Keen, "they [the lower classes] would be inclined to challenge the political authority of their own government" (Keen 57). Enlightened discussion was fine as long as it remained entirely within the intellectual realm. The question was one of keeping thought and action separate. But reformist writings like Paine's that targeted the lower classes put this key distinction in jeopardy. For example, and as Keen explains,

> The audience targeted by [Paine's] *The Age of Reason* would be misled into drastic courses of action because they lacked the advantages of education necessary, not only to distinguish helpful from destructive ideas, but also to understand that ideas, properly digested by enlightened minds, would achieve the desired effects without recourse to action. (Keen 57)

In other words, the lower classes could not keep ideas separate from action. Because they lacked education, and as a result of their being closer to "nature," as Wordsworth would put it, ideas—especially radical ones—could not be checked by thought. Aggressive response replaced passive contemplation. Reformist writers were said to be playing on this very weakness in order to effect their plans—even at the expense of "duping" the less educated part of the public. "The writers these days," says T.J. Mathias, "throw out their ideas at a heat, and intend they should be brought into immediate action" (part III, 37). Likewise, those middle-class lawyers and men of letters that Burke saw as greatly responsible for the revolution in France had failed to attend to this fact of nature. It was only a matter of time, Burke predicted, before further violence would ensue. Many have seen Burke as a kind of prophet in this regard: he described the advent of the French Terror before it happened. And because of the turn of events in France—a violent turn that the British people could read about daily in the papers—the reformist and radical writers too would have to distance themselves from "the people," that is, from words and genres that might be thought to foment violence.

Who were these people? For Burke, as has already been alluded to, the people comprised a "swinish multitude," the "associations of tailors and

carpenters" that "composed," for example, the republic of Paris, or simply, "the will of the many." The people were all those who were excluded from equal representation by their lack of property, and thus lack of rank. As Burke attests, "the characteristic essence of property, formed out of the combined principles of its acquisition and conservation, is to be *unequal*" (*Reflections* 140, Burke's emphasis). The people were to be governed by their betters, by men who had learning and, more importantly, a stake in things. Speaking of the "real" rights of men, Burke argues that,

> In this partnership all men have equal rights; but not to equal things. He that has but five shillings in the partnership, has as good a right to it, as he that has five hundred pounds has to his larger portion. But he has not the right to an equal dividend in the product of the joint stock; and as to the share of power, authority, and direction which each individual ought to have in the management of the state, that I must deny to be amongst the direct rights of man in civil society. … It is a thing to be settled by convention. (150)

Pitting convention against arithmetic or "systematic" reasoning, Burke explains that "the will of the many, and their interest, must very often differ" (141).

For Paine, the people were much the same. That is, Paine addressed himself to those who felt disenfranchised or un-represented by their government precisely because of their lack of a stake in things. "A vast mass of mankind," he writes, "are degradedly thrown into the back-ground of the human picture, to bring forward with a greater glare, the puppet-show of state and aristocracy" (59). Burke, of course, thought that the puppet show would amuse this multitude—and perhaps even make the people love those other few pulling the strings. But for Paine this was sheer artifice. The present form of government would continue to prevent people from ever gaining any kind of stake enough to play a part in representing themselves. For both Burke and Paine, though, "the people" signified a group that was *excluded* from taking part in the institutions of government.

Kathleen Wilson, in her study of eighteenth-century popular political culture, *The Sense of the People*, describes them similarly: " 'the people,' as much as 'the nation' constituted an 'invented community' in eighteenth-century political argument, one conceived, significantly, as lying outside formal political structures and as having interests dichotomous or potentially dichotomous to those in power" (*Sense* 17). She goes on to

explain that unlike in France,

> where "the people" were related oppositionally to "the public" in polit-
> ical discourse … in England, "the people" subsumed the latter position
> in the arguments of propagandists and in the self-representations of a
> variety of contending groups through the 1780s, serving as the short-
> hand for a tribunal of opinion outside political structures against
> which state power was assessed, checked and canvassed. (*Sense* 18)

On the one hand, the people were outside of "formal political structures,"
excluded from playing a direct role in government. On the other hand,
the people were seen as the public, and thus were understood to be indi-
rectly (at least) involved in politics. Via such extra-institutional chan-
nels as print, street performance, celebrations, and reading groups or
societies, the people maintained a connection to the political process
and ensured that their voices were heard, if not always heeded. But this
conflation of "people" and "public" jeopardized the Enlightenment
notion of a public sphere of letters removed from the interest and blood
of faction. It also threatened those institutions of control that had often
excluded the people from politics.

   By the end of the eighteenth century, print had come to be associated
with the people. It was in need of control. Many writers worked to dis-
sociate the two and to validate certain kinds of writing that transcended
this association. One writer who did not do this was William Hazlitt. In
his essay, "What is the People," first published in 1817, Hazlitt responds,
27 years after the fact, to Burke's "real rights" of men. He begins his essay
by asking "—and who are you that ask the question? One of the people."
These people, Hazlitt writes, are "millions of men, like you." And yet, he
continues,

> you would tear out this mighty heart of a nation, and lay it bare and
> bleeding at the foot of despotism: you would slay the mind of a coun-
> try to fill up the dreary aching void with the old, obscene, drivelling
> prejudices of superstition and tyranny: you would tread out the eye
> of Liberty (the light of nations) like "a vile jelly," that mankind may
> be led about darkling to its endless drudgery (3)

The description is violent. But it has the effect of reversing the association
of violence and the people and of removing the "decent drapery" of
Burke's institutional forms to reveal "a detestable fiction"—that is,

"Legitimacy." Hazlitt too defines the people by "saying what it is not"; and he contrasts "the interests of the people" with "the interests of those who would betray them." Government, he explains, "is instituted for the benefit of the governed, there can be little doubt; but the interests of the government (when once it becomes absolute and independent of the people) must be directly at variance with those of the governed" (6). So what is the people? First and foremost they are those who are at odds with the institutions that govern them. That is, "the people" are not government.

Hazlitt goes on to describe the will of the people as tending toward the general good. This will is cultivated via two means: necessity and the press—or what Hazlitt refers to as "public opinion." But he goes farther. Intellect itself is popular, he says. "Where are we to find the intellect of the people," he asks: "why all the intellect that ever was is theirs" (14). Even Burke's—who, as the essay insists from the start, is one of the people. As Tom Paulin has pointed out, Hazlitt lauded Burke's style not for its clever or sophisticated turns but because at its best the voice of the people could be heard in spite of these turns.[21] The passionate intensity of Burke's prose led Mary Wollstonecraft to suggest that had Burke been in France he would have been one of the revolutionaries. But public opinion, the will of the people, tends toward corruption as it comes under institutional controls, says Hazlitt. And these controls are backed not with more print, but with arms. "We appeal to the pen," says Hazlitt, "and they answer us with the point of the bayonet … . They quote [B]urke, but rely on the attorney-General" (16). Once again, Hazlitt reverses the people/violence association, this time throwing writing into the mix.

In significant ways both left and right saw "the people" similarly—as extra-institutional and yet as decisive as far as the legitimacy of institutions was concerned. This made the people both an empty signifier and what T.J. Clark would call a "volatile … political sign" (27). Clark argues that in post-revolutionary France, "[the people] were defined by pure discursive opposition, to the *riches*, the *aristocrates*, the idle and unproductive" (47). As with 1688, 1789 raised the question of just how far the people should be allowed to come forward in the political process. They had to be given some kind of role in representation and controlled at the same time. In David's painting of Marat, the figure of Marat serves as an image of the people while the form of the work suggests a modern engagement with a new kind of political "contingency." "The situation is out of control," writes Clark. "Surely never before had the powers-that-be in a state been obliged to improvise a sign language whose very

effectiveness depended on its seeming to the People a language they had made up, and that therefore represented their interests" (28). That it "did nothing of the sort" is not the point. Rather this is how the Jacobin government *saw* things. The ambivalence becomes part of the object itself.[22]

Having the people on one's side was a powerful claim, even if it was often a misleading one. Looking, for example, at popular readings of the Glorious Revolution of 1688, Wilson shows the extent to which various parties or factions employed the name of the people as a way of legitimating their attacks on, say, a particular party or government. Tories or "patriot" Whigs invoked the people in their critiques of Walpole. They argued that the Glorious Revolution was supposed to have granted parliament increased powers in the interest of checking those of the monarch; yet under Walpole, they claimed, parliament had effectively taken the place of the monarch and become a monolithic force in itself. This of course does not mean that these Tories or patriot Whigs truly had the people's best interests in mind. In fact, an important political trick in the eighteenth century seems to have involved appeasing the people nominally while keeping them "the people"—that is extra-parliamentary—in every material sense. Yet this did not always have the intended effect; or rather, its effect could not always be controlled by those that employed it. "In stimulating the articulation of alternative readings of the interpretations and principles of the Revolution and Act of Settlement," writes Wilson, "the opposition campaign against Walpole provided those out-of-doors with a compelling vindication of extra-parliamentary political culture and a justification for the continuing role of the people in the political process" (Wilson 385).

For part of the supposed greatness of the English constitution was that it afforded a place for the people in government. Richard Price celebrates this idea in his sermon delivered to the Revolution Society on November 4, 1789. It was in this speech that Price compared the Glorious Revolution of 1688 with the French Revolution of 1789, a comparison that incensed Burke. Price begins by praising 1688–89, claiming that "by a bloodless victory, the fetters which despotism had been long preparing for us were broken; the rights of the people were asserted, a tyrant expelled, and a sovereign of our own choice appointed to his room" (Price 28). For Price, 1688 signified the entry of the people into politics. But he continues, shrewdly, by explaining that great though the Revolution may have been, it was far from finished. Price, like many dissenters, wanted a repeal of the Test Act, an act that kept dissenters from holding office. But he encased this specific point within a larger

argument about representation: "the most important instance of the imperfect state in which the Revolution left our constitution," Price states, "is the INEQUALITY OF OUR REPRESENTATION" (Price 30). For moderate reformers like Price the French Revolution provided an occasion to update the English Revolution of 1688.

As I suggested earlier, it was precisely this idea that Burke wished to forestall, if not eradicate, by pointing out not only the differences between the English and French Revolutions, but also the differences between Price's representation of 1688 and the true meaning of that revolution. Burke takes up what he considers the "three fundamental rights" accorded the people of England in Price's reading of 1688: (1) that the people choose their own governors; (2) that they may cashier them for misconduct; (3) that they may frame a government for themselves (*Reflections* 99). According to Burke, Price finds a contemporary legitimacy in the revolution of 1688 by referring to the rights it granted to the people. In response, however, Burke does exactly the same thing—that is, he denies such rights precisely in the name of the people:

> This new and hitherto unheard-of bill of rights, though made in the name of a whole people, belongs to those gentlemen [of the Revolution Society] and their faction only. The body of the people of England have no share in it. They utterly disclaim it. They will resist the practical assertion of it with their lives and fortunes. They are bound to do so by the laws of their country, made at the time of that very revolution. (*Reflections* 99)

Burke, like Price, uses the people to legitimize his reading of 1688, a famously confusing reading whereby the events of 1688–89 are seen to comprise not a break with tradition, but an anomalous instance of its upholding. As Pocock explains, "… Burke desired to maintain that the necessity which justified the Revolution had been the necessity of preserving the ancient constitution, and that the Revolution consequently had been carried out within the constitution and had had the effect of preserving it and not subverting it" ("The Fourth English Civil War" 53).[23] In other words, for Burke 1688 could qualify as a revolution only according to the old, astronomical sense of the word—as in a revolving, or a return—and not in the newer sense that followed from the French Revolution.[24]

Are women the people?

While the rights of the people—real or imagined—comprised a major political topic in the late eighteenth century, many of the institutional

changes that people in France and Britain were fighting for would continue to exclude women. Mary Wollstonecraft, in her reply to Burke's *Reflections*, *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790), argued for the "rights of men"—by which she meant the rights of humanity—as well as for the "liberty of reason" (35). By and large it was a republican more than a feminist statement. Two years later, in her *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), Wollstonecraft revised her stance about what was to be included in the rights of men:

> It is then an affection for the whole human race that makes my pen dart rapidly along to support what I believe to be the cause of virtue: and the same motive leads me earnestly to wish to see woman placed in a station in which she would advance, instead of retarding, the progress of those glorious principles. My opinion, indeed, respecting the rights and duties of woman, seems to flow so naturally from these same principles, that I think it scarcely possible, but that some of the enlarged minds who formed your admirable constitution, will coincide with me. (101)

For Wollstonecraft, the French *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of Citizen* contained principles that are universal—a model for a new written constitution in England. Indeed, Wollstonecraft was an ardent fan of the argument put forth by Paine in his *Rights of Man*. But to apply such rights to "the people" was difficult enough. To include women under such rubrics as liberty or equality, not to mention fraternity, was an altogether different thing—as many women were to find out.[25]

But it is clear too that Wollstonecraft thought differently about the terms of the revolution debate even before her reformed 1792 stance. One indication is that she hardly mentions the Glorious Revolution in her *Vindication of the Rights of Men*. While many male writers—like Paine—took Burke to task concerning his argument about 1688 and its attendant principles, many women writers left this issue alone and focused more on the far-reaching implications of Burke's lament over the fall of chivalry and his curious notions of female beauty.[26] This is an interesting absence considering that Wollstonecraft in other respects makes many of the same points as Paine: for example, she argues for principles over contingency, rights over custom, and simplicity and transparency over "gothic" obfuscations. But the Glorious Revolution was not the focal point of contest between women writers like Wollstonecraft and Burke. In her *Rights of Men*, Wollstonecraft says the following about the constitutional debate:

> The imperfection of all modern governments must, without waiting to repeat the trite remark, that all human institutions are unavoidably

imperfect, in a great measure have arisen from this simple circumstance, that the constitution, if such an heterogenous mass deserve that name, was settled in the dark days of ignorance, when the minds of men were shackled by the grossest prejudices and most immoral superstition. (RoM 42)

If anything, Wollstonecraft departs both from Burke's argument and from that of her mentor, Price. The constitution (and by this Wollstonecraft means not only 1688 and 1701, but all the assembled "liberties" of the English) is for Wollstonecraft neither worthy of improvement nor fine as it is. Sounding most like Paine, Wollstonecraft implicitly questions its very existence. She then goes on to argue that such a "heterogenous mass" reflects only ancient ignorance and superstition.

In fact, Wollstonecraft takes up the argument between Burke and Price not to defend Price's principles, but rather to defend his character. "In reprobating Dr. Price's character," Wollstonecraft exclaims, "you might have spared the man." She continues: "if you had but half as much reverence for the grey hairs of virtue as for the accidental distinctions of rank, you would not have treated with such indecent familiarity and supercilious contempt, a member of the community whose talents and modest virtue place him high in the scale of moral excellence" (RoM 48). Wollstonecraft in essence argues for a meritocracy of virtue and talent against a hierarchy of rank. The former, for Wollstonecraft, is natural; the latter is the most artificial of constructs. Wollstonecraft's defence of Price's character leads her to what is indeed a focal point of *her* argument against Burke: the episode involving Marie-Antoinette:

Granting, for a moment, that Dr. Price's political opinions are Utopian reveries, and that the world is not yet sufficiently civilized to adopt such a sublime system of morality; they could, however, only be the reveries of a benevolent mind. Tottering on the verge of the grave, that worthy man in his whole life never dreamt of struggling for power of riches; and, if a glimpse of the glad dawn of liberty rekindled the fire of youth in his veins, you, who could not stand the fascinating glance of a great Lady's eyes, when neither virtue nor sense beamed in them, might have pardoned his unseemly transport,—if such it must be deemed. (48–49)

Wollstonecraft in effect displaces the argument between Burke and Price about the meaning of 1688 with an argument that she insists is the more central one: what is the proper object of esteem? Price, the virtuous

man, is transported by the "glad dawn of liberty"—a fitting object, if any, to stir the imagination. But Burke, the lover of artificiality, finds himself transported by a far lesser object: a great lady with neither virtue nor sense. This is Burke on the young Marie-Antionette:

> I saw her just above the horizon, decorating and cheering the elevated sphere she just began to move in,—glittering like the morning-star, full of life, and splendor, and joy. Oh! What a revolution! And what an heart must I have, to contemplate without emotion that elevation and that fall! (*Reflections* 169)

These two passages by Burke and Wollstonecraft offer competing versions not only of revolution, but of aesthetics, as well. Wollstonecraft can excuse Price's reverie because its object was virtuous and just: the dawning of a new age of liberty (the French Revolution in its infancy). The implied response is practically Burkean. It was *natural* that he should have felt such. It is not effusion itself that is the problem—though Wollstonecraft elsewhere warns against imaginative excess and flights of fancy. Price is led to reverie via reason—or at least via the possibility of reason's reign.

But for Burke the dawning of this new age is unnatural: "their blow," he says, speaking of the revolutionaries, "was aimed at an hand holding out graces, favours and immunities" (*Reflections* 126). Why does he feel so differently from Price, Burke asks? "Because it is natural I should," he says (175). For Burke, the natural is what has come to assume permanence. Tom Furniss argues that Burke's response to Price is in fact a response to the revolutionary potential of his own aesthetics: "one of the reasons that Burke needs to discredit Price's sermon," remarks Furniss, "is that it rearticulates his own assumptions in the *Enquiry* in order to encourage a political movement which threatened Britain's socio-economic order" (139). Burke thus shifts his aesthetic stance in order to protect a political one. Whereas in the *Philosophical Enquiry* Burke relies on the sublime to ward off the numbing effect of habit and custom (the beautiful)—the effeminization that comes with commercial culture—in the *Reflections*, he "pits 'naturalized' habits and customs (as the 'true' sublime and beautiful) against the naked nature (the 'false' sublime) of revolutionary radicalism" (Furniss 189). Thus habit and custom are themselves naturalized.[27] And in the process, the aesthetic of the beautiful is given a social function: to maintain political institutions via "pleasing illusions" which serve to make power "gentle" and obedience "liberal" (*Reflections* 171).

It is this part of the argument that Paine picks up on when he criticizes Burke for pitying the plumage while forgetting the dying bird and when he rails against the *Reflections* for being more theatrical than historical. Wollstonecraft, too, homes in on Burke's striking image and its political implications. She recognizes it as the both the focal point of Burke's "anti-system" and the true ground of dispute. But unlike Paine, Wollstonecraft emphasizes its gendered underpinnings.[28] As Ronald Paulson explains, "the underlying insight of Wollstonecraft's writings on the French Revolution is that the beautiful is no longer a viable aesthetic category" (86). It is no wonder, then, that Wollstonecraft excuses Price's flight of fancy when his object was that very thing, the Burkean sublime: revolution. While Wollstonecraft's championing of the masculine sublime accords with her love of manly virtue, it is not the case that she simply takes Burke's categories and employs them without thought. In her writings on revolution and on art, it is clear that Wollstonecraft adapts the masculine sublime just as she adapts manly virtue to her program. For it is worth remembering that, as Linda Colley suggests, "the French Revolution had exposed women to political violence as never before, but in return had given them few if any concrete advantages" (256). But while Wollstonecraft eventually became wary of her republican comrades and their "rights," she nevertheless remained skeptical of Burkean sentiment. Her resulting stance is what she calls a "revolution in female manners" (RoW 341).

Of course, such a "revolution" is a Burkean creation—a revolution he roots directly in the body of the Queen:

> Excuse me, therefore, if I have dwelt too long on the atrocious spectacle of the sixth of October 1789, or have given too much scope to the reflections which have arisen in my mind on occasion of the most important of all revolutions, which may be dated from that day, I mean a revolution in sentiments, manners, and moral opinions. (*Reflections* 175)

Burke describes the scene of Marie-Antionette's capture as one of savage violence, at once horrifying and titillating. The very political institutions he wishes to defend at home become, analogously, the vulnerable body of the queen. While the age of chivalry may be gone in France (*Reflections* 170), Burke nevertheless relies on the men of England to come to the defence of a body equally in peril. "To love the state on

Burkean terms," says Claudia Johnson,

> to honor institutions of law, church, rank, and all manner of hereditary structures not because of their deserts but because custom has endeared them, and to love a beautiful woman … is thus to place both state and woman alike outside moral or rational answerability and to insist they remain that way, lest love dissolve, leaving calculation and coldness in its stead. (29)

Burke's revolution is rooted in the customs and manners of which the queen becomes an *embodiment*.[29] The fate of the queen serves as an example: what is done to her suggests that the people themselves no longer embody such customs and manners. This is cause for concern; for when the queen is "stripped," to use Furniss's description, what is left is not pretty:

> All the super-added ideas, furnished from the wardrobe of a moral imagination, which the heart owns, and the understanding ratifies, as necessary to cover the defects of our shivering nature, and to raise it to dignity in our own estimation, are to be exploded as a ridiculous, absurd, and antiquated fashion. (*Reflections* 171)

As Burke says, "a woman is but an animal; and an animal not of the highest order" (171).

Wollstonecraft recognizes the gendered aspect of Burke's beauty—the fact that it is not actually the woman's *body* but woman as *embodiment* that is at the root of both manners and morals in Burke. Her writings on the French Revolution as well as her fiction—for example, *The Wrongs of Woman*—examine this issue of the body more closely. It is in such writings that Wollstonecraft posits the example of a female body truly stripped of artificial customs and constraints—a transparent body at home in its own skin. This is the domestic woman, in whom Wollstonecraft finds an alternative understanding of embodiment—not only to Burke's queen, but also to the "female hags" that stormed Versailles.[30] What we learn from Wollstonecraft is that in Burke, the beautiful queen is used to embody a fiction—namely, courtly virtue. Such is in fact the kind of fiction that Wollstonecraft rails against in her reviews for the *Analytical*. But Wollstonecraft, as I discuss in Chapter 3, does not entirely eschew the genre of fiction. The difference is subtle: whereas in Burke the female

body is used to embody the fictional virtue of political institutions, in Wollstonecraft it is fiction that will embody the virtue grounded in the female body.

For Wollstonecraft understands that Burke's argument about manners is in fact also an argument about imagination, about fiction. Which is the proper object, Wollstonecraft implicitly asks: the dawn of a new age or the embodiment of courtly virtue? One may perhaps be a fiction. This she concedes. The other is simply a lie. On account of his overactive imagination Wollstonecraft actually accuses Burke himself of being a violent revolutionary in chivalric dress:

> Reading your Reflections warily over, it has continually and forcibly struck me, that had you been a Frenchman, you would have been, in spite of your respect for rank and antiquity, a violent revolutionist; and deceived as you now probably are, by the passions that cloud your reason, have termed your romantic enthusiasm an enlightened love of your country, a benevolent respect for the rights of men. (RoM 78)[31]

For Wollstonecraft, Burke's violent imagination could just as easily have found a way to defend the overturning of the state. This is because it is grounded in dangerous—often uncontrollable—sentiment.[32] Price's flight, on the other hand, is grounded in principles of virtue and reason (though they have, at the moment, no institutional embodiment). Price fixes his imagination on the construction of proper institutions. Wollstonecraft, in expanding the rights of man, looks to the imagination as one of these.

The crisis of literature

For Burke, 1688 is no model at all for revolution. For Price, it is a model that can be improved upon, following the success of the French Revolution. For Paine and Wollstonecraft, it is a dead model that should exert no sway over the living who must decide for themselves what kind of government best suits them. Likewise, the very form of Paine's argument for a new government broke from the available models of the past—as his argument broke from the constitutional model—and recapitulated in both style and substance revolution in its newest, most modern sense. Burke may have spoken *of* revolution by way of distancing its possibility from the British people. But what Paine had to say, and how he said it, *was* revolution. The fact that parts one and two of *Rights of Man* sold a combined 200,000 copies attests to this fact.

The constitution was the product of this confusing institutional change. While writers like Aphra Behn or Richard Price could attribute this change to writing, the constitution itself remained unwritten. In Paine we can see an attempt to move away from this unwritten constitution and toward writing—an attempt to make writing, not the constitution, the battleground for political reform. One way of understanding the political debates of the period is as follows: in 1688–89 the rights of the monarch were curbed by a parliament seeking to increase its powers. The century separating 1688 from 1789, however, saw parliament itself become a kind of power too big to be checked. In the 1790s we can see the culmination of a drive to curb that power—of parliament—and to institute a government whereby the people could play more than an extra-parliamentary role.

The corollary of this in writing is what Paul Keen has termed "the crisis of literature in the 1790s." Keen argues that "we need to rethink the relationship between Enlightenment and Romantic discourses in terms of the sort of historical interpretation which emerges out of an analysis of the anxieties generated by the struggle to assert contending definitions of literature as a politically charged social phenomenon" (6). As I have argued, the problem of the people is not just posed *in* print. The problem, in part, *is* print—or what would be classified as certain kinds of print. As Keen himself points out, "… with the advent of a reform movement on a mass scale, the prospect of an open debate within print culture was being increasingly demonized as an inevitable prelude, rather than a healthy alternative, to violent insurrection" (169). All of the writers studied in this book recognized the association between print and violence—that the Revolution debate was about literary as well as political representation. All of the writers studied in this book "contended" over how far definitions of literature should or could admit the public at large.

This includes Burke and Paine; for it would be an error to think that they ignored literary issues. As I hope my argument in this chapter has already begun to demonstrate, the subject of writing played a large role in both the conception and the reception of these two political texts. As another polemicist of the 1790s put it, "Government and literature are now more than ever intimately connected" (Mathias v). Burke and Paine were not only writing for or against a political revolution, they were writing for or against a literary revolution—indeed, there was some sense that a national aesthetic was among the stakes they were writing for.[33] This is to say that these two "revolutions" were hardly distinct for Burke and Paine. Burke, for example, lays a good deal of responsibility

for revolutionary excess at the feet of what he terms the "political men of letters":

> The literary cabal had some years ago formed something like a regular plan for the destruction of the Christian religion. This object they pursued with a degree of zeal which hitherto had been discovered only in the propagators of some system of piety. They were possessed with a spirit of proselytism in the most fanatical degree; and from thence, by an easy progress, with the spirit of persecution according to their means. What was not to be done towards their great end by any direct or immediate act, might be wrought by a longer process through the medium of opinion. (*Reflections* 211–12)

In order to effect this more gradual revolution, these men of letters had to "establish a dominion" over the directors of the press. This they did, according to Burke, through the achievement of literary fame—an achievement, Burke adds, that in turn soothed the excessive vanity of such writers. Excessive vanity is a charge that Burke levels at all of these writers, especially Rousseau.[34] And as to their "pretended" love for the people, such goes hand in hand, Burke argues, with the propagation of "novelties" (*Reflections* 213). This pretended love is only a vehicle for the vanities and ambitions of these writers.

Burke was not alone in ascribing tremendous powers to these political men of letters and to a press that "has made every government, in its spirit, almost democratick" (*Second Regicide* 292), Indeed, there was a feeling among people left and right that radical political protest was, in Kevin Gilmartin's words, "at times indistinguishable from its expression in print" (65). Many radical or reformist writers tried to use the press as a stated non-violent means for change—to enlighten through public opinion. But as Keen explains, "as the French Revolution developed, reformist authors became identified, not merely with the atheistic tradition of Voltaire, but with the Jacobins themselves" (50). As we'll see with Godwin, this association was made despite declarations by various authors against violence as a means for change and despite the move by these same authors away from genres—like system—associated with violence.

Initially, the link between reform and writing had been made by reformists writers themselves. The dissemination of information and reasoned opinion was one of the defining traits of the Enlightenment. Price, for example, praises writers from Milton to Montesquieu for disseminating notions of reason and rights: "they sowed a seed which has since taken root," says Price, "and is now growing to glorious harvest.

To the information they conveyed by their writings we owe those revolutions in which every friend to mankind is now exulting" (Price 26). Here the link is made between ideas disseminated in print and revolution. But Price may have 1688 in mind—that is, non-violent, or "bloodless" reform—as he uses the term "glorious" to describe the effects reaped from the seeds planted in writing. Paine, too, praises the "republic of letters," not only for disseminating reformist or radical ideas, but for providing a model of a more egalitarian or merit-based society that might oppose the "absurdity" of the hereditary system as expounded by Burke:

> As the republic of letters brings forward the best literary productions, by giving to genius a fair and universal chance; so the representative system of government is calculated to produce the wisest laws, by collecting wisdom from where it can be found. I smile to myself when I contemplate the ridiculous insignificance into which literature and all the sciences would sink, were they made hereditary; and I carry the same idea into governments. (176)

Paine imagines the ridiculous world where literary talents would be passed on like an inheritance. The realm of literature offered an alternative social division that opposed itself to primogeniture. Paine himself provides an excellent example of a man made, in many respects, through writing. Paine's idea is echoed by Wordsworth in 1802 when he argues that "one being is elevated above another in proportion as he possesses [the] capability" to be excited "without the application of gross and violent stimulants" (283–84). As I discuss in the next chapter, though, Wordsworth takes Paine's line of thinking in a different direction; his poet may speak Paine's language but he does so with a much more Burkean design.

While many writers made the explicit connection between their reformist and populist ideals and print, very few would have gone so far as to advocate violence.[35] It was a combination of a conservative, anti-Jacobin force in letters and a government fearing the importation of revolution from abroad that created the link between print and violence. Writers pushing for reform had a difficult time distancing themselves from the claim that they were advocating revolutionary violence. As with Locke's arguments in the 1680s (to be discussed later), it was one thing to connect "the people" to the press or the constitution *abstractly* as an institution of British liberties; but when the ambition—as Hume would say—of the press threatened to connect the people with real

institutional change, then such a link had to be disclaimed, lest one suffer the consequences. Writers like Paine, Thomas Holcroft, John Thelwall, and Horne Tooke, and printers like Joseph Johnson, Thomas Spence, and Daniel Issac Eaton were arrested and treated as enemies of the state. Joseph Priestley's house and library were attacked and burned by a "church-and king" mob that viewed him as a threat to the nation. As Eaton avers in his satirical pamphlet on "The Pernicious Effects of the Art of Printing upon Society, Exposed" (1793), "before this diabolical art was introduced among men, there was social order" (Eaton 3). However, after its invention and continued rise in society, "the lower orders beg[a]n to have ideas of rights, as men—to think that one man is as good as another" (Eaton 8). Whether or not such ideas automatically led to violence was beside the point. By claiming that they did so, the government and its anti-Jacobin writers could help to make sure that such ideas never lead anywhere beyond the printed page.

As early as 1793, writers like Hannah More found themselves in the midst of the fray, propagating reactionary ideas and lionizing the virtues of temperance, patience, and passivity. Her *Village Politics* (1793), for example, went head-to-head with Paine's *Rights of Man*. In this dialogue between two country laborers Paine's ideas are cast as both French and violent, and good old-fashioned English sense is called upon to thwart their diffusion and harmful effects in the community. Another writer, T.J. Mathias, defined the ground of battle not simply in terms of Paine's text, but in terms of the whole "field" of Literature itself—and specifically, a national Literature.[36] His *Pursuits of Literature*, which was published in successive parts and editions throughout the 1790s, asserted the importance of literature in the fight to preserve the nation from violent revolution. In the first two parts of his satirical dialogue most of the names named are those of writers whom Mathias finds both absurd and dangerous—writers such as Godwin, Paine, Thelwall, etc. But by the later parts of the dialogue, Mathias's explanatory footnotes nearly take over the poem as he descants on public and political issues: on Pitt and his ministers, on war with France, on the constitution. Where literature is at first cast as a politically important topic, it is by the end one and the same with politics. Literature that would reform the constitution is itself constituted as "ill conducted"; that which would uphold it is "well conducted." Mathias exclaims: "I speak from awful and trembling conviction, OUR RUIN CAN BE EFFECTED BY POLITICAL REFORM ALONE, and our enemies at home and in France know that I speak the truth" (part IV, x).

Mathias claims that reform-oriented literature is based on the "popular origin" of the House of Commons. Literature is made a very part of the constitutional debates of the 1790s. But Mathias stresses that this origin is popular in the historical, not the modern sense (part IV, Advertisement). In other words, it does not refer to "the people" as a collective body. Instead, "the people" comprise an abstracted historical entity, like "Britain," or "the nation." To conclude this chapter I want to address this difference—between historical and modern, abstract and material— as it is played out in the writings of a writer whose *Second Treatise* was thought to provide the theoretical justifications for 1688: John Locke. This distinction will be crucial at the other end of the eighteenth century, too (and is addressed in Chapter 2), where Wordsworth will make the connection between an abstract or "universal" characterization of "the people" and the proper audience for Literature with a capital "L."

Locke's "Appeal To Heaven" and the origins of the problem of the people

While claiming that the legislative power is the "one supreme power … to which all the rest are and must be subordinate," John Locke goes on in paragraph 149 of his *Second Treatise* of Government to declare that there is yet a power above this one supreme power:

> there remains still in the people a supreme power to remove or alter the legislative, when they find the legislative act contrary to the trust reposed in them. For all power given with trust for the attaining an end, being limited by that end, whenever that end is manifestly neglected, or opposed, the trust must necessarily be forfeited, and the power devolve into the hands of those that gave it, who may place it anew where they shall think best for their safety and security. And thus the community perpetually retains a supreme power of saving themselves from the attempts and designs of any body, even of their legislators, whenever they shall be so foolish, or so wicked, as to lay and carry on designs against the liberties and properties of the subject. (Locke, par. 149)

Locke's argument is that the people retain the supreme power in any "constituted" government to depose their governors, or legislators. A couple of questions immediately present themselves, however: first, by what means are the people supposed to employ this power? Second, to whom does Locke refer when he speaks of the people?

Regarding the first, Locke claims that "… the community may be said in this respect to be always the supreme power," but he continues with the proviso that "… this power of the people can never take place till the government be dissolved" (par. 149). Who, then, can dissolve the government? This power falls to the executive, which has the power of "supreme execution." This executive power, though, does not give the king a supreme power over the parliament, at least according to Locke; for "the power of assembling and dismissing the legislative, placed in the executive, gives not the executive a superiority over it, but is a fiduciary trust, placed in him, for the safety of the people, in a case where uncertainty, and variableness of humane affairs could not bear a steady fixed rule" (par. 156).

What Locke effectively sets up is a hierarchy: the people stand over the legislative, which in turn stands over the executive. Yet the executive has the power to dissolve and call to order the legislative, just as the legislative has the right to make laws that the executive must also obey. Stated abstractly, this sounds like a civics lesson about checks and balances. But contextualized historically we can begin to see the significance of Locke's system of government for an argument asserting the rights of the people. Locke's *Second Treatise* was long thought of as a justification of the Glorious Revolution. First published in 1690 it asserts the powers of parliament over the monarchy; indeed, in many respects the *Second Treatise* harmonizes well with the outcome and continuing celebration of 1688. Historians of the period, however, have shown that the *Two Treatises*, while first published at the end of the decade, was in fact composed closer to the beginning—that is, during the tumultuous years of the Exclusion Crisis.[37]

The Exclusion Crisis of the early 1680s was a crisis over whether or not James II, Duke of York, should be allowed to succeed to the English throne. James' brother, King Charles II, was a Catholic sympathizer and was suspected of having secret dealings with the government of France. Fearing Parliament's refusal to grant him the monies he required, Charles got them from Louis XIV in return for the promise to reintroduce Catholicism into England (which was to be carried out when Charles thought it convenient).[38] James, however, was a Catholic, and many in England worried that allowing a Catholic to succeed to the throne would lead to absolutist rule. Among these was Anthony Ashley Cooper, first Earl of Shaftesbury. Shaftesbury was the founder of the Whig party, was Locke's friend and mentor, and the infamous anti-hero of Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel*. He it was who "tempted" Charles's illegitimate son, the Duke of Monmouth, to seek the throne of England

against his uncle and his father:

> Now, manifest of crimes contrived long since,
> He stood at bold defiance with his prince;
> Held up the buckler of the people's cause
> Against the crown, and skulked behind the laws.
> The wished occasion of the plot he takes:
> Some circumstances finds, but more he makes. (Dryden 204–09)

Shaftesbury's plot failed, and he was locked away in the tower. But in 1681, parliament passed (after two other barely failed attempts) the Exclusion Bill. Charles responded by dissolving parliament and by resolving never to call it again during his reign. The money he would receive from France (following the secret Treaty of Dover) made this act possible. The people of England, then, faced not only the possibility of a Catholic ruler at a time when Catholicism was linked to arbitrary rule, standing armies, and violence against protestants, they also faced this without a representative body through which to air their grievances.

It is this, as Laslett and others have demonstrated, which serves as the proper context for Locke's arguments in the *Second Treatise*.[39] When Locke ascribes the supreme governmental power to the legislative, he advocates the upholding of the rule of law—such as the Exclusion Bill—as it was legislated by parliament. When he states that the people have the supreme power only when government is dissolved, the reference is to the situation that faced the English people in the early 1680s: Charles had dissolved parliament, thus leaving them with no other option than to exercise their "supreme" right. The answer to the question of when the people could exercise their power was thus answered by Charles when he dissolved parliament and resolved not to call it again. The possibility of a Catholic—that is, an absolutist—government not only undermined the security and safety of the English people; it undermined the role of parliament as the most important institution of government.

As to the question of means, Locke seems fairly clear when he states that from the dissolution of government follows the dissolution of civility:

> I say using force upon the people without authority, and contrary to the trust put in him, that does so, is a state of war with the people, who have a right to reinstate their legislative in the exercise of their power. For having erected a legislative, with an intent they should exercise the power of making laws, either at certain set times, or when

> there is need of it; when they are hindr'd by any force from, what is
> so necessary to the society, and wherein the safety and preservation
> of the people consists, the people have a right to remove it by force.
> In all states and conditions the true remedy of force without authority,
> is to oppose force to it. (Locke, par. 155)

When Charles dissolved parliament he declared war with the people.
The people, in turn, had the right to use force against force. Such is the
meaning behind Locke's claim, in paragraph 168, that "the people have
no other remedy … but to appeal to Heaven" (par. 168). As Pocock
explains, "… an alternative phrase for the drawing of the sword was the
'appeal to heaven.' When John Locke's 'people' declare their govern-
ment is dissolved … they appeal to heaven … that is, they pronounce
law and authority at an end, and submit themselves to divine judg-
ment" ("Fourth English Civil War" 60). The reference itself dates back to
the 1640s, from the time of the civil wars. The result of *that* "appeal" was
the execution of Charles I in 1649.

Locke's seeming defense of popular violence was quite a claim for the
time. As it was meant to be a practical solution to a real problem (and
not an abstract formulation about the people and their government),
Locke and other "radicals" of his disposition would have faced criticism
from the burgeoning Tories, who viewed the people as a violent and
unstable rabble more than as a legitimate force of societal constitution.
"The persuasive force of the Tory critique of a 'disordered multitude,' "
writes Richard Ashcraft, "was much more difficult to diffuse when one
was advocating popular resistance than it was when one was defending
the popular origins of government" (Ashcraft 300). It may seem strange,
or perhaps ironic, that Locke's *Second Treatise* would eventually be
thought of as a justification for a bloodless revolution when, as Ashcraft
says, "the whole point of the *Second Treatise* is to demonstrate that it is
lawful for the people … to resist the king" (Ashcraft 332)—and not only
that, but to resist him via a legitimate use of force.

But who is it that Locke speaks of when he speaks of "the people"? It
has recently been argued that Locke meant "the people" in the most
basic, or vulgar, sense of the term. "Locke's theory of resistance," writes
Ashcraft, "extends the meaning of 'the people' to the lowest social
classes, and at the same time, endows them with a moral responsibility
that cannot be described in terms of a concretely designated political
group" (Ashcraft 311). This, as was mentioned, was a difficult position
to uphold in the 1680s. If "the people" were to be roughly, or abstractly,
included among discussions of parliament or property holders, then it

was okay to endorse a "power to the people" position. That is, they *could* be included in discussions of political institutions—institutions, as Paine would argue a century later, that largely excluded the people from any real power. But providing a defense of popular action that might in fact put such institutions in jeopardy was entirely a different matter, and only the most radical Whig could be expected to support such a defense. For one thing, the civil wars of the 1640s were still fresh enough in everyone's mind for any one to want to promote anything that might lead to a similar end: violence and anarchy. In the 1640s, says Tom Nairn, "the English people achieved the first great, forceful intrusion of the masses in modern times." Indeed, Nairn suggests, "this event made 'modern times' possible" (Nairn 296). Nairn's thesis that a long "counter-revolution" of the propertied classes "obliterated the ideological potential of that upheaval" (Nairn 296) has been challenged by Wilson, among others. But historians as ideologically diverse as Christopher Hill and J.G.A. Pocock have agreed that this entry of the people onto the great stage of history was something that no one among the propertied classes wished to see repeated in the 1680s.[40]

In effect, the 1680s saw a situation where on one side stood the possibility of a Catholic king and on the other stood the masses. Either path could lead to the same end: violence. For while the 1640s provided an example whose temporal proximity was near enough to remind those who had perhaps forgotten, the possibility of a Catholic king found its corresponding example in a geographic proximity—France—that no one in England needed reminding of. In addition, conspiracies abounded in the 1680s (as they did also in the 1790s): popish plots, secret treaties, and French invasion filled people's minds with visions of protestant massacres and loss of liberty. It is an interesting and significant point of contact between the late seventeenth and late eighteenth centuries that an environment of conspiracy and suspicion took on a reality of its own, infecting political debate and breeding fear among—and of—the people. By the late eighteenth century, writing became part and parcel of this conspiracy. But in the seventeenth century the same variables were otherwise present: dissenters and their reasoned faith, the French and their Catholicism, and, most importantly, the people and their unruliness.

And yet Locke's "revolutionary" theory and corresponding view of the people emerged from religious debates centering on the issue of tolerance for dissenters. Such tolerance, it would seem, did not include Catholics.[41] As in the 1780s and 90s, dissenters in the seventeenth century argued for a more rationalist approach to religion that opposed itself to Catholic ritual and Church of England hierarchy. And as in the 1790s,

attempts were made by the government and by the church to link dissenters with republicanism.[42] One of the ways this was done was precisely by highlighting the fact that dissenters "presupposed an inseparable link between opinion and action" (Ashcraft 65). Samuel Parker's *Discourse on Ecclesiastical Polity*, published in 1669, sounds more than a little like Burke's *Reflections* in its constant invocation of "the rabble," the "disordered multitude," and the like. Parker argued for strict enforcement of the laws against non-conformists, whom he also labeled "a wild and fanatic rabble."[43] Reasoned discussion, as advocated by dissenters, was an obvious threat to the church hegemony; and to "trust so many important matters to the judgment of 'every arrogant mechanic'" reflected, for Parker, "a preposterously subversive view of the social structure of seventeenth-century England" (Ashcraft 73). In addition, and like Burke's *Reflections*, Parker's text gave rise to a host of pamphlets and other printed texts opposing its association of government with paternal authority.

Locke's views about the people developed and became refined in the context of such debates over toleration and reasoned faith. Like reformist and radical thinkers of the late eighteenth century, many of whom were themselves dissenters, Locke argued that people have the right to access such discussions over matters of religion and politics and to think through such issues—to adopt a reasoned stance regarding their faith. His views were thus radical compared to mainstream Whig thought. In the end, of course, the people did not rise to a use of force against their government. As a result of this, Locke's *Treatise* can be dehistoricized and removed from the blood and dirt of real politics in the seventeenth century and employed on behalf of a bloodless revolution that by nearly everyone's reckoning excluded the people. Who knows, had things turned out otherwise Locke might have been the Rousseau of 1688: the theorist whose words and ideas were said to lead to violence or excess. The irony is rich: Locke advocates violent overthrow of the king and becomes the theorist of a bloodless revolution; Rousseau advocates passivity and vegetarianism and finds his latter-day embodiment in Robespierre, the father of Terror.

But not all critics see Locke as a radical, as Ashcraft does; nor would they see any irony in his pronouncements in the *Second Treatise* and the institutional changes of 1688–89. Warren Montag, for example, argues that it was precisely Locke's awareness of the docility of the people that enabled the emergence of his liberal—even radical—ideas without the danger of those ideas "sparking tumult from below." Thus Montag further historicizes Ashcraft's reading of Locke to make the conditions of

late-seventeenth-century England a feature of the political philosophy itself. Tracing a shift in Locke's writing from the pejorative use of the word "multitude" in the 1660s to the more positive, in not benign, use of "the people" in the 1680s, Montag argues that "the multitude as an active force disappeared from Locke's writing at the precise moment that independent mass movements … disappeared from English political life" (*Bodies* 117). The *Second Treatise* may assert a liberal political sphere, but it does so, according to Montag, in "a language designed to make the multitude disappear and to place forever beyond its reach the property and 'liberties' of its masters" (118).

Locke thus uses "the people" as a legitimating force to his arguments concerning private property. The "people"—a sanitized version of the "multitude"—pose no real threat to the true subject of English institutions: property. Much has been written on this particular institution, property; and much evidence has been gathered to dispute the theory of Britain's peaceful rise to prosperity.[44] The violence to come was not to arise from the people, but rather from what Montag elsewhere calls "the 'legitimate' violence of property owners" and "the more subtle violence of capital" itself.[45] According to such a reading "the people" serve as a metonymic substitution for the violence of property: the "legitimate" use of force theorized by Locke is nothing other than the force of property as a newly significant English institution. Douglas Hay agrees. He argues that 1688 established not the freedom of the people, but instead the freedom of property owners, and asserts that "in a mood of unrivalled assurance and complacency, Parliament over the century created one of the bloodiest criminal codes in Europe" (19).

Indeed, such violence is further attested to in the literary output of early-eighteenth-century England. Works such as Defoe's *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana*, John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*, Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and his "A Modest Proposal,"—and later Fielding's *Jonathan Wild* and Smollet's *Roderick Random* (not to mention the innumerable broadsheets, ballads, etc., that sang of criminals and Jacobites as if they were popular heroes[46])—chronicle the often violent processes of history and support the theory that the transition to a modern, enlightened, peaceful economy was painful and often violent. In his discourse on the subject of war and its causes, for example, Swift's Gulliver gives his *Houyhnhnm* friend the following account:

> Sometimes our neighbors want the things which we have, or have the things which we want; and we both fight, till they take ours or give us theirs. It is a very justifiable cause of war to invade a country

after the people have been wasted by famine, destroyed by pestilence, or embroiled by factions amongst themselves. It is justifiable to enter into war against our nearest ally, when one of his towns lies convenient for us, or a territory of land, that would render our dominions round and compact. If a prince send forces into a nation, where the people are poor and ignorant, he may lawfully put half of them to death, and make slaves of the rest, in order to civilize and reduce them from their barbarous way of living. (213)

The latter part of the quote, which refers to Ireland, highlights how those not quite in the center of prosperity could often feel its violent effects. As was mentioned in the introduction, the Irish and the Scottish would hardly have considered 1688–89 to be "bloodless." William Godwin found in Swift's work an example of the best kind of history—and this precisely because his satirical view captured the contradictions and hypocrisies of post-1688 English society. The message in Swift and many of the works named earlier is quite clear: Locke's "possessive" individual could quite often be as ruthless and as violent as a common criminal. Or as the beggar in Gay's opera puts it: "it is difficult to determine whether the fine gentlemen imitate the gentlemen of the road, or the gentlemen of the road the fine gentlemen" (Act III. Scene 16).

What we see in these conflicting readings of Locke's *Treatise* is not that it must be one way or the other but rather that texts like Locke's are always in contact with history. By this I mean that just as 1688 is reread throughout the eighteenth century by the myriad discourses that grew out of defending or vilifying it, so Locke's "defence" of popular uprising would be continually reread and reconfigured. Thus the radical possibilities of certain readings are not necessarily Locke's own. They are a result of what 1688 had become in the ensuing century: an ambivalent sign, like the people, that could be used to justify or overturn institutions— sometimes both. The argument that follows looks at several instances of how this ambivalent sign was reread and rewritten in the eighteenth century. The argument can be sketched schematically: whereas in 1688 an institutional change subordinated the parliament by the end of the next century an Enlightenment-based print culture threatened to take this process one step further and subordinate the parliament to "the people." This did not happen. The very event that gave rise to the possibility also provided a formal model for containing it. The move toward a private, individual realm of literature helped redirect the powerful effects of print and to subordinate politics to culture. Nevertheless, writers like Wordsworth and Scott would draw on the popular energies of

revolution, of the people, in order to give their texts life. Even as this gesture helped to block these energies from getting off the page, it left an opening (despite intentions to the contrary)—a hole or a gap through which history could sneak. The closure enacted in works like *The Prelude* or *Waverley* is tolerable only as a result of this—just as, one imagines, Burke becomes tolerable to Hazlitt by the excesses that his prose leaves on the page. These openings, excesses, and possibilities, are the possibilities not of institutions or even nations but of history, of the people. In them we can glimpse the coming together of what has risen and what has been risen above, the latter just beneath the surface of meaning, ready to break through.

2
Lyrical Ballads and Terrorist Systems

> … and just at the time when we were threatened with a stagnation of fancy, arose Maximilian Robespierre, with his system of terror, and taught our novelists that fear is the only passion they ought to cultivate, that to frighten and to instruct were one and the same thing, and that none of the productions of genius could be compared to an ague. … Our genius has become hysterical and our taste epileptic.
>
> "The Terrorist System of Novel Writing" (1797)

A taste for violence: Jacobin and Gothic

The third part of T.J. Mathias's satirical poem, *The Pursuits of Literature*, was printed and published anonymously in 1796—at the same time, as a matter of fact, as the second part. Against his original intention to hold off publishing part three, Mathias explains that:

> some subjects are of an importance serious and urgent, not to be deferred. Wherever the freedom of the press exists (and with us may that freedom be perpetual!) I must assert that Literature, well or ill conducted, is the great engine by which, I am fully persuaded, all civilized states must ultimately be supported or overthrown. (III. 1)

The suggestion that literature is the great engine by which civilized states will stand or fall may strike us today as a bit inflated. It was, however, a common claim in the 1790s.[1] Writers on all sides of the political spectrum attributed to literature the power to change (or in this case) preserve the world.[2] Mathias approaches this great power in a refreshingly practical way given the period of publication. The mid-1790s

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witnessed the height of the government's attempt to reign in free speech and political association via the Two Acts, the suspension of habeas corpus throughout much of the 1790s, and the treason trials of members of the London Corresponding Society and various radical writers like Horne Tooke and Thomas Holcroft, in 1794. Pitt's "terror" aimed to avert the kind of revolutionary violence predicted by Burke and witnessed in the Jacobin Terror of 1793. As discussed in the previous chapter, Burke and others blamed the political men of letters to varying degrees for the outbreak of revolution. Yet despite the very real fear that certain kinds of writing would lead to violent revolution, Mathias does not follow the government by issuing a call to censorship. Instead, he aims to preserve the freedom of the press by pushing people toward literature "well conducted," by which he means, in part, literature that does not challenge national institutions or solidarity. He does not suggest using violence to curtail seditious writing; instead, he works to expose the violence that underpins such writing and to label it literature "ill-conducted."

Wordsworth's Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* does not sound a tone quite so urgent as Mathias's *Pursuits*; but there is little doubt that he considers literature a subject of "importance serious." For Wordsworth too the question is not one of force or censorship but rather one of taste—in the case of the Preface, of revivifying a literature "driven into neglect by frantic novels, sickly and stupid German tragedies, and the deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse" (249). These "frantic" novels and "German" tragedies are usually understood to be references to the gothic productions that saturated the literary marketplace at the end of the eighteenth century.[3] In these gothic texts we can see one of the modes that Wordsworth was writing against. As Michael Gamer has recently argued, "… the gothic perpetually haunts, as an aesthetic to be rejected, romanticism's construction of high literary culture" (7). Gamer points out that Wordsworth was downright annoyed with—and perhaps a little envious of—the popular success of Matthew Lewis's *Castle Spectre*, especially following the failure to get his own German tragedy, *The Borderers*, staged.[4]

But as Paul Magnuson explains, "the word German in the public discourse meant 'Jacobin' in the 1790s" (9).[5] Wordsworth surely had the gothic in mind when he wrote his Preface. But his critique extends beyond the popular appeal of *The Castle Spectre* or *The Mysteries of Udolpho* when he turns to "… the great national events which are daily taking place" as the "most effective cause" working "to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind, and, unfitting it for all voluntary exertion, to reduce it to a state of almost savage torpor" (249). Such great national events would

include war with the revolutionary government of France, the struggle to prevent violent revolution at home, and the various economic changes that led to the "increasing accumulation of men in cities" (249). The link between gothic and Jacobin may not be immediately clear to us—as Robert Miles points out, "Equating the Gothic with the French Revolution was a contemporary, rather than a retrospective phenomenon" (43). But there are some pronounced points of contact, despite the fact that gothic was neither overwhelmingly pro- nor anti-Jacobin. These points can be helpful for understanding Mathias's and Wordsworth's pursuit of literature well conducted.[6] I suggest that what unites Jacobinism and the gothic is the link between the popular and the violence that was thought to underpin both. Mathias, for example, refers to Lewis's gothic novel, *The Monk*, as "a new species of legislative or state-parricide." And of William Godwin's *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* he writes: "I looked indeed for a superstructure raised on the revolutionary ground of equality, watered with blood from the guillotine; and such I found it" (Pt. III, 32).

Godwin's work is addressed more fully in the next chapter. Suffice it to say that even while his system urged a gradual change of governing institutions, a change predicated upon nonviolence, Godwin's abstract reasoning looked to many a little too much like Robespierre's. In one of his 1795 *Lectures on Revealed Religion*, Coleridge attacks the "stoical morality" of Godwin, and questions whether this "professed [friend] of freedom" has any concern for actual human beings (Lecture 3, 165). As Nicholas Roe writes,

> Coleridge's perception of an underlying similarity between Robespierre and Godwin fed his doubts about the moral effects of *Political Justice* and its popularity among reformists. His deepest fear, I think, was that Godwin's abstract and unprincipled philosophy might lead to political and social breakdown, and ultimately to violence like that witnessed in France. (219)

In 1795 Coleridge was himself a professed friend of freedom. His soon-to-be co-author, Wordsworth, was still somewhat of a Godwinian. Wordsworth's subsequent turn from "reasonings false" (1805, X, l. 883) was quite dramatic, at least as rendered in works like *The Borderers* and in the famous crisis passages of Book Ten in *The Prelude* (1805):

> for I was perplexed and sought
> To accomplish the transition by such means

> As did not lie in nature, sacrificed
> The exactness of a comprehensive mind
> To scrupulous and microscopic views
> That furnished out materials for a work
> Of false imagination, placed beyond
> The limits of experience and of truth. (1805, X, ll. 841–48)

As I argue later, it is in literature that Wordsworth pursues the transition he once thought Godwinian abstraction would help to assist. "Yet I feel / The aspiration" (l. 839), he exclaims. Wordsworth's alternative approach called for a turn away from the stoical morality of new philosophy and back toward something that might be called true imagination.[7] This would seem quite new at the time.

   Lewis's text is less overtly political than Godwin's philosophy and his gothic fictions, like *Caleb Williams* or *St. Leon. The Monk* does attack Catholicism. And at a time when anti-clerical texts were being blamed for the revolution—in the writings of the Abbe Barruel and John Robison—his novel could certainly be understood to be a threat to the nation. But what really got to reviewers was the excessive sex and violence (along with a very peculiar reading of some passages in the Bible). In his review for the *Critical* in February, 1797, Coleridge writes that "The sufferings that [Lewis] describes are so frightful and intolerable, that we break with abruptness from the delusion, and indignantly suspect the man of a species of brutality, who could find a pleasure in wantonly imagining them." After remarking that a parent might "reasonably turn pale" upon seeing such a book in the hands of a child he concludes "Yes! The author of the Monk signs himself a LEGISLATOR! We stare and tremble." The shocking passages alluded to by Coleridge appealed to the baser instincts of the reading public and revealed a taste for scenes of harrowing violence. This was not Ann Radcliffe's aesthetic of "terror," where suspense is built up over many pages before the reader is shown that there is nothing so horrible behind the veil as what his own imagination had most likely projected. Lewis's *The Monk* conforms more to what Radcliffe called an aesthetic of "horror," which "contracts, freezes, and nearly annihilates" the faculties—leading to what Wordsworth described as "a state of almost savage torpor."[8] The following may serve as an example:

> The Rioters heeded nothing but the gratification of their barbarous vengeance. They refused to listen to her: They showed her every sort of insult, loaded her with mud and filth, and called her by the most

opprobrious appellations. They tore her one from another, and each new Tormenter was more savage than the former. They stifled with howls and execrations her shrill cries for mercy; and dragged her through the Streets, spurning her, trampling her, and treating her with every species of cruelty which hate or vindictive fury could invent. At length a flint, aimed by some well-directing hand, struck her full upon the temple. She sank to the ground bathed in blood, and in a few minutes terminated her miserable existence. Yet though she no longer felt their insults, the Rioters still exercised their impotent rage upon her lifeless body. They beat it, trod upon it, and ill-used it, till it became no more than a mass of flesh, unsightly, shapeless, and disgusting. (356)

At least we do not have to hear those opprobrious appellations!

There are even worse passages than this in Lewis's novel—as when Agnes is found underneath the convent holding a lifeless baby covered in maggots, for instance. I chose the above passage for its particularly violent imagery and for its presentation of the people as an unruly force incapable of thinking before acting. "Indeed," Lewis writes,

the consequences of their action were more sudden, than themselves had expected or wished. The Flames rising from the burning piles caught part of the Building, which being old and dry, the conflagration spread with rapidity from room to room. The Walls were soon shaken by the devouring element: the columns gave way: The Roofs came tumbling down upon the Rioters, and crushed many of them beneath their weight. (357–58)

The inability to separate thought from action is a chief symptom of Wordsworth's "savage torpor." The people bringing the walls of the state down upon themselves is not a far cry from what Mathias and others thought literature well conducted might prevent. *The Monk* is just one place among many where the link between a culture that dulls and a people that rebels is affirmed. Gamer's claim that high literary productions of the romantic period struggled against the popular obsession and critical disdain for the gothic can thus be expanded. The genre was not tied to the popular by taste alone but also by violence. The gothic can be seen as a kind of writing politically associated with *popular* violence—that is, the very sort of violence that the government hoped to prevent through its own brand of anti-Jacobin terror.

The Terrorist School and the critics who loathed them

If the word "German" meant Jacobin, as Magnuson claims, so did the word "terrorist." According to the *OED*, the word "terrorist" has its origin in Jacobinism. It is defined as a "political" term "applied to the Jacobins and their agents and partisans in the French Revolution, especially to those connected with the Revolutionary tribunals during the reign of Terror." The earliest citation for the word is 1795—first from the *Annual Register*: "The terrorists, as they were justly denominated, from the cruel and impolitic maxim of keeping the people in implicit subjection by merciless severity"; and second from the fourth of Burke's *Letters on a Regicide Peace*: "Thousands of those hell-hounds called terrorists … are let loose on the people." In 1801 Helen Maria Williams describes "the defeat of the terrorist party." The word "terrorism" is defined as "a system of terror," and one of the citations given comes from Mathias's *Pursuits of Literature*: "The causes of rebellion, insurrection … terrorism, massacres, and revolutionary murders."[9] It is interesting that the words "terrorist" and "terrorism" were first used to describe the practices of a government.

And a school of novel-writing. As in the quote that heads this chapter, taken from an anonymous letter written to the *Monthly Magazine* in August, 1797, this school of writing was "taught" by Maximilian Robespierre and his "system of terror." This was not necessarily the same thing as advocating violent revolution, as some claimed Godwin was doing in his "new" philosophy. Rather, these gothic novels used the fear generated by the violence and the proximity of revolution to titillate readers via a kind of false sublime. The anonymous writer, like Mathias (though more with tongue in cheek), makes the issue one of taste. The writer complains that "a novel used to be a description of human life and manners." However, thanks to this "revolution" in the art of novel-writing, "we have, at the same time, simplified genius, and shown by what easy process a writer may attain great celebrity in circulating libraries, boarding-schools, and watering places." The writer argues that common life had become too common a subject. Yet the "new" introduced by the terrorist school did not offer a new way of representing common life and manners. Rather, it was a new way of "interesting these numerous readers" at the expense of manners and taste. The letter is signed "A Jacobin Novelist"—hardly one to make a noise about terrorists. Perhaps the writer meant to highlight the connections between

gothic and Jacobin writers. If this is the case, the signature is akin to the "Jacobin poet" signatures that appeared in the poetry section of the *Anti-Jacobin*. Then again, it could be that the writer is truly a Jacobin novelist, one who resents the simplistic creations of the terrorist school and the contemporary association with the philosophical romances of the Jacobin novelists. For while "terrorist" stemmed from "Jacobin," few reformers to whom the Jacobin label was attached would consider themselves as having been taught in any way by Robespierre.[10]

The word "Jacobin" finds its modern significance in the 1790s. A Jacobin was originally "a friar of the order of St. Dominic." However, after the French Revolution the word referred to members of the political club that was established in 1789 and that met in the convent of St. Jacque. This group becomes associated with the maintenance and propagation of "the principles of extreme democracy and absolute equality." The first modern usage of the term in English appears in Burke's *Reflections*, in 1790. The *OED* maintains that by 1800 or so the word "Jacobin" became a nickname "for any political reformer." But this seems to have been happening for a couple of years prior to 1800, thanks to the *Anti-Jacobin Review, The British Critic*, and works like Mathias's *Pursuits*. In 1802, Coleridge had been lampooned as a Jacobin so many times that despite his political change of sympathies—from one terrorist government to another, we might say—he wondered whether he might ever escape the opprobrium of the word. His October, 1802 piece for *The Morning Post*, "Once a Jacobin Always a Jacobin," accuses politicians like Pitt of using the word too liberally. "What he thus condescended to decorate," Coleridge writes, "it were well, if he had attempted to prove. But no! He found it a blank assertion, and a blank assertion he suffered it to remain" (583). Coleridge proceeds in his article to offer some specificity as well as to distance himself from the term. For Tories, a Jacobin could be anyone opposed to the war with France. More generally—and more sympathetically—a Jacobin was a person "whose affections have been warmly and deeply interested in the cause of general freedom" (583). Both were bad to the extent that they threatened to undermine government policy in a time of war. When Coleridge published his essay in 1802, the Peace of Amiens had provided a temporary lull in the fighting. It was a fitting time for Coleridge to ask questions about the now recent prime minister's wartime crackdown on Jacobins.

Although Coleridge's article aims to correct Pitt's "blank assertion," in part so that it would not impute Coleridge himself, what seems evident is that it was the very blank-ness of the assertion that gave it such power.

For reviews like the *Anti-Jacobin*, "Jacobinism" indeed referred to any political reformer. In the pages of this review the word becomes synonymous with atheism, republicanism, and murder. In one poem printed in the *Anti-Jacobin*, a work described as a "new song, attempted from the French," suggests the following:

> Two heads, says our proverb, are better then one,
> But the Jacobin choice is for five heads, or none.
> By directories only can liberty thrive,
> Then down with the one, boys! And up with the five.

In April, 1798, we find an "Ode to Jacobinism" signed by an English Jacobin:

> Oh swiftly on my country's head,
> Destroyer, lay thy ruthless hand;
> Not yet in Gallic terrors clad,
> Nor circled by thy Marseille band,
> (As by th' initiate thou art seen)
> With thundering canon, guillotine,
> With screaming horrors funeral cry,
> Fire, Rapine, Sword, and chains, and ghastly poverty.

References to the guillotine were frequent—a common sign connecting Jacobinism and violence. But these punishing parodies were certainly hatchet-jobs in themselves. Their effect was to help sever radical writing from a popular readership.

   The 1790s constituted what the *British Critic* called "a state of literary warfare." While the radical press was busy insinuating its Jacobin principles and encouraging insurrection it became necessary and even urgent for conservative periodicals like the *British Critic* "to wield the pen, and shed the ink."[11] The prospectus to the *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine* states the following by way of a mission statement: "The regicides of France and the traitors of Ireland find ready advocates in the heart of our metropolis, and in the seats of our universities. At such a time, what friend of social order will deny, that the press requires some strong controul? And what controul is more effectual than that which the press itself can supply?" (Vol. I, 2). This wielding and shedding manifested itself in attacks on the ways in which events were reported in magazines like the *Monthly* and reviews like the *Analytical* and the *Critical*; in reflections on the events of the day from a more nationalistic and conservative

perspective; and in reviews and publications of contemporary literature. Works were presented and judged on grounds that were political first and literary, if at all, last. In a review of Thomas Holcroft's *Knave or Not. A Comedy* (in 1798), for example, the writer for the *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine* justifies the length of his review in the following terms: "although, as a dramatic performance, merely and apart from its political doctrines, it deserves little attention, either of praise or censure; yet as a vehicle of pernicious principles, it is an object of rigid animadversion" (Vol. 1, 52). In good times Holcroft's play might merit a sentence or two. In this particular review it gets nearly three pages.

In the journal that preceded the *Anti-Jacobin Review* and set the agenda to be continued in that publication, the *Anti-Jacobin, or Weekly Examiner*, we are warned straight off that the reviews will not necessarily be free from partiality and prejudice—unless we understand those words to mean partiality to the country in which the reviewers live and prejudice in favor of its civil and religious establishment. The intended audience for the publication, we are told, is comprised of:

> All who think the press has been long enough employed principally as an engine of destruction; and who wish to see the experiment fairly tried whether that engine by which many of the states which surround us have been overthrown, and others shaken to their foundations, may not be turned into an instrument of defense for the one remaining country, which has establishments to protect, and a government with the spirit, and the power, and the wisdom to protect them. (Nov. 20, 1797)

As in Mathias's *Pursuits*, there is nothing subtle about the *Anti-Jacobin's* motivations. Yet such motivations find their way into much more subtle writing of the period—they become, in fact, the foundations for a whole new kind of literature, as I will discuss later.

The organization of the *Anti-Jacobin* was threefold: its intention was to (1) provide an abstract of the important events of the week; (2) provide a reflection of these events; (3) and most importantly, to "confute falsehoods and misrepresentations concerning these events from seditious papers." But an additional section of the review became popular in its own right and continued to be published after the demise of the journal in 1798: "The Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin." It was in this section that the events, reflections, and misrepresentations combined to implicate the literature of the period. Yet in this section we are also warned that there is no good anti-Jacobin poetry. After introducing the section as something

that might amuse readers and cultivate taste and feeling appropriate to the kind of politics that underpinned the *Anti-Jacobin*, the writer continues,

> but whether it be that good morals and what we should call good politics are inconsistent with the spirit of true poetry ([after all] muses may have an aversion to regular governments and require a frame and system of protection less complicated than King, Lords, Commons) or for whatever reason it may be, whether physical, or moral, or philosophical, we have not been able to find one good and true poet, of sound principles and sober practice, upon whom we could rely for furnishing us with a handsome quantity of good and approved verse. (Nov. 20, 1797)

The fact that there is no good anti-Jacobin poetry leaves the editors with an awkward choice: either provide no poetry at all and discontinue the section before it gets started, or "go to the only market where it is to be had good and ready made, that of the Jacobins." It is the latter that is chosen, but with the following proviso: that these pieces will be "qualified" with "such precautions, as may conduce at once to the safety of our readers principles, and to the improvement of our own poetry." This qualification leads to an often clever, often hilarious mix of parody, politics, and poetry. Poems by Coleridge and Southey are held up to literary and political abuse. The new poetry and the new philosophy are attacked through humorous but astute imitations. Again, the overt intention is to get at the "principle" of great poetry but to remove the odious "political insinuations"—and possibly, as a result, to produce a good anti-Jacobin poet.

This last intention receives its strongest statement in the final issue, from July 1798, when we are presented not with an imitation of Jacobin verse, but of Mathias's *Pursuits of Literature*. This imitation carries with it an anti-Jacobin "new" to displace the old target of the new philosophy: "The New Morality." The anonymous poem was written by George Canning—a Whig-turned-Tory wit, member of Parliament, and future Foreign Secretary. James Gillray's corresponding print, "The New Morality," was designed as a pull-out for the review and featured grotesque caricatures of Whig politicians and Jacobin poets (Coleridge among them) worshipping at the altar of revolutionary France. The poem asks "where is the modern-day Pope?"

> Awake! For shame! Or o'er thy nobler sense
> Sink in the oblivious pool of indolence!

> Must wit be found alone on falsehood's side
> Unknown to truth, to virtue unallied?
> Arise! Nor scorn thy country's just alarms;
> Wield in her cause thy long neglected arms. (ll. 71–76)

Pope's *Dunciad* is the implied model for Mathias's poem; for Pope too claimed the mantle of the satirist and wished to address the wrongs and follies of society. "Let the enemy be dragged forth to light and shewn as he is," says Mathias, "and I will yet trust that the kingdom and the citadel may stand" (pt. III, 10). Both Mathias and Canning hint at a connection between print and arms. This violent connection is made more explicit as "The New Morality" progresses. Jacobins, we are told in a reference to a Coleridge poem, would weep over a dead ass, but they,

> hear, unmov'd, of Loire's ensanguin'd flood,
> Choak'd up with slain;—of Lyons drench'd in blood;
> Of crimes that blot the age, the world with shame,
> Foul crimes, but sicklied over with freedom's name. (ll. 144–47)

The poem names Coleridge, Southey, Thelwall, Paine, Godwin, and Holcroft as producers of "savage cruelties, that scare the mind" (l. 154). In opposing the new philosophy and Jacobin poetry, Canning's poem implicitly calls for what it is mocking. The present morality mocked in the *Anti-Jacobin* parodies was ugly: it was philosophically confused, politically dangerous, and more to the point, blood-soaked. In calling for something new, Canning's poem in effect calls for a return—to Pope, as he says, but also to something more intangible that has been lost in the frenzy of the moment. The new morality will be morality itself.

But how was this to happen? As the whole project of "The Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin" attests, the good poetry of the period is stained with Jacobin blood. The *Anti-Jacobin* satires may be funny parodies but they rely, in part, on the same "system of terror" to make their point and to get their laughs as the so-called Terrorist school. This is especially clear in Gillray's work. His prints and drawings seem to revel in grotesque caricature and violent fantasy. The same quality that makes his work so brilliant also makes it slip a bit—beyond anti-Jacobin lampoon and into a wild revolutionary ethos that defies any coherent political critique. The work is itself frantic and sickly even as it exposes these qualities as depraved and un-English. It would take a much more subtle and sophisticated approach to literature to embody a "new" morality freed from the violent excesses of a revolutionary age. But the tactic will be

similar: to capture the underlying principle of "good poetry" while excluding the violent effects that comprised the present state of literature.

   The anti-Jacobin campaign waged by the government and its literary organs was remarkably effective—at the very least, in rendering Jacobin writing a form of literature "ill conducted"; at most, of aiding in the effort to avert violent revolution. Godwin, for example, was all but forgotten long before he died. As Hazlitt remarks in 1825, "No one thinks it worth his while even to traduce or vilify him." By 1837 Carlyle could write, "gone are the Jacobins; into invisibility; in a storm of laughter and howls."[12]

The Lake School—and the same critics

Canning and his anti-Jacobin associates called for a "new morality," a "modern-day Pope." What they got that same year was what Francis Jeffrey called "the new poetry." Literary history from the nineteenth century onwards has often put these two at odds with one another. In his 1802 *Edinburgh Review* essay on the new poetry, for example, Jeffrey describes the poets of the "Lake School" as representatives of the very system targeted in *Anti-Jacobin* attacks:

> The peculiar doctrines of this sect, it would not, perhaps, be very easy to explain; but they are dissenters from the established systems in poetry and criticism, is admitted, and proved indeed, by the whole tenor of their compositions. Though they lay claim, we believe, to a creed and a revelation of their own, there can be little doubt, that their doctrines are of German origin, and have been derived from some of the great modern reformers in that country. Some of their leading principles, indeed, are probably of an earlier date, and seem to have been borrowed from the great apostle of Geneva.

Jeffrey, a Whig, sees in works like Southey's *Thalaba* and Wordsworth's Preface a "new" much closer to Godwin's philosophy than Canning's morality:

> A splenetic and idle discontent with existing institutions of society, seems to be at bottom of all their serious and peculiar sentiments. Instead of contemplating the wonders and the pleasures which civilization has created for mankind, they are perpetually brooding over the disorders by which its progress has been attended. They are filled with horror and compassion at the sight of poor men spending their

blood in the quarrels of princes, and brutifying their sublime capabilities in the drudgery of unremitting labour.

Likewise, in his 1818 lecture "On the Living Poets," Hazlitt explains that "This school of poetry had its origin in the French revolution, or rather in those sentiments and opinions which produced that revolution; and which sentiments were indirectly imported into this country in translations from the German about that period" (215). Hazlitt is anything but a zealous anti-Jacobin. But both he and Jeffrey see the new poetry as following from—not against—German and French revolutionary ideas. Southey himself, in his review of *Lyrical Ballads* for *The Critical* (Oct. 1798), famously referred to Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancyent Marinere" as "a Dutch attempt at German sublimity."

   Not all of Wordsworth and Coleridge's contemporaries regarded their poetical experiments as a continuation of the French-Revolutionary project, however. The review in the *British Critic* of October 1799 begins by stating that "The attempt made in this little volume is one that meets our cordial approbation," and continues by noting that "the endeavour of the author is to recall our poetry ... to simplicity and nature." The reviewer for the *British Critic* of February 1801 extends this train of argument:

> This Preface, though written in some parts with a degree of metaphysical obscurity, conveys much penetrating and judicious observation, important at all times, but especially when, as it is well observed, "the invaluable works of our elder writers are driven into neglect by frantic novels, sickly and stupid German tragedies, and deluges of idle and extravagant verse." Perhaps it would be expecting too much from any one but Shakespeare, were we to demand that he should be the poet of human nature.

Where Hazlitt and Jeffrey saw German ideas and French systematizing the conservative *British Critic* found a return to simplicity, nature, and Shakespeare. In his 1802 letter to Wordsworth, the future Christopher North and *Blackwood's Magazine* contributor, John Wilson, discovered "a body of morality of the purest kind."[13]

   As with "German and Jacobin," the connection between new morality and new poetry is not immediately clear. Hazlitt and Jeffrey (along with a host of more recent critics) are shrewd in noticing similarities *in the effects* of the French Revolution and the new poetry—the "breaking loose from the bondage of ancient authority" and democratization of poetic subject (Jeffrey), or the discarding of "all the common-place

figures of poetry, tropes, allegories, personifications …," etc. (Hazlitt). But to say that the poetry is motivated by or caused by the revolution is another matter. Here we might remember the parodies of the *Anti-Jacobin* and their basis in the only good poetry of the moment. The experiments in *Lyrical Ballads* are better understood as attempts to separate cause from effect, change from action—to connect the radical effects of the contemporary literature (German, French) to a tradition through which these effects function as a retreat from violence (English). For example, there is the explicit attempt to return to the works of Shakespeare and Milton, which have been "driven into neglect." More implicitly, there is a return to 1688—to a bloodless Revolution that provided (1) an example by which many in England first championed the French Revolution; (2) a model that gave form to the difficult idea of the new preserving the old: "Thus, by preserving the method of nature in the conduct of the state, in what we improve we are never wholly new; in what we retain we are never wholly obsolete" (120). That's Burke, not Wordsworth.

Wordsworth seems to have understood in a way that the *Anti-Jacobin* wits did not that such a return could only be effected by pushing the language of poetry forward through the moment. Their parodies of poets like Coleridge are often merely parodies of content that take their form from older poetic traditions. But for the modern-day pope, zeugma and heroic couplets will be anathema. As Hazlitt notes, "Our poetical literature had … degenerated into the most trite, insipid, and mechanical of all things, in the hands of the followers of Pope" (215). Such "decayed barriers" indeed needed "stirring up." But to equate this regeneration of poetic language with a leveling impulse is hasty. That Wordsworth's verse reacts against Popean language does not mean that his poetry is new in the sense of being revolutionary. Wordsworth's experiments can be understood as translations in the way Walter Benjamin characterizes the term. "It is the task of the translator," he writes, "to release in his own language that pure language which is under the spell of another, to liberate the language imprisoned in a work in his re-creation of that work. For the sake of pure language he breaks through decayed barriers of his own language" (80). The Jacobin and terrorist literature parodied by the conservative press was in many respects a foreign literature: it was French or German. It was new in the sense of being recent or contemporary; but it was not yet English. The language still had to be transformed, expanded, and at the same time purified. In a decidedly modern gesture, the newness of Wordsworth's experiments will guarantee their authenticity. Like the frantic novels and German tragedies, the decayed barriers too were blocking the way back.

To push this analogy a bit further, those German and French influences attributed to Wordsworth and Coleridge can themselves be understood as translations—albeit, bad ones. The Enlightenment ideas that Burke blamed for the revolution originated in England with Newton, Bacon, and Locke.[14] But their sojourn on the continent seems to have ended in violent politics, frantic art, and the elevation of system. Jeffrey refers to the new school of poetry as a "new system." But it is the turn against system—against the privileging of principles over people—that defines the poetic productions of the Lake school.[15] As David Simpson explains, "Systems, propositions, and theories have been more and more associated with cold-blooded social reformers and would-be radical politicians" (171). Bacon wrote essays. So did Locke. But in being translated on the continent the idea behind these essays was transformed generically. The revolutionary drive for equality, Enlightenment, and progress, had lost touch with the very idea that propelled it: the idea of the people. This was how the anti-Jacobin press read it, anyway. As noted in the previous chapter, "the people" was a powerful political signifier. It was often invoked even while the people themselves were likely to suffer as a result of their name being used. But "the people" was also an English idea, one rooted in an English revolutionary experience that was thought to be both bloodless and progressive. Where the violence of the Terror offered a stunning example of how the idea of "the people" had been lost, the bloodlessness of 1688 offered a model for the way forward.

In his Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth writes that friends "anxious for the success of these Poems" advised him "to prefix a systematic defence of the theory, upon which the poems were written." This he refuses to do for a variety of reasons. For one thing, he "might be suspected of having been principally influenced by the selfish and foolish hope of reasoning [his reader] into approbation of these particular poems" (242–43). In addition, a true systematic defense would require "a full account of the public taste in this country" as well as a "retracing [of] the revolutions not of literature alone but likewise of society itself" (243). And at any rate, Wordsworth implies, the poems are "experiments," as both the 1798 Advertisement and the 1800 Preface state, and the prefatory note is an *essay*, not a system. Quite simply, there is not enough room for system. Clifford Siskin suggests that contemporary reviewers may be forgiven for seeing a system in Wordsworth's prefatory essay, for "embedded within *Lyrical Ballads and Other Poems* are the basic components of a system: explanatory principles and 'things' to be known."[16] But the gesture of shrugging off system is important, even if some of the effects of system remain. It suggests a return to a pre-French

Enlightenment—to the experiments (and essays) of Bacon or Newton, and to a society that existed just prior to modernity and its host of violent dislocations.

Coleridge was intellectually much closer to the continent and to system. Even still, his translations (and occasional plagiarisms) from the German helped to comprise what Seamus Perry has characterized as "a muddle," the very opposite of a system.[17] A decade after the experiments published in *Lyrical Ballads* Coleridge developed a language to articulate this anti-systematic strain of thinking. Not surprisingly, he uses Shakespeare as an example. In his lecture entitled "Shakespeare's Judgment Equal to his Genius" (1812), Coleridge targets those criticisms that attack Shakespeare's works as barbarous, wild, and badly formed. Such criticism, Coleridge argues, approaches the works of Shakespeare with a "mechanic" under-standing of form. "Form is mechanic," he says, "when on any given material we impress a predetermined form" (432). Thus Shakespeare can be critiqued for failing to uphold the unities of design as established in the ancient poets and playwrights, like Aeschylus. To this approach Coleridge opposes one that understands form organically. "The organic form … is innate," says Coleridge: "it shapes as it develops itself from within, and the fullness of its development is one and the same with the perfection of its outward form" (432–33). Works like *King Lear, Macbeth*, and *Hamlet* are not "barbarous" because they fail to conform to certain rules; they are "genius" because their rules develop organically from the diverse ends and design of the plays themselves.

Coleridge's writings on Shakespeare are in a sense the culminating point of a near-century's worth of effort by writers and critics toward founding a national canon of literature, one that might compete with or even surpass the works of the ancients and especially of other nations, like France.[18] The revaluation and reclamation of Shakespeare played a particularly significant role in this process.[19] But the terms that Coleridge employs in his description of Shakespeare—mechanic and organic—while perhaps borrowed for aesthetic purposes from German thinkers like Schlegel and Kant, were politically very much part of the moment in Britain. One could even make a plausible case for their being borrowed from Burke, whose anti-methodical stance was itself a culmination of a long-developing experimental, or organic approach to politics.[20] Burke opposes the organic tradition of the British constitution to the systematic one of France, and in doing so attempts to impose his own canonical reading of 1688 against those readings that compare it to 1789.

For example, in the second of his *Letters on a Regicide Peace*, Burke argues that it is not possible to make peace with the new French "faction"

because the old rules of peace no longer apply to this new entity. French government has been systematized, according to Burke, and a system, generically, is the subordination of the multiplicity of the whole to one principle. The principle governing France is expansion, says Burke: the French government's purpose is to subordinate more and more governments to its revolutionary idea. Thus for Burke there is an essential difference between the new government of France and "all those governments which are formed without system, which exist by habit, and which are confused with the multitude, and with the complexity of their pursuits" (*Regicide* 288). For Burke, governments of the "Christian world," such as that of Britain, are more organic in their structure:

> [they] have grown up to their present magnitude in a great length of time, and by a great variety of accidents. ... Not one of them has been formed upon a regular plan or with any unity of design. As their constitutions are not systematical, they have not been directed to any peculiar end, eminently distinguished, and superseding every other. (*Regicide* 287)

As with Coleridge's appraisal of Shakespeare, what might be deemed a negative feature—lack of unity in design—is celebrated as national genius. The two governments of Britain and France differ so much that not only can the latter not be rendered safe by the former, but as it poses a threat to Britain, this French system "must be destroyed." "In a word," says Burke, "with this republic nothing independent can co-exist" (*Regicide* 290).

   Coleridge's distinction between organic and mechanic might be understood in political as well as aesthetic terms. Similarly, Burke's distinction between a system that cannot be rendered safe and a tradition that is too diverse to fall prey to the tyranny of principle is literary as well as political.[21] Burke had no doubt that the methodical nature of French government originated in the writers of the Enlightenment. Burke Scoffs,

> We are not the converts of Rousseau, We are not the disciples of Voltaire; Helvetius has made no progress amongst us. ... We know that we have made no discoveries; and we think that no discoveries are to be made, in morality; nor many in the great principles of government, nor in ideas of liberty. ... In England we have not yet been completely emboweled of our natural entrails; we still feel within us, and we cherish and cultivate, those inbred sentiments which are the faithful guardians, the active monitors of our duty, the true supporters of all liberal and manly morals. (*Reflections* 182)

Where the French have Rousseau, Voltaire, and violent revolution the English have Shakespeare, Bacon, and bloodless revolution. The organic nature of Shakespeare, for example, points not simply to the genius of the bard but to the genius of England. The correspondence makes for the canonicity. Indeed, for Burke, as well as for writers like Coleridge and Wordsworth, there was much at stake in making sure England maintained a literature that would not "embowel" the people of their "natural entrails." Burke's metaphor works on a couple of levels. On the one hand it suggests that literature is part of, or is integral to, the very constitution of a nation's subjects. Bad literature, then, leaves people empty. On the other hand, Burke's metaphor suggests something much more graphic—a violent act akin to the sans-culottes attack on Marie Antionette's footmen.

To go back to a point made in the previous chapter, literature had to rise above writing in order to sever itself from the more violent aspects of Enlightenment. As Siskin has recently suggested, "the technology of the Enlightenment is writing." What is necessary for understanding the Romantic periodization of literature, he explains, is to "untangle … literature from writing."[22] For Siskin, this is a way for the literary historian to avoid the pitfalls of romantic ideology—to focus on what the writers of the period did (genre) instead of on what they said about what they were doing (ideology). Writers like Wordsworth—as well as Mathias, Canning, Godwin, and many others—were in fact untangling literature from writing. I am not arguing that the violent turn taken by the Revolution in France and feared at home in England was the sole motivation behind this process of untangling. But it was part of it. System, German, Jacobin—each suggested violence and each represented literature ill conducted. It may have been too late to render the French system "safe," as Burke said. In Britain, however, the republic of letters was not yet so republican. According to Burke's train of thought, there was even reason to believe that making literature safe might help to prevent the outbreak of revolution at home. One way of doing this was to validate the literary by opposing it to the violence of the system.

Wordsworth's Bloodless Revolution

Which brings us back to where we started—to Mathias's urgency. In Mathias's *Pursuits*, Canning's "The New Morality," and a good number of the parodies that dominate the poetry of the *Anti-Jacobin*, a terrorist threat is articulated in literary terms. In all of these, too, there is the sense given that literature—good literature, well conducted literature— will play a role in aiding or averting a violent outcome. As Mathias said

in his *Pursuits*, literature is "the great engine by which ... all civilized states must ultimately be supported or overthrown." The Romantic revolution began in 1798.

A New Morality

In a recent biography, Kenneth R. Johnston argues that Wordsworth was singled out by the *Anti-Jacobin* as a potential "modern-day Pope."[23] In fact, Johnston makes the claim that Wordsworth's new poetry was a direct response to "the *Anti-Jacobin's* invitation in 'The New Morality' ":

> The main thrust of "The New Morality" is a call for a strong national poet to rise up and take on the task of moral regeneration which the editors had been preparing for by therapeutic satire. It is not wholly out of the question that they actually had Wordsworth in mind, and hence protectively did not mention his name. (436)

"Tintern Abbey," says Johnston, "may be in part Wordsworth's response" to the call issued by the *Anti-Jacobin* to a "bashful genius, in some rural cell" (437). Johnston bases his case for this connection on a series of personal relationships that may have brought Wordsworth's proclivities to the attention of Canning and company. But as I have argued in this chapter, there are other points of contact as well. Like much of the anti-Jacobin press, Wordsworth opposed the popular literature of his day and helped to shape a taste that might transcend it. He also confronted the problem of popular violence as it related to writing and reform. Wordsworth was peculiarly well placed to confront this problem—indeed, it is in many respects at the very center of his "crisis." As an early advocate of the morality attacked in the *Anti-Jacobin* and later as a poet looking to go back and think through things again, Wordsworth's passage through the difficult decade of the 1790s mirrored that of the nation, poised as it was on the brink of revolutionary outbreak. It is clear that the political contradictions that emerged in this period served as a rich material for poetic experiment. It appears too that poetry, above all, offered a form of reflection flexible enough to mediate the complexities of such explosive material.

By the end of the decade Wordsworth must have been quite practiced at working through the political complexities of revolution, even though his political perspective had changed quite a bit over the preceding five or six years. As early as 1793, in his unpublished letter to Richard Watson, Bishop of Llandaff, Wordsworth confronted the problem of violence being used in the interest of freedom. In what seemed a drastic

change from his former principles, Watson claimed in the appendix to his sermon that he would turn his back on freedom when he sees it "stained with blood." "What!" replies Wordsworth,

> Have you so little knowledge of the nature of man as to be ignorant that a time of revolution is not the season of true liberty? Alas, the obstinacy and perversion of man is such that she is too often obliged to borrow the very arms of despotism to overthrow him, and, in order to reign in peace, must establish herself by violence. (6)

For Wordsworth, such a "contradiction"—that freedom must establish itself through violence—"confuses" ideas of morality. "But," he continues, "is this a sufficient reason to reprobate a convulsion from which is to spring a fairer order of things?" (6). As Jeffrey said of the new school of poetry *c*. 1802, rather than "contemplating the wonders and pleasures which civilization has created for mankind," Wordsworth in this letter indeed voices "a splenetic … discontent with existing institutions in society." It is those governing institutions that are at the root of popular violence—in France and at home: for "left to the quiet exercise of their own judgment," argues Wordsworth, the people would not "… have thought it necessary to set fire to the house of philosophical Priestley, and to hunt down his life like that of a traitor or a parricide" (10).

Watson serves as Burke to Wordsworth's Paine. Not only does Wordsworth complain that Watson, a former friend of liberty, has turned away from his former principles; he proceeds to insist on universal representation and on instituting the right to cashier officials. A couple of things in particular strike me as interesting given Wordsworth's later position. First, his argument implies an idea of nature as essentially salutary. Nature has been corrupted by government, where the interests of a few control the lives of the many. It must be restored by revolution. Where Watson sees a continuation of violence in the Revolutionary government of France—it is "but a change of tyranny"—Wordsworth sees a possibility in the change for a way beyond violence. The governing institutions represent the true cause of popular corruption; thus, with the destruction of the government, "… the stream will go on gradually refining itself" (11)—the violent effects produced by an unjust government will wither away. Wordsworth's argument offers a positive idea of a human nature that will be revealed as a result of revolution. The violence that occasions the transition is an unfortunate effect of governing institutions; it is not inherent to the will of the populace. We see this again in the following statement about the popular violence that

accompanies revolution: "The animal just released from its stall will exhaust the overflow of its spirits in a round of wanton vagaries; but it will soon return to itself, and enjoy its freedom in moderate and regular delight" (11). Even here, in 1793, there is a sense of natural return—a notion of human nature that regulates its own excess. This will feature in Wordsworth's theory of poetry too, with the significant difference that the poet will be called upon to assist in this regulation.

The second point of interest here is that Wordsworth confronts Watson as a philosopher, not a poet. It is the philosopher who does not stop at the easy argument—for example, that the Revolution represents one form of tyranny replacing another. Watson's appendix may represent a turn away from the values of liberty but it also shows him turn from the principles of philosophy. The Revolution posed hard questions for Britons. For Wordsworth, the philosopher does not reject these but rather works through them to a new, less confusing, morality. Wordsworth attributes Watson's sermon to the "hope that it may have some effect in calming a perturbation which … has been excited in the minds of the lower orders of the community" (3). As just suggested, this is something which, by 1800 at least, will concern Wordsworth's poet. Watson sees the excitement in the minds of the people as a potentially violent threat. Wordsworth's philosophy, on the other hand, posits this excitement as a natural consequence of events. Philosophical effort is not required to quell the violence but rather to see past it to the possibility of a peaceful end, when it will have been justified by history. As Wordsworth would explain later,

> Shall I avow that I had hope to see
> (I mean that future times would surely see)
> The man to come parted as by a gulph
> From him who had been? (1805, XI, 57–60)

This "man to come" is not simply assisted by violence: he is the product of it.[24] This was just the sort of morality the anti-Jacobin press was afraid of.

The confidence of Wordsworth's prose in 1793 gives no indication that at this time, as he would later put it, "strangely did I war against myself" (1805, XI, 74). But by 1796, in works like *The Borderers*, a new kind of moral confusion is brought to the surface. We can see this, for example, in the character of Rivers, the very embodiment, as Robert Osborn suggests, of "the man to come."[25] "I seemed a being who had passed alone," says Rivers, "Beyond the visible barriers of the world / And traveled into things to come" (IV.ii.143–45).[26] Violence redefines

Rivers as this man to come and helps give shape to a corresponding new morality:

> And wheresoe'er I turned me, I beheld
> A slavery, compared to which the dungeon
> And clanking chain are perfect liberty.
> You understand me, with an awful comfort
> I saw that every possible shape of action
> Might lead to good—I saw it and burst forth
> Thirsting for some exploit of power and terror. (IV.ii.104–10)

Critics have found echoes of Godwin in some of Rivers's speeches.[27] In this one, however, Rivers goes beyond Godwin's abstractions to a morality based on violent action, on terror. Yet one can see, as Coleridge seems to have, how easily Godwinian philosophy could slip into Robespierrean Terror. Like many of Godwin's characters, Rivers's morality leaves him alone in a world that has not caught up to his grand ideas of things. The play's hero, Mortimer, joins him in the act but does not, finally, accept the morality that might justify it. He forgives Rivers and in doing so breaks the repetition of act / justification. The stage direction that immediately follows Mortimer's words, "But I forgive thee" (V.iii.250), is telling. It reads, "[*confused noises are heard with uproar*]." The confusion signals the coming arrest of Mortimer and Rivers but it also suggests a moral confusion—a crack in the philosophical firmament that holds through Rivers's end (he smirks at having rendered Mortimer "A fool and coward") and Wordsworth's earlier *Letter*. Osborn points out that "Mortimer does in the final lines of the early version propose a route toward the healing opposition between man and nature …" (39). This is not yet the "I love the brooks … / *Even more* than when I tripped lightly as they" of the "Intimations" ode (emphasis added), but it is on the path toward it. Wordsworth's new morality had not yet found its form. But in *The Borderers* an old one can be seen receding into the distance.

By the time confidence is restored to Wordsworth's language he will have moved quite a way from his republican *Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff*. In *The Prelude*, Wordsworth looks back on the earlier period and describes himself as "A bigot to a new idolatry," who "Did like a monk who hath forsworn the world / Zealously labour to cut off my heart / From all the sources of her former strength …" (1805, XI, 74–78). The metaphor is a violent one: Wordsworth labored to cut off his heart from what came before. Such violent labors prove insufficient, finally, in completing the break—thanks to his sister Dorothy and his friend

Coleridge. Dorothy's "sudden admonition like a brook / That does but cross a lonely road … / Maintained for me a saving intercourse / With my true self" (1805, X, 910–914). She "preserved me still / A poet" (ll. 918–919). In quitting his books of philosophy, Wordsworth returns to the source of his former strength: a nature and a pursuit that *precede* revolution. This nature can only be grasped after the fact, however: Wordsworth's true self, or original self, is thus also a new self. His maturity, or growth, is evidenced by his return to something he could not see before. When Wordsworth again addresses this confusing morality he does so not as a republican philosopher but as a philosophic poet. Philosophy, books, "our meddling intellect"—these come to be stained with blood. When in "The Tables Turned" (1798) Wordsworth says "We murder to dissect," it is not just the object but the self that is killed in the dissection.

   "The Tables Turned" begins with the following lines, addressed to a friend whom some have thought to be a young Hazlitt:

> Up! Up! my friend, and clear your looks,
> Why all this toil and trouble?
> Up! Up! my friend, and quit your books,
> Or surely you'll grow double. (ll. 1–4)

The last word, "double," can be read in a couple of ways: first, more obviously, that too much reading will force the reader to double over, corrupting a more natural and upright posture. The friend is in danger of *growing* double. But when these lines are read in the context of Wordsworth's own move away from books of philosophy another sense of the word "double" is opened up. On this reading it is not the posture but the sense of self that will "grow double." The reader will lose himself: he will grow double in the sense of being schizophrenic. To read books of philosophy is to lose a clear sense "of moral evil and of good" (l. 23) in the "endless strife" of abstraction. The friend in the poem is urged to "clear your looks," to shake off his double-vision, as it were, and to "Let Nature be your teacher" (l. 1; l. 16).[28] As with Rivers, such double-vision is but a step from violence ("endless strife") and from a morality that justifies it in the name of individual liberty.

   "The Tables Turned" is in turn doubled by its companion piece, "Expostulation and Reply," which itself offers a curious example of doubling. Take for example the second stanza, again on the subject of books:

> "Where are your books? That light bequeath'd"
> "To beings else forlorn and blind!"

"Up! Up! And drink the spirit breath'd"
"From dead men to their kind" (ll. 4–7)

In a reversal of the scene of "The Tables Turned," the "friend" of this piece chastises the "replier" for not having his books out. This sets up the second half of the poem, where the reply will privilege powers other than books. Beyond either speaker, however, the poem plays with the language used to articulate the different views. The expostulator and his obsession with books, for example, is turned into a kind of Burkean reactionary, obsessed with "dead men" and lifeless parchment. Paine of course argued "the rights of the living" against "the manuscript assumed authority of the dead."[29] The second half of "Expostulation and Reply," too, argues for the priority of the living—"of things for ever speaking" (l. 27). Wordsworth seems to take this as meaning all things alive, the "powers" of nature in lines 21–24. But where Paine's "living" posed a threat of revolutionary action that led to his eventual prosecution, in absentia, Wordsworth's rejection of "these barren leaves" ("Tables Turned," l. 30) culminates "In a wise passiveness" (l. 24). The positions of the time and their associations are reversed. Burke's position ("dead men") is associated here with books of philosophy (Jacobins, France, Godwin); and the vitality of "the living" (Paine) amounts not to action but to a "wise passiveness" (Burke's reading of 1688).

Nature can restore, it can keep the self one, but in Wordsworth's poetry doubling is necessary to show this. In *The Borderers*, the conflicted Rivers is doubled in the character of Mortimer. Rivers tricks Mortimer into following him in act but Mortimer stops short of accepting Rivers's justifying morality. The repetition of system is invoked. But in a complicated poetic move, it is invoked to show the progress in Wordsworth's work beyond it. I would argue that Gamer's characterization of *The Borderers* as a "German" tragedy can itself be understood in a couple of ways. *The Borderers* is "German" in the sense that it is Jacobin (Rivers' connection to Godwin, to a new morality in the violent revolutionary sense) and gothic (Mortimer as gothic double). The gothic convention of doubling serves Wordsworth's aim of representing the crisis of new philosophy and the morality it gives rise to. Violence cuts the individual off from his / her own heart, creating a conflicted self who seeks wholeness through changing everything outside his perceptions. The poet, unlike the philosopher, does not look ahead to a new morality forged in violent revolution. Instead, he points out what was there all along to lose and how this is precisely what will be sacrificed by giving oneself over to such a morality.

The mix is essential for the "one world" vision of Wordsworth's poet. The republican philosopher of the *Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff* will

remain embedded in Wordsworth's verse as a reminder and a remainder of past terror. He will haunt the work as Mortimer, the doubled hero of *The Borderers*, will haunt to world of the living:

> I will go forth a wanderer on the earth,
> A shadowy thing …
>   … And I will wander on
> Living by mere intensity of thought,
> A thing by pain and thought compelled to live,
> Yet loathing life, till heaven in mercy strike me
> With blank forgetfulness—that I may die. (V.iii.265–75)

Mortimer will not be forgotten, just as Wordsworth's proximity to terror—his personal experiences of 1792–93—will not be forgotten. This intensity of thought and all its associations with new philosophy, the gothic, and violence haunts Wordsworth's work. It is never fully written out, even in the final revisions of *The Prelude*. It remains to mark a progressive movement. Mortimer cannot go back and undo his action, which led finally to the death of an innocent man. He does, however, forgive Rivers when the justification was there to "have plucked out" his heart and to have "flung it to the dogs" (V.iii.248–49). Wordsworth never went so far as murder. He can in fact go back and correct his reasonings false. But the act of having crossed nature must remain, as I've said, to mark the way forward.

   This complicated manoeuvre is worked through more fully in books ten and eleven of *The Prelude*. In these books Wordsworth shows himself doubled, not only by these reasonings false, but by his conflicted allegiance to France and England. For example, when "with open war / Britain opposed the liberties of France" (1805, X, ll. 759–60), he explains that:

> a way was opened for mistakes
> And false conclusions of the intellect,
> As gross in their degree, and in their kind
> Far, far more dangerous. (1805, X, ll. 765–68)

He goes on to chronicle a series of changes in events and in himself. The course of the Revolution and the course of his own reading are intimately connected:

> But when events
> Brought less encouragement, and unto these

> The immediate proof of principles no more
> Could be entrusted …
> > > … evidence
> Safer, of universal application, such
> As could not be impeached, was sought elsewhere.
> > > > (X, ll. 779–82, 788–90)

Unsurprisingly, in the very next verse paragraph we find not Britain opposing the liberties of France but rather, "now, become oppressors in their turn, / Frenchmen had changed a war of self-defence / for one of conquest, losing sight of all / which they had struggled for" (X, ll. 791–94).[30] When the French Revolution turns from its own principles Wordsworth turns back to his. The "elsewhere" of safer evidence is the organic soil of England:

> Nature's self, by human love
> Assisted, through the weary labyrinth
> Conducted me again to open day,
> Revived the feelings of my earlier life. (X, ll. 921–24)

It becomes clear to the reader that it is not only France that has lost sight of something. "I rejoiced," says Wordsworth, recalling his revolutionary fervor,

> Yes, afterwards, truth painful to record,
> Exulted in the triumph of my soul
> When Englishmen by thousands were o'erthrown. (X, ll. 258–61)

Wordsworth had cheered the death of his fellow countrymen—indeed, he "Fed on the day of vengeance yet to come!" (l. 274).

The sense of nature conducting Wordsworth again "to open day" and reviving the "feelings of … earlier life" is altered slightly in the 1850 version of *The Prelude*. In this last revision we are presented with the following:

> > Nature's self,
> By all varieties of human love
> Assisted, led me back through opening day
> To those sweet counsels between head and heart
> When grew that genuine knowledge. (1850, XI, ll. 349–53)

In the 1805 version, the sense is given that the two courses are parallel in time and that Wordsworth could be brought from one (French) to another (English). The 1850 version adds a step. Wordsworth has to be "led … back" to those "sweet counsels between head and heart." The suggestion is that Wordsworth had gone too far and that he needed to undo his course before pursuing another, surer one. But the passage is even more complicated. Those counsels between head and heart are also the product of growth—away from childhood, the "coarser pleasures of my boyish days," and toward the "philosophic mind." It is as if Wordsworth did not know that he had the idea to lose until he had gone past it enough to see it behind him in the distance. To maintain a new idea Wordsworth must go back to the time "when grew that genuine knowledge"—a knowledge that can be known only after being lost—or nearly. (What was there is thus connected to the good of the new, the new itself becoming old.) *The Prelude* presents a theory of return—a new structure for an older feeling. In Wordsworth's return, the new preserves something crucial from the past that has been neglected in the frantic art and radical politics of the present. Yet it brings that something into the present, where it is urgently needed.

The sense of the people

James Chandler has argued that *The Prelude*, "… the magnum opus of the great decade and Wordsworth's fullest attempt to deal with the French Revolution, is written from an ideological perspective that is thoroughly Burkean" (31–32).[31] I would certainly agree to the extent that Wordsworth's turn from France and from reasonings false reflects a view of revolution much closer to Burke's reading of 1688 than to Paine's reading of 1789. I do not, however, think this is solely a reactionary gesture. Instead, I see it as an attempt to come to terms with a couple of competing narratives of modernity: what might be labeled the English and the French. In the English, a tradition is maintained through innovation; according to the French model, a radical break from the past is required to ensure progress. As discussed in the introduction, and according to Ellen Meiksins Wood, the French version of revolution necessitated a strong state apparatus, one in which certain *ancien regime* features persisted. In England the power of the state was dispersed across "symbolic substitutes." For Meiksins Wood this does not suggest an incomplete modernity but rather "a more complete evolution of a 'modern' relation between state and civil society …" (34). The symbolic use of a pre-modern past in Wordsworth functions as a symbolic substitute for the state and signifies a modernity that did not necessitate radical

ideologies of rupture from the past. Tradition, in other words, was a way of consolidating the new. In some respects it had to be invented for just such a purpose.[32]

1688 was in many respects an eighteenth-century invention—or reinvention. England's Revolution was reread and reinvented several times over the course of the century: after the Act of Union in 1707, for example, and later, following the Jacobite uprising in 1745.[33] As discussed in the introduction, the bloodless Revolution provided a central context for discussing events in France following the outbreak of revolution in 1789. *The Prelude* may reflect a more solidly Burkean reading of that revolution, but in the *Lyrical Ballads*, and especially in the Preface, we can see Wordsworth incorporating several different readings of 1688 into his theory of literary and social change.[34] The first, which might be called Burkean, involves a similar structure as that identified in *The Prelude*, where something new preserves something old. A form is found to push ahead yet also back to a continuous past. The second involves the role of the extra-parliamentary voice of the people in the national culture. Burke's reading of 1688 as glorious—and bloodless—because of its exclusion of the people was not a standard interpretation. It had to be argued against a prevailing reading of the Revolution—Price's for example—as Enlightened progress for the people. As Jon Mee has pointed out, "the whole point of Burke's polemic was to stop philosophers and the literati more generally from playing with what was regarded as the flammable enthusiasm of the masses" (86).

One member of the general literati who would come to embody for the government Burke's fear of political men of letters was the radical orator and poet, John Thelwall. As Nicholas Roe has argued, the notorious Two Acts were brought before parliament in part because of an attack on the King's coach that was blamed on Thelwall's "inflammatory discourses." The speech referred to was given three days prior to the assault. "Thelwall's overriding concern," says Roe, "was to counsel 'the common people' against violence" (173). Thelwall drew on a very different reading of 1688 as a flawed though important precedent for the people's participation in the political process. In his *Tribune*, No. XXV (1795), which offered a *Report on the State of Popular Opinion*, Thelwall exclaims,

> But when I came to read Mr. Burke's book … I was astonished to hear the man talk of the Revolution of 1688, as an act by which the privileges and liberties of the people were taken away! As an act by which our ancestors relinquished forever a natural and imprescriptible

right, to which formerly he seems to admit we might have laid some claim. (220)

Thelwall on several occasions champions the Revolution of 1688 as a guarantor of popular rights—a "strong mace" which "bruised to pieces" the "golden calf of passive obedience."[35] In the report on popular opinion, Thelwall goes on to condemn the government trials against speech as a mockery of the constitution. "Britons," he says, "men for speaking these sentiments, under that constitution which pretends to be the same as was established at the Revolution of 1688, were transported, like felons, to Botany Bay" (224).

E.P. Thompson suggests an implicit link with this reading of 1688 when he argues that Wordsworth's turn away from Godwinian abstractions in the 1790s was not necessarily a turn toward Burkean conservatism. "In my view," says Thompson, "Wordsworth remained an 'odious democrat' until after the Peace of Amiens, and his poems of national independence and liberty are often criticisms of the course of the French Revolution from the 'left', for its own self-betrayal" (94). But a turn away from Godwin is not necessarily a turn toward Thelwall or Paine. This is especially true considering that Wordsworth's poetry of the later 1790s is, as I suggested at the start, an attack on the populace—the very same target, it must be said, of Godwin's political philosophy. Wordsworth's poetry from the late 1790s onwards in large part dismisses "the people" as an arbiter of taste and as a unit of historical progress. As David Bromwich discovers, "nowhere, in the poems that follow ['The Old Cumberland Beggar,' 1797], does Wordsworth fix our interest for long on a group with more than two members" (15). But if Wordsworth was not interested to champion the rights of the people he at least found a place for their voice.

As Siskin argues that reviewers might be excused for finding elements of radical systems in *Lyrical Ballads*, so it seems plausible to read "democrat" in Wordsworth's use of the real language of men. But as with system, this can also be seen as a gesture against the very thing invoked. Wordsworth opposes the literary or organic to the systematic (as in "The Tables Turned"). But unlike Burke, who also does this, Wordsworth renders this opposition in the very form and style that Paine and other radical writers used to address the people—a style, I argued in Chapter 1, that was seen to be intimately connected to its reasoned, or systematic approach. The poems in *Lyrical Ballads*, explains Wordsworth in the Preface, were published as "an experiment" that attempted to fit to metrical arrangement "a selection of the real language of men in a state

of vivid sensation" (Preface 241). Wordsworth would seem to be opposing the popularity of the frantic novels with the populace itself. The readers of gothic novels could not get enough of violent scenes and terrifying descriptions. Yet "the people" as a political category was thought to be the source of such scenes and constituted a threat that went well beyond the printed page. The two—the people and the terrorist school—had become closely associated by the end of the eighteenth century. Wordsworth's Preface separates the two by returning to a pre-1789 English view of the people—one taught, so to speak, in various eighteenth-century readings of 1688. Kathleen Wilson argues that "since it was the (largely mythical) role of the people in the constitution that in most contemporaries' minds distinguished English liberty from Continental absolutism, populist beliefs and discourses were a crucial plank in the construction of national identities and consciousness" (19). Whether or not the people actually had such a role in the constitution was not the point. As Wordsworth would say in his 1815 *Essay, Supplementary to the Preface*, "The appropriate business of poetry … her appropriate employment, her privilege and her *duty*, is to treat of things not as they *are*, but as they *appear* …" (226, emphasis in original).

If Robespierre and the French Revolution taught the writers of the terrorist school that "fear is the only passion they ought to cultivate," perhaps England's past experience of revolution could provide a lesson for this increasingly fearful present. The popular tradition that had grown steadily in the wake of 1688 presented an alternative picture of the people, one put in jeopardy by the events of 1792–93. But as with Locke and his "appeal to heaven," Wordsworth invokes the people in order to bring them inside the emerging institution of literature, thus controlling a force that is too threatening to leave outside the gates. And like Locke, Wordsworth makes a distinction between "the people" and what he refers to in his 1815 *Essay* as "the clamour of that small though loud portion of the community, ever governed by factitious influence, which, under the name of the public, passes itself, upon the unthinking, for the people" (254–55). It is not to this "public" that Wordsworth addresses himself. Instead, it is to the people "philosophically characterized, and to the embodied spirit of their knowledge" that the poet's "reverence is due" (255). This is not Paine's "the people," those intimately connected to his seditious writings by the government and the conservative press. It is a version of the people disembodied politically and represented by custom and tradition that finds its voice in Wordsworth's poetry.[36] This is not an incendiary gesture; it is a gesture toward an institution capable of staving off the threat of the popular by making it institutional.

In 1793 Wordsworth saw a revolution that would liberate human nature and a human nature that would then regulate itself. By the end of the decade he had a different idea of this nature. The Revolution of 1688 presented a version of the people already regulated and in danger of being loosed by the various revolutions, or the "great national events which are daily taking place." The poet, then, like the post-1688 institutions of eighteenth-century English life, would continue to provide this regulation in the dangerous realm of print—that extra-institutional force that was nevertheless threatening the nation's institutions. Thus I think Wordsworth employs Paine-like language in order not to rouse the people, but as a way to keep them from rising to revolutionary violence. He takes the language of "the people" and renders it less potentially violent by giving it back in the form of a language of the self. This self would be institutionalized in literature well conducted, a literature best able to represent that constitution of the nation. Watson's sermon sought to do something similar: to calm "a perturbation which … has been excited in the minds of the lower orders of the community." Unlike Watson, however, and a little like his republican philosopher, Wordsworth pushes forward to the brink of revolutionary outbreak before retreating to a previous point. Wordsworth, in a sense, gives us the mental experience of having passed through revolution without our having truly done so. As Paul Keen says,

> Poetry immunizes the reader against the danger of excess by exposing him to precisely those situations which are most likely to lead to excess. It teaches people to feel, but not to feel too much. Wordsworth thus summons up the dangers of revolution. He calls the threat of it to mind, dwells on it, highlights the number of forces that contribute to its potency, but only in order to unveil a force that is capable of warding it off. (247)

Wordsworth not only helps to render literature safe. He renders it something capable of "warding off" revolution—that is, of keeping Britain safe.

Indeed, this becomes the very job of the poet. In the revised Preface to the 1802 edition *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth articulates what has become a classic definition of the poet, describing him as a "man … endued with a more lively sensibility," with a "disposition to be affected more than other men by absent things as if they were present" (255–56). That the poet can feel more intensely than others is significant not because he will herald the intense changes and massive events taking place in his world or society. Quite the contrary: it is precisely the subtleties of some

transcendent humanity that Wordsworth's poet articulates in the face of a violent modernity. This ability to feel "absent things as if they were present" becomes important, or better, useful, to the degree to which the immediate and excessive stimulation of a world changing too fast for contemplation has rendered "men" followers and unthinkingly violent actors.

Although Wordsworth's famous description has come to define *the* poet, to express a general truth regarding poetry as we presently understand it, much work has been done to demystify this romantic ideology and to assert the historical specificity behind the poems and theories of Wordsworth and other writers of the period.[37] In looking at Wordsworth's description of the poet's more lively sensibility, it is important to continue in such work by noting the relationship between this sensibility—however transcendent Wordsworth or others might wish it to appear—and a very specific historical present that has, in Wordsworth's opinion, dulled people's capacity to feel by bombarding them with excessive stimulation. The poet "has acquired a greater readiness and power in expressing what he thinks and feels, and especially those thoughts and feelings which, by his own choice, or from the structure of his own mind, arise in him without immediate excitement" (256). This qualification, that the poet is a man capable of feeling intensely without the aid of external stimuli, points to the fact that Wordsworth was writing at a time of immense external stimulation resulting from the proximity of revolution, changes leading to industrialization, and war with France. "The human mind is capable of being excited without the application of violent stimulants," says Wordsworth, "and he must have a very faint perception of its beauty and dignity who does not know this, and who does not further know, that one being is elevated above another, in proportion as he possesses this capability" (248–49).

Wordsworth goes on to claim that the "enlargement" of this capability to feel is "one of the best services in which, at any period, a writer can be engaged." However, while this service may be useful at any time, Wordsworth stresses the significance of such a service in the present— thus emphasizing the historical rather than the abstract virtue of his poet. It is the desire for instant gratification that has raised the threat of violence *and* driven into neglect the works of Milton and Shakespeare. Contra Hazlitt and Jeffrey, it is not the poems in *Lyrical Ballads* that reflect a revolutionary threat but rather literary output in general—an output that recapitulates a dulling of the mind produced by industrial and commercial changes, revolution, and war. Wordsworth's poems will not manifest a revolutionary energy that has failed to materialize on

English soil, but will instead counter such an energy by producing the effects of a change that does not require revolutionary violence.

Even the structure of the Preface reflects this: the gap between the two halves of the famous definition of poetry—"a powerful overflow of emotion … recollected in tranquillity"—is filled by a discussion of the individual poet figure himself ("What is a Poet"); it marks the space of the contemplation that allows him to assimilate the new, the powerful, the violent, without fully breaking from what came before. The powerful overflow is revolution. The tranquility is the product of return to nature and bloodless-ness first experienced by the poet. Wordsworth restores the distinction between thought and action by providing this space for the reader not habituated to reflection or revolution. To do this, however, requires that literature be separated from writing and from the public sphere of potentially revolutionary ideas—literature ill conducted—and placed instead within the disciplinary equivalent of a reclusive retreat. As Mee puts it, "Wordsworth's Preface suggests that literature is the means by which the enthusiasm of print can be regulated into healthful form" (227). This more overtly political effect is linked to the literary drive for a *new* kind of writing, one that is radical in the true sense of the term—as in going to the root (in this case of Literature): Shakespeare and Milton as opposed to "frantic" novels and "sickly" German tragedies.

Toward the end of the Preface Wordsworth explains that his "purpose" has not been to prove that "some other kinds of poetry" are "less worthy of the nobler powers of the mind," but instead to show that if his own purpose "were fulfilled, a species of poetry would be produced, which is genuine poetry" (302). In other words, in attempting to educate the reader in how to read this new kind of poetry, Wordsworth simultaneously hopes to inform him / her of what constitutes *genuine* poetry. This conflation of something new with something genuine points to the complex structure of Wordsworth's project: what is novel in it is not really new but rather genuine. The new poetry is poetry itself.

Remembered (t)error

"Tintern Abbey," the poem Johnston identifies as taking off from Canning's "The New Morality," provides one of the best examples of the relationship between this complicated structure of return and Wordsworth's experience of revolutionary excess. "It is a poem," says Bromwich, "about the peace and rest that one can know only by a sublimation of remembered terror." In fact, says Bromwich, " 'Tinter[n] Abbey' … appears to be the first poem by Wordsworth to offer an implicit apology for the good of *aesthetic* sublimation" (73, emphasis in

original). A late edition to *Lyrical Ballads*, "Tintern Abbey" brings the first collection of Wordsworth and Coleridge's experiments to a close. In many ways too it serves to offset the strange "German" poem that leads the volume, Coleridge's "Rime." Paul H. Fry, for example, discusses the poems in *Lyrical Ballads* as comprising a dialogue between Wordsworth and Coleridge, with "The Rime" constituting an "attack on Wordsworthian calm" (329), and some of Wordsworth poems, like "The Thorn" or "The Idiot Boy," offering a corrective to Coleridge's "Rime." "The Rime" presents a natural world that is arbitrary, even malevolent, and a human psyche formed in the process of being cut off from any healing power the world might have to offer. As the poem tells, neither the spirits nor the hermit can "shrieve" the Mariner. He is doomed to repeat his stunning tale:

> Forthwith this frame of mine was wrench'd
> With a woeful agony
> Which forc'd me to begin my tale
> And then it left me free. (1798, ll. 625–28)

The freedom that comes from telling the tale is only temporary—the agony returns "at an uncertain hour" and "makes me tell / My ghastly aventure" (ll. 629–32). In Coleridge's poem the repetition fails to make a difference. The listener is changed: he is "a sadder and a wiser man" (l. 624). But the Mariner, the poet ("I have strange power of speech") is not. As with system, the principle works mechanically to repeat its conclusions regardless of time, place, or listener.

   This pattern is repeated in "Dejection: an Ode," another poem written in response to Wordsworth.[38] Coleridge tells of "afflictions" that "bow me down to earth" (l. 82). "Each visitation," he writes, "Suspends what nature gave me at my birth, / My shaping spirit of imagination" (ll. 84–86). The resolution of the poem offers joy only to the listener: "gentle sleep" and "wings of healing" may visit the "Dear Lady" to whom the poet addresses himself but not the poet himself. The shaping sprit of imagination can reach only her—though significantly it does this through the shape of the poem itself. "Dear Lady!," the speaker concludes, "Friend devoutest of my choice, / Thus mayest thou ever, evermore rejoice" (ll.138–39). The poet, distanced from nature by his afflictions, is described in terms of a system:

> For not to think of what I needs must feel,
>   But to be still and patient, all I can;

> And haply by abstruse research to steal
>   From my own nature all the natural man—
>   This was my sole research, my only plan:
> Till that which suits a part infects the whole,
> And now is almost grown the habit of my soul. (ll. 87–93)

As with a system, a part controls the whole—its repetition becomes "habit." Coleridge's habit seems a far cry from what Chandler has called Wordsworth's "second nature." Indeed, to go back for a moment to Meiksins Wood's argument about tradition and revolution, Coleridge, in his ultimate break from his own past, seems more insistent on a centralized mechanism of culture to do the work of Wordsworth's poet. As Jon Klancher suggests, "the regeneration of taste—to which both Wordsworth and Coleridge were deeply committed—required for Coleridge the making of an interpretive institution that at once resituated the political state, reestablished a state of intellectual grace, and restructured the circulatory practices of reading and writing themselves" (151–52). The clerisy will act as the state to a people cut off from their better selves.

In poems like "Tintern Abbey," the "Intimations" ode, and the later books of *The Prelude*, Wordsworth's subjects are never fully cut off from the natural world; the part is invoked but it never infects the whole. A loss is always recuperated via a gain—"Other gifts / Have followed, for such loss, I would believe, / Abundant recompense," says the speaker of "Tintern Abbey" (ll. 88–90). In "Tintern Abbey" the story told will bring the listener a wisdom that will help ameliorate the sadness that is bound to come with the passing of time. The silent listener (Dorothy Wordsworth) is in the eyes of the speaker set free from future sadness by what the speaker tells—"Therefore let the moon / Shine on thee in thy solitary walk" (ll. 135–36). However, the speaker too is transformed in the telling—not set free for a mere instant, but rather equipped to go forward in step with "The still, sad music of humanity" (l. 92). The telling brings a wisdom that is durable and that breaks the repetition of agony or affliction:

>   for she can so inform
>   The mind that is within us, so impress
>   With quietness and beauty, and so feed
>   With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
>   Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
>   Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all

> The dreary intercourse of daily life,
> Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
> Our cheerful faith that all which we behold
> Is full of blessings. (ll. 126–35)

As in *The Borderers*, the repetition is disrupted (though again the doubling of Wordsworth by Dorothy is required to show this). While the speaker was once "more like a man / Flying from something that he dreads, than one / Who sought the thing he loved" (ll. 71–73), this moment of time is incorporated into a structure that uses it as an example of nature's precedence. Sadness and dread are part of the world. But this part cannot infect the whole of the speaker or the listener imbued with a sense of wisdom such as nature can provide.

For Wordsworth to repeat the tale is to alter it; this is the template that underpins "Tintern Abbey" and which justifies the changes to *The Prelude*.[39] In this sense Wordsworth's poetry is the more organic: it progresses according to the justifications of its own inner laws. In reading the potential written into the present Wordsworth's poet helps us to avoid danger—precisely by rewriting, or reforming, the moment. The threat of an absolute break—of "revolution" in the modern sense—is used to heighten the value of the return to what was nearly lost—or "revolution" in the older sense of the term. As Bromwich and others have pointed out, the poem is dated July 13, 1798. The five years that have passed place Wordsworth's flight from "something he dreads" in the year of the Terror. The date July 13 suggests the eve of Revolution—a final moment when one might reconsider one's steps before rushing into a course of action that could easily lead to the events of 1793. "Tintern Abbey," like *The Prelude*, affirms that there is a way back from (T)error.

Wordsworth's poetry at the end of the 1790s posits a similar solution to the problem of revolutionary outbreak as did the Glorious Revolution. The institutional change that made for a "bloodless" Revolution in 1688–89 did so by subordinating the powers of the monarchy to those of parliament. The next phase in this process should have entailed an institutional change that subordinated the parliament to the people. That the Reform Act of 1832 was linked only to the "Romantic revolution"—and not to social revolution—is in part due to the institution of Literature that preceded it. Literature substituted the subordination of politics to culture for the subordination of parliament to the people. In doing so it disciplined a public sphere of letters that was threatening national integrity. As with 1688, the emergence of a literary institution as

conceived in the 1790s by writers like Wordsworth, Coleridge, and others, helped play a similar role in forestalling revolutionary violence and revolutionary aims. The effect was in many respects doubled: a public was controlled at that same time that it was given a popular, revolutionary character. The language of the people was utilized but not necessarily in order to give the people any more of a voice.

That the French Revolution has often been understood as inaugurating the modern should not keep us from seeing a very different but equally modern struggle: the struggle to contain revolution by institutionalizing one of its most powerful vehicles: print. Indeed, it may well be the case that modernity is constituted not by the violent break from the past but rather from the struggle not to break with it—the struggle to keep something of what came before even while the present seems to move steadily away from it.

3
The Political Institution of Literature

> The two leading features of my character are sensibility and insensibility.
>
> William Godwin, 1798[1]

Godwin's Enlightenment

In critical accounts of Wordsworth's early or "radical" years a lot of space is devoted to his turn from Godwinian philosophy and toward what David Bromwich has termed a "radical humanity."[2] Comparatively less attention has been paid to the changes in Godwin's thought in this same period and to what might be described as Godwin's own turn from abstraction—from Godwinian philosophy. Although he stresses that the revisions to *Political Justice* in 1795 and 1797 "are not of a fundamental nature"[3] it is clear from the content of these revisions and from the other projects Godwin devoted himself to in the second half of the 1790s that a fundamental change was exactly what was being effected. In a document entitled "Principal revolutions of Opinion to which my Mind has been Subjected," dated March 10, 1800, Godwin lists three major errors to his *Political Justice*: the first is "stoicism," or "the inattention to principles of pleasure and pain"; the second is "sandemanianism," or "the inattention to the principle that feeling, not judgement, is the source of human actions"; and the third is what he describes as "the unqualified condemnation of the private affections."[4] In a schedule of proposed literary projects dated September, 1798, Godwin lists a book "to be entitled First Principles of Morals" which will correct the errors of *Political Justice*, especially as they relate to "the empire of feeling."[5] The products of Godwin's turn away from his earlier philosophy include, in addition to the revisions to *Political Justice*, his next two novels—*St. Leon*

and *Fleetwood; or The New Man of Feeling*—and his collection of essays from 1798, *The Enquirer.*

In fact, if there was such a thing as a Wordsworthian Philosophy at this time Godwin could be described, with a few qualifications, as turning toward it. But there was no such thing—not really. There was instead a movement, discussed in the last two chapters, toward a certain idea of literature, one we today associate with Wordsworth and some of his contemporaries (though not Godwin himself). Many early Romantics directed their work away from the Enlightenment notions of writing contained in Godwin's *Political Justice*. The rise in anti-Jacobin sentiment and establishment control of the press coincides with what many have come to describe as the waning of the public sphere in eighteenth-century Britain—the end of the so-called republic of letters. Jon Klancher surmises that the 1790s witnessed "a crisis of literature and of the left," and that the period between 1793 and 1798:

> Spans a moment in literary history that was to prove ruinous to the British republic of letters and to its central category, the larger Enlightenment classification of "literature." It was a time when literature itself—still the spacious universe of eighteenth-century written genres that included natural philosophy, moral philosophy, historiography, and political economy, as well as poetry, drama, and criticism—had become associated in Britain with the Dissenters, who edited the four leading literary reviews, and with intellectuals such as Godwin or Paine, who modelled the progressive's ideal political republic upon the republic of letters. ("Godwin and the Republican Romance" 143)[6]

As we know, literature's associations did indeed change: not only was the literary narrowed to exclude, in large part, moral philosophy, historiography, and political economy, but this narrowed focus also helped to narrow the range of opinion in the larger world beyond letters. Michael Scrivener argues that the Enlightenment project "became radical" after men of property abandoned it at the end of the century. "The Jacobins," he says, "not only sustained but deepened the project with greater egalitarianism" (16). Despite efforts in the early 1790s by Godwin, John Thelwall, and various Jacobin novelists and poets, literature did not necessarily follow suit. For many who were to become canonical Romantic writers the value of literature was understood in terms of a very different kind of depth.

Godwin's own Enlightenment conception of literature as a public sphere of ideas changed in the course of this larger shift—especially as

the connection between Enlightenment and greater egalitarianism made his at best an uneasy alliance with the Jacobin left. His antipathy to the popular politics, as discussed below, in some respects kept Godwin above the fray as well as out of prison. As Coleridge writes in a sonnet to Godwin, included in a letter to Southey from December 17, 1794, "Calm in his halls of brightness he shall dwell!" Godwin's brand of Enlightenment was abstruse and expensive—hardly the kind of thing to find its way into the alehouse or out onto the barricades. Nevertheless, his changing conception of the literary can be attributed in part to the barrage of criticism that labeled his work as Jacobin and as violent despite his many claims to the contrary. Godwin did not have the personal experience of revolution and terror that Wordsworth or Helen Maria Williams had. But his work in the first years after the Revolution suggested an intimate connection to terror, one that angered many on the right and that became a real obstacle to Godwin's own Enlightenment project. In order to continue the Enlightenment project started in *Political Justice*, Godwin had to abandon some crucial aspects of this project.

As in Coleridge's 1795 Lectures, where he addresses Godwin's abstraction, and in the character of Rivers in Wordsworth's *The Borderers*, the "stoicism" of Godwin's new philosophy was easily linked to the morality of Robespierre and the violent effects that followed from it. But this association was not obvious to Godwin when he embarked on his great system. In 1793, in the preface to the first edition of his *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*, Godwin appears ready to take on the vicious labeling of the press. "The period in which [*Political Justice*] makes its appearance is singular," he writes: "The people of England have assiduously been excited to declare their loyalty, and to mark every man as obnoxious who is not ready to sign the Shibboleth of the constitution" (70). With *Political Justice*, he declares, "It is now to be tried whether, in addition to these alarming encroachments on our liberty, a book is to fall under the arm of the civil power which, beside the advantage of having for one of its express objects the dissuading of tumult and violence, is by its very nature an appeal to men of study and reflection" (70). It is as if Godwin is proposing an experiment of sorts: can a book appeal to reflection and non-violence simultaneously? By 1795, in the preface to the second edition, he seems less sure of his success but echoes the intention:

> The *Enquiry concerning Political Justice* has been treated by some persons as of a seditious and inflammatory nature. … No man can more fervently deprecate scenes of commotion and tumult than the author

of this book; no man would more anxiously avoid the lending his assistance in the most distant manner to animosity and bloodshed; but he persuades himself that, whatever may be the events with which the present crisis of human history shall be distinguished, the effect of his writings, as far as they are in any degree remembered, will be found favourable to the increase and preservation of general kindness and benevolence. (73–74)

That same year (1795) Godwin expressed his concern more directly in a note explaining why his preface to *Caleb Williams* (1794) was withdrawn. "Terror was the order of the day," he writes, "and it was feared that even the humble novelist might be shown to be constructively a traitor" (4). In what remained of the public sphere of letters at the end of the eighteenth century, Godwin's systematizing was not found favorable to the increase of general kindness—not by the predominantly anti-Jacobin press and not by the literary lights of the new poetry. To what extent Godwin admitted defeat on his claim that literature as he defined it and peaceful progress were commensurate is hard to specify. But his literary output at the end of the decade suggests that Godwin sought progress through a new and in some respects anti-Enlightenment conception of literature.

As Chapters 1 and 2 looked at the emergence of literature in terms of it providing a discourse of legitimacy to governing institutions in eighteenth-century Britain, so this chapter continues with an approach to literature that sees it as an *alternative* institution to that of government. What links these two approaches—we can call them Wordsworth's and Godwin's—however, is what was called in the last chapters the "problem of the people." Wordsworth and Godwin found in literature a possible solution to this problem. Both validated a literary sphere removed from the more overtly political and public sphere of print. While certainly a dissenting voice—indeed, one of the most hated of his time—Godwin differed from other radical and reformist writers of the 1790s in that he was not a proponent of "the people" in the sense that Paine was or the London Corresponding Society was. For one, Godwin did not wish to see this "extra-parliamentary" body given a presence in government institutions because he wished to see government institutions abolished. Godwin was thus not a reformist in the sense that he thought government capable of reform; he was a reformist in the sense that he thought humanity itself capable of reform. His final aim precluded any need for government institutions to keep the people "in line." But in addition to this eccentric reformist stance, Godwin was also

quick to point out that "the people" was not the unit to be privileged in the reform of humanity. Like Wordsworth, Godwin's fundamental unit of thought was the individual—radical though he or she might be. He was strictly opposed to collective, or group-based action, by which he meant everything from angry mobs, left or right, to organizations like the London Corresponding Society and governments like Britain's. If reform groups and government were to be excluded from Godwin's plans for the reform of society, though, the question remains as to exactly what kind of institution might assist in this project. In this chapter I argue that literature was just such an institution.

Literature and the people

In the section of his *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* entitled "Of Political Associations," Godwin provides the reasoning behind his dislike of peoples' politics. This reasoning can be broken down into two strands, both of which are familiar to us from Chapter 1. The first is that group, or collective, politics does not allow for the development of individual judgment.[7] Godwin argues that,

> Party has a more powerful tendency than perhaps any other circumstance in human affairs to render the mind quiescent and stationary. Instead of making each man an individual, which the interest of the whole requires, it resolves all understandings into one common mass and subtracts from each the varieties that could alone distinguish him from a brute machine. (1798, 285)

In a party or association, says Godwin, ten people do the thinking and 100 people follow and find ways to make their thinking agree. But this is no way to prepare individuals to live without the guidance of government institutions. In fact, says Godwin, political associations and government are very much alike in the havoc they wreak on private judgment. He explains that " … confederate action is of the nature of government," and insists that " … every argument of this work, which is calculated to display the evils of government, and to recommend the restraining it within as narrow limits as possible, is equally hostile to political associations" (287). Political associations do not help to effect a dissolution of government. Rather, they promote a continuation of its coercive means.

Godwin's second line of reasoning argues that as political associations attend upon "harangue and declamation" so such haranguing and

declaiming leads "to passion, and not knowledge" (285). Sounding more like Burke than the radical friends to whom he was so often linked, Godwin explains that these passions have a "tendency" toward disorder and tumult. "Nothing is more notorious than the ease with which the conviviality of a crowded feast may degenerate into the depredations of a riot," says Godwin; and "there is nothing more barbarous, blood-thirsty and unfeeling than the triumph of a mob" (288). For Godwin, as for so many in the eighteenth century, any organization of the people posed the threat of violence. But Godwin's was a "rational" anarchy, not a violent one—regardless of what his critics accused him of. For Godwin, as for Wordsworth, "truth dwells with contemplation" (286), not with action. As it was one of the fundamental points of *Political Justice* to argue for gradual, nonviolent reform of humanity, Godwin found little of value, politically or philosophically, in arguments for associations of the people, however well-intentioned the authors of such arguments.

This was a point that Godwin was to emphasize and reemphasize continually throughout the years that followed the publication of his *Political Justice*. For it was not simply his enemies that were liable to con-nect Godwin's work to radical and violent—that is, collective—political action. His friends or disciples, too, could just as easily be misled into thinking that Godwin's new philosophy was a more theoretically sophisticated extension of Paine's arguments. Take for example an early correspondence between Godwin and the young Percy Shelley. Shelley had written to Godwin about his scheme to push for Catholic emancipation in Ireland and to repeal the Act of Union of 1801. Godwin's reply to Shelley focused on the latter's proposal for a "philan-thropic society"—a kind of *avant garde* political association that would discuss the rational reform of the Irish political situation. "If I may be allowed to understand my book on Political Justice," Godwin replies,

> Its pervading principle is, that association is a most ill-chosen and ill-qualified mode of endeavoring to promote the political happiness of mankind. And I think of your pamphlet, however commendable and lovely are many of the sentiments it contains, that it will be either ineffective to its immediate object, or that it has no very remote ten-dency to light again the flames of rebellion and war. (March 4, 1812)

As in his *Enquirer* essay, "Of Choice in Reading," Godwin discriminates between the moral, or intention of a work, and what he calls its "tendency"—that is, its "effect" on the reader.[8] In both cases Godwin

argues that tendency trumps moral in importance. Shelley's intentions may be pure or good. But it is the very nature of political associations to corrupt such individual intentions and to turn them toward less salubrious ends. "You may as well tell the adder not to sting," says Godwin, " … as tell organized societies of men … to employ no violence, and calmly to await the progress of truth" (March 4, 1812).

Shelley persevered in his brand of Godwinian politics: in his letter of March 8, 1812 he offered a definition of a philanthropic society taken directly from *Political Justice*—he even quotes Godwin's text verbatim back to him: "I have at length proposed a Philanthropic Association, which I conceive not to be contradictory but strictly compatible with the principles of 'Political Justice' " (March 8, 1812), he says. Godwin, however, is not persuaded by this tendency in his work. "Shelley, you are preparing a scene of blood," he quips: "If your associations take effect to any extensive degree, tremendous consequences will follow, and hundreds by their calamities and premature fate, will expiate your error" (March 14, 1812). Godwin again states that his "hostility" to political associations is a "main pillar" of his work; and he laments the fact that Shelley is only "half a convert to [his] arguments" (March 14, 1812). Yet Godwin became increasingly cognizant of the fact that Shelley was not the only one to interpret his work in such ways. Just as he argues with Shelley in 1812 and more generally in his essay on reading in 1797 that it is not the intention of a work that is important but rather its tendency, or effect, so Godwin had to admit that his own works—especially the notorious *Political Justice*—had produced effects that ranged far beyond his intentions. The revisions to *Political Justice* made in 1795 and 1798, as well as the *Enquirer* essays composed in 1797, were all attempts to temper such tendencies—indeed, to curb the radical edges of his philosophy by focusing even more on the individual and on the empire of feeling.

It is this increased emphasis on the radical individual that carries into Godwin's post-*Political Justice* writing and that serves as the foundation for his subsequent arguments concerning literature. For Godwin's move toward an individualist, removed literary sphere is a move away from a literature based on publicity—specifically, on the violent tendencies of the public model of letters. In 1793 Godwin put forth a model of literature based on a public sphere of rational discussion. In other words, Godwin's was a typical Enlightenment understanding of literature. Mark Philp has argued that it was Godwin's own experiences, first with dissenting circles and later at the salon-like dinners of publisher Joseph Johnson, that impressed upon him the importance of public discussion.[9]

As in Habermas' theory of the public sphere, Godwin saw enlightened public discussion as a means for testing one's opinions against other arguments and also as a way of leveling social distinctions. "If then we would improve the social institutions of mankind," says Godwin in the first edition of *Political Justice*, "we must write, we must argue, we must converse" (1793, 115). The best argument wins the day, according to this model, regardless of the social status of the person arguing.[10] The first edition of *Political Justice* includes a section entitled "Literature," in which Godwin puts this model of literature forward as a tool for the perfecting of humankind. Godwin sounds a note similar to Mathias's when he states that "Few engines can be more powerful and at the same time more salutary in their tendency, than literature" (1793, 15).

But as I discuss later, by 1797, and by the third edition of *Political Justice*, Godwin had changed his tune with respect to literature, just as he changed his views on the French Revolution. This was no coincidence. For example, the section on "Literature" was not included in the later editions of *Political Justice*. Paul Keen suggests that this was because "even for a radical middle-class reformer like Godwin, it had become too risky to advocate such a position publicly" (73). The risk, as was discussed in Chapter 1, was one of being associated with the threat of violence against the state. With the escalating violence in France and the polarizing conflict at home, the "salutary" tendency of literature as defined in 1793 had shifted toward less enlightened ends. This had always been the argument from the right. But Godwin seems to have arrived at a similar conclusion. In his *Considerations on Lord Grenville's and Mr. Pitt's Bills* (1795),[11] Godwin argues passive obedience to those increasingly harsh strictures placed on speech and association. Needless to say, this argument incensed many on left, like John Thelwall.[12] Philp suggests that Godwin's "fear" was that "the enlightened few would lead the masses into action to attain ends which they did not understand, and that they would thereby precipitate a revolution they would be unable to control and which would destroy the conditions of trust and security upon which all progress relies" (196). In addition to articulating this fear, however, Godwin had to distance himself from the kinds of writing that were associated with this public threat. The imaginative realm of literature served as a good retreat.[13] Thus while his motivations may have been different from those of Wordsworth or Burke, his resulting stance on the value of a literary institution was in many ways quite similar.

For Godwin, when the public sphere of letters becomes inseparable from the people and popular reform, it loses its value as an "engine" of change and becomes a kind of political association in its own right.

The very means of reform are compromised, regardless of progressive intentions. But while government may be in essence "an authority superseding private judgment" (1793, 110), this does not mean that political opposition need follow suit. The means of individual judgment and private contemplation, Godwin will argue, are still capable of being utilized on behalf of a politics opposed to government. Thus Godwin's is at base a radical, even Paine-ite, position on literature just as Wordsworth's was said to be Burkean in motivation. One major point of contact between Godwin and Paine was that both thinkers dismissed the Revolution of 1688 as a starting point and looked to events in France and to earlier events in seventeenth-century England for models of change and examples of revolutionary critique. At the same time, however, and as we saw with Wordsworth, it is hard to find any of Paine's egalitarianism deepening Godwin's Enlightenment project. Godwin, too, it could be argued, would have wished literature, not the people, to rise. Such a position accounts for the ambivalence expressed by more recent writers on the left, like E.P. Thompson, to Godwin's work.

This is not to suggest that Godwin was in some sense a closeted Burkean or conservative—though it is clear that Godwin admired Burke. Godwin wrote in 1798 that "among the moderns there are no authors I prefer to Burke and Rousseau."[14] Strange bedfellows these, though they are coupled in Wordsworth's Preface too, it might be argued. Godwin's work is an attempt to politicize literature without politically critiquing the category itself as it emerged in the late eighteenth century. Godwin can be seen as participating in a larger movement against Enlightenment conceptions of literature but not necessarily against the political. He followed the Romantics, so to speak, into the newly-construed imaginative realm. He did this for reasons that were sometimes very different, very much his own. But once there he worked to keep this realm connected to the political—to a critique of the state. Whatever Godwin's radical conclusions, they must be understood as being radical *within* the individualistic literary sphere as posited by himself, Wordsworth and others. There is no room in Godwin's conception of literature for *the people* to gather. As such, they are considered only as readers of radical ideas—like those contained in novels such as *Caleb Williams*—and never as authors (or producers) of them. For Godwin, the discipline of Literature is meant to discipline subjects precisely by preserving a space for private judgment. The turn from abstract philosophy to an emergent sphere of literature is accommodated into a radical approach to politics—and vice versa—in order to supplant the political as a sphere for the governing people. We can see this in the trajectory from the 1793 *Enquiry Concerning*

Political Justice to the 1797 collection of essays, *The Enquirer*. But several texts written around this time help fill in the details of this complicated picture. One of these is the essay, "Of History and Romance," written in 1797. This essay not only marks a change in Godwin's approach to literature—straddling as it does the line between public and private, mass and individual, and the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it marks an attempt to think the notion of a radical, or violent break between the Enlightenment and Romanticism more generally. The picture is complicated further when we turn to Godwin's fictional works, especially *Caleb Williams* (1794) and *St. Leon* (1799), where the relationship between philosophy and violence is rewritten in the novel.

From Enquiry to Enquirer

The publication of the *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* in 1793 was a major event in 1790s England, especially as it provided for a political education of sorts to Jacobin writers, romantic poets, and "Rights of Man" theorists. The *Enquiry* articulated one of the most philosophically sophisticated of responses to the kind of political analysis employed in Burke's *Reflections*, and asserted more generally the priority of a science of politics. Indeed, as William Hazlitt remarks in his portrait of Godwin for *Spirit of the Age*, "Tom Paine was considered for the time as a Tom Fool to him" (16). A mammoth work of political philosophy, *Political Justice* assimilated over a century's worth of thought and sought to transform it in the interest of achieving intellectual and social progress. For Godwin asserts that "there is no science that is not capable of additions; there is no art that may not be carried to a still higher perfection. If this be true of all other sciences, why not of morals? If this be true of all other arts, why not of social *institution*" (1793, 30).[15] And, it could be added, of "man" himself. Godwin's doctrine of the "perfectibility of man" led him to posit an Enlightenment-liberalist version of what would become an infamous (late) Marxist concept, the withering away of the state. By bringing society into accord with the dictates of reason, thought Godwin, a repressive state apparatus that lends support only to error would no longer be necessary. "With what delight," Godwin exclaimed, "must every well informed friend of mankind look forward to the auspicious period, the dissolution of political government, of that brute engine, which has been the only perennial cause of the vices of mankind …" (1793, 311). A topic of infinite importance, then, is systematically presented in order to help bring about its end.

However, even in the *Enquiry* itself, Godwin could not, finally, do away with the kind of control the state provided. He refers to "short term" uses for authoritative or repressive measures on behalf of the state, as well as the possible necessity for an authority "empowered" to declare the general principles by which "the equity of the community will be regulated." In fact, what we get at the outset of the second volume of *Political Justice* is a move toward an alternative terminology for a future, government-less state:

> It was in the recollection of this truth [that of the current state of "imperfection" of man] that I have preferred the term political insti-tution to that of government, the former appearing to be sufficiently expressive of that relative form, whatever it be, into which individu-als would fall, when there was no need of force to direct them into their proper channel, and were no refractory members to correct. (1793, 207)

Other than his pointing to the absence of the need for force, Godwin does not go on to describe what a political institution *is* in relation to government.[16] We are to understand it negatively, as something which has not been achieved, or lived up to ("whatever it be"). And yet the denomination ("political institution") is "sufficiently expressive" of its "relative" form, says Godwin. It would seem that we can know such a form only through our knowledge of something else that is *not* it. Godwin might think of such a move as being one from the empirically present to the theoretically possible.[17] Someone like Burke, on the other hand, would counter by denigrating the idea as romantic, or vain. We can offer our own term for it, a term that was itself being (re)envisioned at this very moment: fiction.[18] In other words, Godwin's future state is deferred into an alternative generic realm—that of the novel.[19] "I made whole books as I walked," says Godwin of his childhood walks and reveries: " … books of imaginary institutions in education, and govern-ment, where all was to be faultless …" (*Autobiography* 37). As will hope-fully become clear, his more mature attempt to render these institutions real would itself require some theorizing.

Many critics have argued that Godwin's *Caleb Williams*, published one year after the *Enquiry*, is an attempt to "translate" the ideas of *Political Justice*. For example, Gary Kelly explains that after *Political Justice* Godwin "planned to go on to write a massive work of Enlightenment 'philosophical history' " (*English Fiction* 33). Instead, he wrote *Caleb*

Williams, a novel "thoroughly imbued with Enlightenment ideas" and that "translates the principle ideas of the *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* and Enlightenment critical historiography into the form of fiction."[20] However, Kelly's classic account of Godwin's work in the 1790s leaves something out—namely, genre. Godwin planned to write a massive work of Enlightenment philosophical history; but in place of that work he wrote in a genre that was equated with anything but enlightenment. Granted, in his first edition of the *Enquiry* Godwin does say that "literature" is one of three ways by which the human mind "[advances] toward [a] state of perfection" (1793, 14)—the other two being education and political justice.[21] But as David McCracken has pointed out, though "imaginative works … have important functions in spreading truths and suggesting truths … they are apparently excluded from the genus 'literature' as Godwin defines it in 1793" ("Godwin's Literary Theory" 117–18). There is, then, something more going on in *Caleb Williams* than the mere "translation" of the *Enquiry's* philosophical principles—that is, something more like "revision" or "reformulation." What is of interest here is the direction Godwin's conception of the political takes after this fictional reformulation of the *Enquiry*, especially as this direction would seem to be intimately connected to Godwin's (revised) conception of fiction—indeed, of "literature" itself.

In looking ahead to Godwin's next set of non-fictional writings in the 1790s, most of which were gathered under the title of *The Enquirer* (1797), several significant changes can be observed. The first is the obvious one reflected in the title: from an "enquiry" to an "enquirer"—from a stress on the objective product of a science to the more subjective emphasis on the person inquiring. As Philp suggests, by the end of the 1790s "Godwin's rationalism ebbed and he endorsed a sentiment-based theory of moral judgment and moral motivation."[22] To put it somewhat more banally, Godwin moved from a position of knowledge to that of an inquiring mind that wanted to know. This move is reflected generically in the shift from system to essay. Godwin's stated intention in the *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* is to add to those "few works of literature [that] are held in greater estimation," those "which treat in a methodical and elementary way of the principles of science" (1793, iii). *The Enquirer*, though, "a series of essays," has as its subtitle "Reflections on Education, Manners, and Literature." The first thing Godwin tells us is that "the volume here presented to the reader, is upon a construction totally different from that of a work upon the principles of political science, published by the same author four years ago" (77). He goes on to describe the differences between the two "principal methods according

to which the truth may be investigated." The first, that of the *Enquiry*, is the "highest style of man," yet is "perhaps a method of investigation incommensurate to our powers" (*Enquirer* 77). The second, that of *The Enquirer*, proceeds via "an incessant recurrence to experiment and actual observation" (77). That is, Godwin's new approach proceeds more like the poetic "experiments" that comprised Wordsworth and Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads*.

A second and closely related change is that of Godwin's feelings toward the French Revolution. The *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* was clearly influenced by the ideas and optimism of the events taking place across the channel. In the preface to the 1793 edition of the *Enquiry*, Godwin lists two major influences on his work. The first are "the French productions on the nature of man"—the Enlightenment tradition of D'Holbach, Rousseau, Helvetius, and others. The second is the revolution that followed from these progressive ideas. "Of the desirableness of a government in the utmost degree simple," writes Godwin, "he was not persuaded but in consequence of ideas suggested by the French Revolution. To the same event he owes the determination of mind which gave birth to the present work" (69–70). Just a few years later, in the preface to *The Enquirer*, Godwin confesses that he has cooled in his enthusiasm:

> While the principles of Gallic republicanism were yet in their infancy, the friends of innovation were somewhat too imperious in their tone. Their minds were in a state of exaltation and ferment. They were too impatient and impetuous. There was something in their sternness that savoured of barbarism. (78)

The result is a collection of essays that marks a radical departure from the Enlightenment project in *Political Justice*. It is not terribly surprising that Godwin would stand back from the violent course taken by the Revolution following the completion of his *Enquiry*. Godwin's gradualist philosophy had always been opposed to the use of violence as a means of change. But the arguments in *Political Justice* against violence were not enough to separate Godwin from the "men of blood" whose ideals *Political Justice* also served in part to forward. This was in large part because of the form such arguments took in Godwin's writing. "After 1793 especially," writes David Simpson, "everyone with any tolerance for system or theory was branded a Jacobin, and writers sympathetic to a reformist cause were often all the more cautious" (55).

Indeed, very few writers in the 1790s experienced this branding more than Godwin—and none perhaps less deservingly so. As I suggested

above, Godwin's claim that he "uniformly declared himself the enemy to revolutions" (*Thoughts Occasioned* 168) did little to dampen the fervor with which he was attacked. In fact, it was only later in the decade, following such claims as well as the rise in anti-Jacobin sentiment, that Godwin really became a target of the establishment cause. Ironically, then, the initial publication of *Political Justice*—by far the most radical of the three editions—made Godwin a celebrity, read by many far and wide. As Godwin says in his reflection on his work of the preceding decade, *Thoughts Occasioned by the Perusal of Dr. Parr's Spital Sermon* (1800), "for more than four years, it remained before the public, without any man's having made the slightest attempt for its refutation … and, so far as I have been able to learn, every man of the slightest impartiality was ready to give his verdict to the honest sentiments and integrity of spirit in which it was written" (165). However, all that changed following the declaration of war with France and later, the Irish uprising of 1798. "The days of democratical declamation are no more," noted Godwin, "even the starving labourer in the alehouse is become a champion of aristocracy" (*Thoughts Occasioned* 169). And thus an enemy to Godwin. Even former friends, like Wordsworth, Tom Wedgewood, and, perhaps most cruelly, James Mackintosh (an early critic of Burke's *Reflections*), became anti-Godwinians. In his lectures on "The Law of Nature and of Nations" (1799), Mackintosh descanted on the evils of the new philosophy—meaning first and foremost, Godwin's.[23] Mackintosh had not mentioned his old friend by name, but to everyone attending the lectures, and to Godwin himself, the object of his attack was obvious.

To be anti-Godwinian, it seems, was not simply—or even—to hate the man, but rather to despise the whole impetus of political reform and violence with which the arguments in *Political Justice* had become synonymous. Godwin's insistence on duty and on the general good of society came too close for comfort to arguments justifying state terror in France.[24] Even after his turn away from so-called cold-blooded philosophy, though, Godwin could still inspire such sentiments. In later editions of *Pursuits of Literature*, T.J. Mathias explained that while he thought he had finished with Godwin, he had nevertheless gone and "obtruded himself upon the public" again with his *Enquirer* essays.[25] Indeed, Godwin's work may be trite; Godwin himself may be foolish and without talent. Yet Mathias feels the need to address his work because of "the importance of the consequences and effects of his wild, weak, wicked, and absurd notions" (1803, 395). If literature was truly "the great engine by which … all civilized states must ultimately be supported or overthrown" (1797, 1) as Mathias attests in the third part of

his dialogue, then Godwin's work would remain a focal point. For his was literature "ill-conducted."

But if for Mathias Godwin's work in the 1790s comprised a single, unchanging entity, or system, for Godwin himself the 1790s marked a significant period of change in his writing and his ideas. There was an increasing need for a writer like Godwin to disassociate himself from his systematic approach to knowledge—both in form and in content. For the content of such an approach was grounded in impersonal politics (think of the Fenelon anecdote in *Political Justice*); and its very form was linked *generically* to some of the same dangerous French and Enlightenment thinking that had led "naturally" to terror. Godwin dismissed "the vulgar contumelies of the author of the Pursuits of Literature" (*Thoughts Occasioned* 171), turning instead to more substantial critiques of his work offered by Samuel Parr and Thomas Malthus. Yet the overall message of such critiques, in addition to the changing political conditions in France and Britain, clearly did have an effect on Godwin's writing. I discuss Godwin's turn toward "sympathy" and away from the ultra-rationalist stance of *Political Justice* later. For now, I would point out that one obvious way for Godwin to distance himself from this violent tendency in his work was to distance himself from system. His *Enquirer* essays were an attempt to do just that.

Godwin writes that while he might have disdained to write his *Enquirer* essays four years prior, he is nevertheless "persuaded that the cause of political reform, and the cause of intellectual and literary refinement, are inseparably connected" (*Enquirer* 79). As with the ambiguous "political institution," Godwin does not offer a definition of what he means by "literary." Yet a simple perusal of the contents of *The Enquirer* suggests that something has changed: titles such as "Of the Awakening of the Mind," "Of an Early Taste for Reading," "Of the Study of the Classics," and "Of English Style," point to a clear difference from the contents of the *Enquiry*. From a definition of literature as a "diffusion of knowledge through the medium of discussion,"[26] we find a new emphasis on reading, taste, and style. Indeed, what we find in *The Enquirer* is a conception of literature that not only includes the fictional, but that orients itself toward it, especially as the fictional might provide for a political education of sorts, what Jon Klancher has called "genre-reform," that might itself utilize the writings of Jacobin novelists and romantic poets.[27] Clifford Siskin traces such a move between the very titles of the novel that falls between these two works, *Things as They Are, or, The Adventures of Caleb Williams*. "What is continuous," writes Siskin, "is the power of the *or* in Godwin's title: how *Things as They Are* can

almost silently give way to the fictitious *Adventures* of an individual character" (155). As Siskin sees it, there is a move from "things" to "character." Or to repeat the point made earlier, from inquiry to inquirer.

From History to Romance

The place where Godwin himself comes closest to theorizing this move is in "Of History and Romance," an essay written for a possible sequel collection to *The Enquirer*. Godwin's essay replaces, in a way, the section on "Literature" that disappeared from *Political Justice*—though it is significant that the essay was not published in his lifetime. For in "Of History and Romance" Godwin argues a new place for literature within the larger system of knowledge. In addition, he argues for a new conception of literature itself.[28] Klancher argues that Godwin's question in "Of History and Romance" is "whether prose fiction was or should be one of the genres encompassed by the Enlightenment category of literature" (147). But the steady move away from the Enlightenment category of literature—as characterized in the first edition of *Political Justice*, for example, and removed from subsequent editions—suggests to me an attempt to supersede, not expand, the category. As we saw with Wordsworth in Chapter 2, Godwin's writing in the latter half of the 1790s seems more engaged with the process of untangling literature from writing. He may have had quite different reasons for doing so, but the resulting stance, as I have said, is strikingly similar. Godwin looks to clear a space for imaginative works within and finally against the accumulating mass of late eighteenth-century writing.

　The specific target of Godwin's "Of History and Romance" is the "Enlightenment universal history" that emerged in the stadial theories of Scottish Enlightenment historians and that would later underpin Scott's historical fictions. Against this abstracted view of society Godwin pits romance. "The writer of romance," exclaims Godwin,

> is to be considered as the writer of real history; while he who was formerly called the historian, must be contented to step down into the place of his rival, with this disadvantage, that he is a romance writer, without the arduous, the enthusiastic and sublime licence of imagination, that belong to that species of composition. ("Of History and Romance" 372)

A good romance is for Godwin better history than a good history because it allows for the development and shaping of character that are

not consonant with the facts. This notion of the poet being more truthful than the historian because he admits to his lying is based on mimesis, verisimilitude, and invention, terms associated with the novel.[29] In "Of History and Romance," Godwin marks a place for the novel that is further up the genre hierarchy. At the same time he criticizes the current place and form of history. In the reversal Godwin claims a place for an alternative history, one that remained to be written.[30]

Godwin begins his essay with a claim that "the study of history may well be ranked among those pursuits which are most worthy to be chosen by a rational being" (359). As in *Political Justice*, Godwin establishes the importance of his topic before he proceeds to undercut it by offering something different in its place. He goes on to divide the study of history into two branches: the general approach, or the study of mankind "in a mass," and "the study of the individual." The first is for Godwin linked to Enlightenment history in that it is written "entirely in terms of abstraction, and without descending so much as to name one of those individuals of which the nation is composed" (359). It is interesting to think of Godwin writing this only a few years removed from his own infamous abstractions and cold-blooded rationality. But Godwin then moves on to discuss the second branch of the study of society: the study of individuals. It is through this second branch that we can begin to view ourselves. Whereas the first approach is "dry and frigid," the latter is "the most fruitful source of activity and motive" (361). Stressing an approach to history that aims to "understand the machine of society, and to direct it to its best purposes" (362), Godwin compares this second branch of history to his stated aim in *Political Justice*: he explains that through it, "we shall be enabled to add to the knowledge of the past a sagacity that can penetrate into the depths of futurity" (363). Government and abstract history are implicitly associated with things as they are. Individual history, like political institution, suggests a way toward things as they might be. The key is the individual.

As we have seen in our comparison with *The Enquirer*, however, we know that in 1797 Godwin would not rest here. In "Of History and Romance" he lands on individual history only to substantiate that which he hopes to supplant via his theory of fiction. Individual history, if it lives up to its own standard, should present great individuals, or characters. But Godwin, not content to remain with such a character merely on the "public stage," explains that he would instead,

> Follow him into his closet. [He] would see the friend and the father of a family, as well as the patriot. [He] would read his works and letters,

in any remain to us. [He] would observe the turn of his thoughts and the character of his phraseology … study his public orations … collate his behaviour in prosperity with his behaviour in adversity. … [He] should rejoice to have, or to be enabled to make, if that were possible, a journal of his ordinary and minutest actions. (364)

In Godwin's description we see "history" more as it was used in works like Fielding's *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling*. In other words, like fiction. As in the aim of *The Enquirer*, Godwin's history would be comprised of local investigations "into the humbler walks of private life" (*Enquirer* 79); or more specifically, and as stated in the preface to *Caleb Williams*, it would provide "a general review of the modes of domestic and unrecorded despotism by which man becomes the destroyer of man" (3).

The attention to domestic affections and sympathetic relations marks a distinct change from Godwin's project of 1793 and suggests that the turn away from the public sphere model of literature was not simply a formal one. The revisions to *Political Justice*, the preface to *Caleb Williams*, and the essays of the later 1790s all point to an attempt to yoke together the rationalist claims of the Enlightenment with the private affections of the individual citizen. However awkward at times, Godwin worked to show that these two were not necessarily incompatible. I have already suggested that one major reason for this re-evaluation was a political climate increasingly hostile to reasoned and public discussion. According to Scrivener, Jacobin participation in the public sphere was subject to relentless attack. "There was no subtle consciousness-distorting trickery," he writes, "just brute force that the government wielded against popular radicalism" (88). In such an environment, Jacobins had to resort to what Scrivener calls "seditious allegory" as a way of avoiding brute force. *Caleb Williams* incorporates some of Godwin's political principles into a work of fiction and might very well qualify as seditious allegory. Scrivener himself keeps Godwin "under the Jacobin tent" despite certain aspects of his thinking that were hostile to the cause. Godwin's later fiction, though, seems less an attempt to forward the principles of *Political Justice* than to correct them—a process that begins in *Caleb Williams*. Godwin's turn toward a counter-Enlightenment literary sphere seems a retreat from radicalism—an attempt to circumvent the "brute force" of the government and the people. Solidarity is replaced by sympathy.

But as I mentioned earlier, Godwin's turn is not a turn away from politics altogether. Romance, for all its unreality, does not disassociate—at least as Godwin sees it. For Godwin romance can connect where history

compares. Characters are connected to historical period. Godwin, in his celebrated *Life* (1803), did this with Chaucer by contextualizing his development within the peasant uprisings of the fourteenth century. Readers are in turn connected to characters. The result is a connection to history, past and present. For example, When Godwin's *St. Leon* reflects on the Inquisition he remarks,

> If these papers of mine are ever produced to light, may it not happen that they shall first be read by a distant posterity, who will refuse to believe that their fathers were ever mad enough to subject each other to so horrible a treatment, merely because they were unable to adopt each other's opinions? Oh, no! human affairs, like the waves of the ocean, are merely in a state of ebb and flow. … two centuries perhaps after Philip the Second shall be gathered to his ancestors [he died in 1598], men shall learn over again to persecute each other for conscience sake; other Anabaptists or levellers shall furnish pretexts for new persecutions; other inquisitors shall arise in the most enlightened tracts of Europe. (338)

Two centuries after the death of Philip the Second places Godwin's readers in the year 1798, the year of the *Anti-Jacobin, Lyrical Ballads*, and Godwin's own *Enquirer*.[31] Neither abstract theories nor empirical facts can open up such a connection. Thus neither can be true for Godwin's purposes.

Even if facts themselves were not contradictory and "unsatisfactory," it is only the chronicle that would have any claim to historical truth. Yet such a genre is lacking in the invigorating force of "muscles and articulations"; it is as dead as so many abstractions or dry principles. In order to flesh out, so to speak, the bones of historical data, something else was needed: "*licentia historica*." The "noblest and most excellent species of history" exclaims Godwin, is that species of literature that "calls itself romance or novel" (368). Godwin here distances himself from the generic feature *par excellence* of system: principle. He puts his political faith instead in "a number of happy, ingenious and instructive inventions" (368). It is precisely the mix of fact and invention that works for Godwin: invention penetrating the futurity of mere facts, facts taming the banalities of the romance genre.[32] Godwin sounds a bit like Burke in this, emphasizing as he does a more organic mix against an organization based on one principle.[33] Nevertheless, it is thus that the novel finds its way into the ranks of "literature" as Godwin reckoned the term in 1797. We will see later to what end Godwin would direct it.

Of course the novel was widely read, too. McCracken writes that for Godwin the novel was "in short, a means of propaganda" ("Godwin's Literary Theory" 131). Godwin would seem to agree when he explains in his preface to *Caleb Williams* that,

> It is but of late that the inestimable importance of political principles has been adequately apprehended. It is now known to philosophers, that the spirit and character of the government intrudes itself into every rank of society. But this is a truth highly worthy to be communicated to persons whom books of philosophy and science are never likely to reach. (3)

However, while the novel may have been an effective vehicle for radical principles, it was not the vehicle part of the equation that qualified it as literature. If anything, the popularity of novels served to work against them for Godwin. For him it is a "class" of readers "consisting of women and boys, and which is considerably numerous," that "requires a continual supply of books of this sort" ("History and Romance" 369). Godwin wants to pick from what he refers to as the trash heap the finer specimens by "those persons who had really written a romance, not those who had vainly attempted it" (369).

The principles of selection that comprise the process by which such specimens are chosen are what we would today call disciplinarity, the canon formation, or simply, Literature:

> The critic and the moralist, in their estimate of romances, have borrowed the principle that regulates the speculations of trade. They have weighed novels by the great and taken into their view the whole scum and surcharge of the press. But surely this is not the way in which literature would teach us to consider the subject. ... There is no species of literature that would stand this ordeal. (369)

Far from championing the strengths that someone like Catherine Gallagher has more recently found in the genre (or someone like Anna Barbauld, to name one of Godwin's contemporaries), Godwin wants to release the novel from the "speculations of trade," from the "whole scum and surcharge of the press."[34] Here the metrical genres and the systems become not something novels are set against (as in Barbauld, for example), but rather models for the inclusion of a genre that has become "feminized" and "vulgarized" since the efforts of writers like Fielding or Richardson. What is being "thrown out," says Siskin, is "the connection

of the genre to the gender with which it was linked throughout the eighteenth century: the women whose 'continual' need had elicited the scum" (170). But while this is undoubtedly true, Godwin does not necessarily exclude women writers from "literature"; rather, he wants to exclude those books that are associated by and large with women readers (and boys)—those "mass market" books that suggest an undiscriminating taste and too acute a sense of the market.[35] Godwin wants the novel to be associated not with domestic pleasure but with "manly" respect—indeed, with the *somebodies* of the world.

But the domestic was not to be ignored or somehow jettisoned from the novel. For Godwin, the domestic *is* a space of political insinuation. However, it would seem that the domestic is only "literary" for Godwin when this political connection is affirmed, when character is shown to be necessarily shaped by such a connection.[36] In novels such as *Mandeville, St. Leon*, and *Fleetwood* we find many parallels with domestic setting and the internal states of characters. In *Cursory Strictures*, his essay on the treason trials of his friends, Thomas Holcroft, Horne Tooke, and others, Godwin elaborates on the rhetorical workings of political insinuation. Referring to Chief Justice Eyre's attempt to include a new form of treason—"conspiracy to subvert the monarchy"—under the statute of Edward III (the statute making it a treasonable offence to "imagine" the death of the king),[37] Godwin explains that,

> There is a figure of speech, of the highest use to a designing and treacherous orator, which has not yet perhaps received a name in the labours of Aristotle, Quintilian, or Farnaby. I would call this figure *incroachment*. It is a proceeding, by which an affirmation is modestly insinuated at first, accompanied with considerable doubt and qualification; repeated afterwards, and accompanied with these qualifications; and at last asserted in the most peremptory and arrogant terms. (*Cursory Strictures* 92)

"Incroachment" is the literary equivalent of political insinuation: via "incroachment" a political untruth is gradually and firmly established in the minds of the people. *Cursory Strictures* is a particular instance of Godwin practicing what I have been trying to describe in this chapter. In it, Godwin opposes such encroachment by bringing to light the workings of Eyre's logic and by offering an alternative understanding of institutional precedent. His remarks were considered by many to have been the deciding factor in the charges being dropped. Significantly, too, I would add, Godwin sets up a comparison between his defence of

Holcroft, Tooke, and others and Hume's attack in his *History of England* on the trial of Lord Stafford—a comparison which he repeats several times in the text.

In short, the politicization of the domestic has the effect of rendering it more "manly," and thus, for Godwin, more worthy of respect. As I will discuss in a moment, writers like Mary Hays, Elizabeth Inchbald, and Mary Wollstonecraft would have found nothing new in Godwin's claim in *Political Justice* and *Caleb Williams* that political institutions had *insinuated* themselves into the space of the domestic. In fact, Godwin was influenced in this discovery by writers like Inchbald. Representations of the domestic space may have been depoliticized or tamed following the publication of Richardson's *Pamela*, but from the "amatory" fictions of Eliza Haywood and Delariviere Manley to the gothic novels of Ann Radcliffe, themes of excess and violence often defined the domestic space in eighteenth-century England. Godwin would have found such descriptions in the novels of his friends and peers: in Hays' *The Victim of Prejudice*, Inchbald's *A Simple Story*, and Wollstonecraft's *Maria*, the domestic is shown to be a space not removed from the political, but in many ways enslaved by it.[38]

In criticizing those works that were read predominantly by women and boys, Godwin suggests that the way in which novels have been judged is by those faulty criteria of "general" history. That is, they have been judged "in a mass." Godwin implicitly compares the faulty criteria for judging history and the "feminized" logic of the market.[39] Neither discriminates. Any definition of "Literature," we must assume, would have to be articulated against these criteria, this logic. For Literature would have us judge by the individual, by the "great" in the other sense, as in "excellent." What we get is a strange logic suggesting that fiction is a lesser species of written composition when it is judged according to historical criteria, but a finer one when judged as history itself should be: as Literature. History is already fiction, Godwin suggests; the problem is that it is not Literature.

However, Godwin does not go on to offer a specific set of criteria by which we might delineate the "literary." The best we can do is to extrapolate such criteria from the totality of his political, philosophical, and literary writings. For example, Godwin's critique of the general, like his critique of government in *Political Justice*, finds it unfit both for history and for romance. But unless this argument is understood in the context of political philosophy—that is, unless the political connection is affirmed—the alternative to the general, "literature," remains trapped in a rationalist tautology: we know literature because literature tells us

what it is. Within the context of the arguments developed in *Political Justice*, though, we can see that literature is to history what political institution is to government: a relative form that can only be articulated negatively—the one against the abstractions of history, the other against the violence of the state. "Literature," we come to understand, comprises a set of criteria that remains, like the British Constitution, to be written. Unlike Walter Scott, who would later gain fame precisely by writing, so to speak, the British Constitution, Godwin attempts to maintain the plausibility of a better future, rather than to maintain the status quo of the present by closing off the past. Godwin's work marks an attempt to institute this history of the future. It starts with the individual removed both from coercion and from "the mass."

But as Godwin himself admits, such a task is too much for the romance writer. In a strange turn he concludes "Of History and Romance" with the statement that "to write romance is a task too great for the powers of man, and under which he must be expected to totter" (372). Now, instead of recapitulating the sentiments of *Political Justice*, Godwin appears to be in the less systematic mode of *The Enquirer*: romance, like Godwin's attempt at system before it, is *too great for "man's" powers*. Yet unlike in *The Enquirer*, Godwin does not offer anything in the place of fiction (e.g. the local investigations and essayistic form of *The Enquirer* itself). One must assume that it will be the individual reader who will be left to grasp the implications of this newly canonized genre, just as the inquirer *essays*, or attempts, where the inquiry fails. It is not that Godwin gives back to history what he initially takes from it. It is rather that the reader must finish what the writer starts. Maurice Hindle compares the final ending of *Caleb Williams* to the trial of Godwin's friend, Joseph Gerrald. Gerrald was a member of the London Corresponding Society who was convicted and transported for his radical activities. Hindle argues that Caleb's defeat of Falkland signifies a reversion to the "anarchistic conviction that the truth needs only to be heard to prevail," and that Godwin "fictionally [defeats] the representative of a politically abusive state, where Gerrald, in life, had failed" (xxxviii). In a very oblique way, Godwin reopens a space for a public sphere of letters—the very space he seemingly closed off in the later editions of *Political Justice*. However, this version of Literature is only hinted at in *Caleb Williams*. It is never fully articulated. In this, it must be the reader that marks the distance between where we are and where we have not yet reached. Like "government" in *Political Justice*, history has not been thoroughly done away with. It remains as the marker for what can only be articulated negatively. Indeed, for Godwin "history" would need to be negated before anything but a fictional resolution could materialize.

From dagger to text

But even this final ending is compromised in ways that connect it back directly with Gerrald's trial. This is due more to the materials used in the work more than to any specific intent on Godwin's part. *Caleb Williams* is a novel that takes up as one of its central themes the question of whether or not one can break with the past—indeed from history itself—*nonviolently*. Its tentative resolution has significant consequences for Godwin's projection of an ideal form of political institution.

First published in 1794, and thus between the *Enquiry* and *The Enquirer, Caleb Williams* recapitulates in its narrative structure a similar logic of substitution and displacement to the one I have tried to outline in the move from inquiry to inquirer and from history to romance. It also foregrounds the connection to violence that lurks behind the generic scenes of the sudden shifts in Godwin's writing in the 1790s. For example, when Caleb exclaims that he will "use no daggers" but will instead "tell a tale," we are meant to compare this to a previous moment in the text, a moment when Caleb's nemesis, Ferdinando Falkland, presumably uses the former—a dagger—to murder his own antagonist, Tyrrel, from whom he has suffered a public humiliation. What emerges in this comparison are two such examples of substitution and displacement. First, in terms of character: a desperate Caleb, like a desperate Falkland before him, is about to commit a murder. Previously in the novel, in the battle over what Michael McKeon would call "aristocratic ideology," the urbane and chivalric Falkland vanquishes the rough, country "gentleman," Tyrrel. Yet in doing so, Falkland effectively becomes Tyrrel, or like him, in stooping to a use of force that is contrary to the code of honor he professes to live by. He is radically changed by the whole incident with Tyrrel. "No two characters," says Mr. Collins, Falkland's steward, "can be in certain respects more strongly contrasted, than the Mr Falkland of a date prior and subsequent to these events" (*Caleb* 101). We need only compare Falkland's imprisonment of Caleb to Tyrrel's earlier treatment of Emily Melvile to grasp the scale of Falkland's transformation.

But it is over what McKeon would call a "question of virtue"—that is, a question "of how the external social order is related to the internal, moral state of its members"—that Falkland and Caleb come to be foes (*Origins* 20). Unlike Falkland and Tyrrel, Caleb and Falkland are not economic equals. And even though Caleb may have elevated himself above his class position via Falkland's library and via Falkland himself, who serves as a mentor to him, it is clear throughout the novel that his inequality renders his burden of proof against Falkland all the more

heavy. Nevertheless, Caleb attempts to use his knowledge as a way of levelling the field and of increasing his power. For example, while conversing on the topic of Alexander, Caleb inquires of Falkland how he came "to be surnamed the Great"; for he seems to Caleb to be rather "the Great Cut-Throat" (115). Falkland, for whom this is blasphemy, explains that

> The death of a hundred thousand men is at first sight very shocking; but what in reality are a hundred thousand such men, more than a hundred thousand sheep? It is mind, Williams, the generation of knowledge and virtue, that we ought to love. This was the project of Alexander; he set out in a great undertaking to civilise mankind. (116)

Caleb, not quite convinced, but quite in order to further provoke, responds: "and yet, sir, I am afraid that the pike and the battleaxe are not the right instruments for making men wise" (116). It is clear that Falkland identifies himself with Alexander. "Alexander, I say, does not deserve this rigour," he states. Caleb, who also understands this identification, represents here what Nietzsche would later call the cunning of Judeo-Christian ethics—the tasty little lamb revenging itself upon the "evil" bird of prey. For in attempting to get Falkland to slip up—that is, to betray some piece of evidence against himself—Caleb makes clear that ends do not always justify means. Abstractions such as "honor" and "civilisation" are compromised by the historical violence from which they have sprung.

Caleb would forego violence as a means "for making men wise." But if for Caleb the pike and the battleaxe (not to mention the dagger) are not fit instruments for making men wise then we must assume that it is writing itself that will take their place. Toward the end of the novel, this substitution is made explicit. In wondering whether or not he has left anything unsaid (and just prior to posting his writings—like one of Richardson's heroines—to yet another "father" figure, Mr. Collins) Caleb concludes that,

> The contents of that fatal trunk, from which all my misfortunes originated, I have never been able to ascertain. I once thought it contained some murderous instrument or relic connected with the fate of the unhappy Tyrrel. I am now persuaded that the secret it encloses is a faithful narrative of that and its concomitant transactions, written by Mr Falkland, and reserved in case of the worst. (326)

The supposed weapon in Falkland's trunk was the only piece of evidence that might have exonerated Caleb (his resort to Falkland's

method—i.e., pleading his character—having failed miserably). Yet where Falkland previously convicts Caleb in the eyes of the public by importing evidence *into* Caleb's concealed trunk, Caleb moves at the end to convict Falkland by transporting concealed evidence *out* of his. In place of this evidence he would have us find a narrative. What Godwin has done via Caleb is to render the question of "virtue" (in McKeon's terms) a question of "truth," as well. That is, in Caleb's account the question of ends—virtue or honor—becomes one and the same with the question of means—in this case, as McKeon suggests, a question of "how to tell the truth in narrative" (*Origins* 20). After all, "truth" is what we might call Caleb's abstraction.

But in highlighting the question of means, Godwin has also rendered writing a weapon, of sorts. This is the second example of substitution and displacement that governs the novel: not characters, but things—and more specifically, weapons. In this substitution of a narrative for a murderous implement we see Caleb attempting ultimately to displace not an act of violence—Falkland's murder of Tyrrel—but rather one of writing: Falkland's account of the said act. The dagger has become the narrative, and in telling his own tale, Caleb will not be assaulting, so to speak, an unarmed Falkland. It will be a public affair, Caleb versus Falkland, as opposed to a covert action. Caleb has his tale, Falkland has his; and if the latter's never comes to light, if he is never detected in his guilt, says Caleb, "mine may amply, severely perhaps, supply its place" (326). However, Falkland is detected in his guilt, and Caleb's writing has the added responsibility of contributing "to redeem the wreck" of his own reputation. As we will see, this last proves to be beyond Caleb's powers. His words are terrifically effective, though, in the laying low of Falkland. For upon hearing Caleb's tale at their final confrontation Falkland exclaims: "I could have resisted any plan of malicious accusation you might have brought against me. But I see that the artless and manly story you have told has carried conviction to every hearer" (335). Whereas before it was Caleb who could be compared to Emily Melvile, in a startling reversal, it is now Falkland who, like Melvile, survives but three days, and Caleb, like Falkland before him, who is a "murderer."

In the end, Caleb does understand himself to be a murderer, his tale having led to the death of Falkland. Various explanations have been given for Caleb's guilt: for example, McCracken's claim that in stooping to a dependency on the law Caleb has compromised himself.[40] But in looking more closely at the novel's structure and again its relation to the political and philosophical writings that surround it on either side, we can add something to this explanation. The implied shift from a dagger

to a text, while obviously of great significance, is never explicitly theorized in the novel itself. There are, however, and as I hope I have demonstrated, clues throughout Godwin's 1790s *ouevre* that the reader can draw on. Caleb's quest in the novel for evidence—for truth—renders him an inquirer of a particularly obsessive kind. What Godwin says of the philosophizing friends of the French Revolution can in turn be said of Caleb: "[he] was too impatient and impetuous. There was something in [his] sternness that savoured of barbarism" (*Enquirer* 78). In fixating on the secret of the "fatal" trunk as the means to the truth that would convict Falkland and redeem himself, Caleb effectively renders Falkland an object of inquiry. That is, he fails to see him as a person, and thus repeats in his quest for truth the same reifying logic that is ultimately responsible for things as they are. The dagger that Caleb is sure lies concealed in the trunk is transferred—unwittingly, perhaps—by Caleb into his narrative (which then becomes a weapon). There remains, finally, a covert as well as a violent element in Caleb's public act. In a similar way, elements of Godwin's political system have been embedded in his fictional narrative, to be read and used by those who would not otherwise have access to the loftier and more expensive philosophical genres. Neither Caleb nor Godwin, it seems, can quite do away with violence. Such means, however, are contrary to the code of "truth" that both profess to live by.

If it is Caleb that finally takes the place of Falkland—that is, takes his place as a murderer—then in the end it is Caleb's narrative that must stand in for his own previous presence as one questing for truth: it opposes his act of reification by taking it up and casting it in an estranged light for the "curious" reader. Again we see a shift in emphasis from an object of inquiry to the inquirer himself. And in Caleb's personal tale we see an alternative to the publicity modelled in his showdown with Falkland. The dagger, in other words, is the Enlightenment model of letters that Godwin would eventually retreat from—its tendency too much toward the murderous to be recuperated. In the bigger picture, sympathy is not quite the panacea that Godwin is looking for. If anything, it is a compromise on his part—a watered down version of the collectivity he elsewhere excludes from political progress.

I would suggest that this failure stems from Godwin's inability to extend his political philosophy to any form of collective endeavor and his ambivalence about the Enlightenment-based, public sphere model of literature. For the novel's resolution, Godwin's whole philosophy, in fact, depends upon readers reacting to the text and, finally, to one another. His *Political Justice* may abandon the public-sphere model, but his fictions never quite follow suit. While Godwin suggests that the "revolution in

opinion" will be a gradual and bloodless transition to a government-less state, it is at the same time clear that he has great difficulty in representing this transition in the later editions of *Political Justice* and in *Caleb Williams*. The moment when a dagger becomes a text, arguably the most important moment in Godwin's writing, must take place offstage, as it were. This is precisely where history will always have it over romance—where romance remains "incommensurate." Indeed, like the "political institution" that remains ambiguous in *Political Justice*, like "literature" in "Of History and Romance," we are left with a "relative form," one that must be understood against Caleb's interpretation of things, and thus against the violence that remains embedded in his narrative. It is here that the coercive and violent connotations of "political institution" enter the very fiction which was to have done away with such violence. This violence from which Caleb's narrative cannot free itself serve's in Godwin's novel as a stand in for history—a history which as Godwin reminds us "… is little more than the history of crimes" (*Enquiry* 4). Godwin's novel thus recapitulates the logic of substitution and displacement that manifests itself in his non-fictional writings. But no final resolution is offered. Political institution is like government, group politics, and, most significantly, the Enlightenment-based print culture that Godwin turned away from—tainted by coercion and tending, on occasion, toward terror.[41] The problem of the people has insinuated itself into the private itself; not even imagined worlds are free.

Violence and reform of *la Lettre de Cachet*

As I suggested, the claim that government had insinuated itself into the domestic space was hardly novel. Or rather, it was a claim the novel had become quite adept at mediating. Indeed, Godwin was not alone in turning to the novel as a potential "political institution." Women writers in particular had found—or had been forced to make—the novel a vehicle for just such an idea. Godwin's turn away from Enlightenment letters may be usefully compared with Wordsworth's poetry. But what Godwin turned toward, the private realm of literature, and the novel in particular, was itself already highly politicized. While in this chapter I have been concerned to present Godwin's idea of a political institution of literature, I want to conclude by expanding this notion to include other writers for whom literature offered a possible alternative institution for ideas and subjects excluded from the present governing institutions. Like Godwin, many of these writers have been classed under subgroups or curious offshoots of the major literature of the period—as

Jacobin novelists, Gothic writers, or simply "women writers." Such classifications have been challenged in the critical present, especially to the extent that literature has itself come to be understood as "political."

One writer who has begun to receive a good deal of critical attention is Helen Maria Williams.[42] She certainly did not lack such attention at the end of the eighteenth century. Her *Letters Written in France* (1790) was one of the most popular accounts of the French Revolution to reach British readers in the 1790s. Her Paris salons were the meeting place of republicans and intellectuals, and she enjoyed fame in both France and England. Celebrated as a poet of sensibility yet excoriated as a "… militant supporter of blood-soaked France,"[43] Williams qualifies as one of Adriana Craciun's "fatal women of Romanticism."[44] Yet while she was associated in England with French Jacobinism, Williams did not escape persecution and, finally, imprisonment at the hands of the Jacobin government. In prison Williams continued to write; but her writing took on a newly political significance. At one point, for example, she had to destroy her eyewitness account of the initial months of the Terror, in order to protect herself. In the preface to her translation of Bernardin de Saint Pierre's *Paul et Virginie*, done while in prison, she exclaims that,

> During that gloomy epocha it was difficult to find occupations which might cheat the days of calamity of their weary length. Society had vanished; and amidst the minute vexations of jacobinical despotism, which, while it murdered in mass, persecuted in detail, the resources of writing, and even reading, were encompassed with danger. (1)

Writing itself became dangerous under such a government, even while it offered a means of escape in both an imaginative and a political sense. In other words, Williams comes to a similar conclusion from her experiences in France as many writers—loyalist and radical—came to in Britain, especially in the wake of Jacobin violence abroad: writing is dangerous.

But for Williams, it is not the Revolution that is to blame for this; nor does the Revolution in itself represent an affront to the rights of women. In fact, for Williams, *the* Revolution is characterized as feminine. Williams saw a difference between the initial years of the revolution, roughly 1789 to 1792, when constitutional monarchy, as she describes it, ruled the day, and the events which followed August 10, 1792, the day on which Louis XVI was imprisoned on treason charges. Of the earlier period she says "this was indeed the golden age of revolution." But with the king's arrest a conflict "far more terrible" was ushered in—a conflict "between freedom and anarchy, knowledge and ignorance, virtue and

vice" (III, Letter 1).[45] Sounding like her fellow Girondist, Wordsworth, Williams laments "Ah! ye slaughtered heroes of the immortal 14th of July, was it for this ye overthrew the towers of the bastile, and burst open the gloomy dungeons?" (III, 1).

The events beginning on the 10th of August and continuing on to the September massacres and execution of the king "finally alienated the minds of Englishmen from the French Revolution" (IV, Letter 5), says Williams. Indeed, from Williams's *Letters* we might infer that such events alienated the Revolution from itself. From an initial period of what might be termed healthy conflict "between the executive and the legislative powers, between the court and the people," the Revolution gave way to that conflict described above as far more terrible. Unlike Wollstonecraft, Williams does not blame the Revolution for violating, for example, the freedom of women. Rather, the Revolution is linked to domesticity, and is only subverted by the "fanatics of liberty," whom Williams compares to St. Bartholomew's day murderers. These fanatics were led by Robespierre—a man "formed," Williams writes, "to subvert and destroy" (III, 1).

In fact, Robespierre is characterized by Williams as a kind of domestic tyrant, and the Revolution as a Clarissa-type figure, imprisoned by a cruel father. As Deborah Kennedy explains,

> Her image of liberty is a woman of sensibility, wounded by the ill-usage of the Jacobins—a representation that parallels the manner in which the Jacobins replaced the feminine figure of Liberty with the excessively masculine Hercules. By showing Liberty as a victim of male violence, Williams provides a chilling reminder of the betrayal felt by her and others whose political ideals included improving the status of women. (97)

Williams is not as outspoken about the place of women within the "rights of men" as Wollstonecraft is—or came to be—but her use of masculine and feminine categories to describe the revolutionary stages suggests that this was nevertheless an important part of her representation. Indeed, her *Letters* reads like a domestic novel. And while the Terror may have interrupted the emplotment of her story, it was nevertheless accommodated by a significant transformation in the story itself that did not leave the domestic behind, but rather theorized it more fully in relation to revolution.

In the first volume of the *Letters* Williams says to her reader: "I will make you acquainted with incidents as pathetic as romance itself can

furnish" (I, 9). Her strategy is to personify the revolution via characters straight out of the world of fiction. Indeed, throughout the first volumes of her account Williams sees the Revolution in terms of individuals. "With respect to myself," says Williams,

> I must acknowledge, that, in my admiration of the revolution in France, I blend the feelings of private friendship with my sympathy in public blessings; since the old constitution is connected in my mind with the image of a friend confined in the gloomy recesses of a dungeon, and pining in hopeless captivity; while with the new constitution, I unite the soothing idea of his return to prosperity, honours, and happiness. (I, 9)

Later, in her poem to Dr. Moore (in the second volume of the *Letters*), she writes: "Oft while with glowing breast those scenes I view, / They lead, ah friend belov'd, my thoughts to you" (73–74). It is through the lens of the individual and the pathos of sensibility that Williams renders her account of the grand events of the French Revolution. As Kennedy points out, Williams's subject matter "was the 'true stories' of the Revolution instead of the historical incidents on which she based her earlier poetry" (96).

One of these "true stories" is that of the Du Fosse family—specifically, it is the story of Mon. Du Fosse, eldest son to the tyrannical Baron Du Fosse. Mon. Du Fosse marries a woman his father believes beneath him, and he subsequently suffers by the arbitrary power of the patriarch, both of which—arbitrary power and patriarch—are associated by Williams with the *ancien regime*. Whereas the Baron Du Fosse is described as having "a disposition that preferred the exercise of domestic tyranny to the blessings of social happiness, and chose rather to be dreaded than beloved" (I, 9), his son, Mon. Du Fosse is said to have "possessed … the most feeling heart." Mon. Du Fosse meets and falls in love with Mlle. Monique C, daughter of a farmer who died before she was born. Mlle. C, who was educated by her mother, had a mind, says Williams, "endowed with the most exquisite sensibility." It is precisely such a mind that attracts Mon. Du Fosse, who:

> had been taught, by his early misfortunes, that domestic happiness was the first good of life. He had already found by experience, the insufficiency of rank and fortune to confer enjoyment, and he determined to seek it in the bosom of conjugal felicity. He determined to pass his life with her whose society now seemed essential not only to his happiness, but to his very existence. (I, 16)

In other words, Mon. Du Fosse not only marries against his father's wishes, he marries against his father's very nature, and thus brings upon himself the weight of arbitrary power. The two sides of the revolutionary forces are individualized, the struggle rendered as a pathetic story. The Baron issues a *lettre-de-cachet*, the very symbol of arbitrary power, to bring his son to account. Though he and his family escape to England, Mon. Du Fosse is eventually imprisoned in France. It is not until July 15, 1789 that Mon. Du Fosse's "domestic comforts were no longer embittered with the dread of being torn from his family by a separation more terrible than death itself" (I, 22).

While the *ancien regime* is personified in the Baron Du Fosse—his wife notably absent from this personification (she actually approves of the match, and agrees to keep it from the Baron until a more propitious moment)—the revolutionary side is represented not simply in Mon. Du Fosse, but in his being reunited with his family and his family's successful return to France (from England). Theirs is the domestic comfort ushered in with the events of July 14, 1789. Mon. Du Fosse is, significantly, not a war hero or revolutionary leader; he is a man fond of domestic bliss and whose honor is more like the middle-class virtue of eighteenth-century novels.

It is this "true story" that sets the tone and design for Williams's subsequent account. Even the death of Louis the XVI is cast in the language of domestic sentiment, with his tearful good-byes to his wife and children and his imprisonment serving to humanize the king as father while emphasizing the disruption to domestic life caused by the violent turn in the Revolution. It is, we are to understand, only the office of kingship that is corrupt. John Barrell suggests that such accounts as Williams's contributed to the war effort at home, in Britain. "The royal family," says Barrell, "could be rehabilitated as a family, and their sudden display of domestic virtues could be mobilized to reveal the inhumanity of republican attitudes to the natural family affections, and to emphasize therefore the unnaturalness of republican government" (93).

Thus in a way Williams's language of sentiment—her rendering the personal political—conforms with Burke's language of chivalry in the *Reflections*. That is, for both Burke and Williams "the affective state of the individual correspondent," as Mary A. Favret explains it, "must serve 'naturally' as the medium for understanding the people and thus, the State itself" (283). But where Burke opposes such an affective state to the Revolution, Williams characterizes the Revolution itself as an affective state. She feminizes the revolution, so to speak, and does so by linking it to the domestic affections—and by extension, to the novel.

As Gary Kelly explains, "Williams suggests the revolutionary potential of women's novelistic discourse, its ability to prefigure social and political revolution" (*Women* 38).

Burke may have foreseen the violent course of the Revolution and incorporated that foresight into his reading of 1789, but for Williams the two moments are not to be conflated. If anything, the events of late 1792 and 1793 are compared to pre-revolutionary France. "It was reserved for the Commune of Paris to check the generous glow of sympathy," says Williams, "… and to lead all the feelings of humanity to take part with its oppressors" (III, 1). Robespierre is a domestic tyrant, who, like the Baron Du Fosse, wields arbitrary power and imprisons the true Revolution. However, in the later volumes of the *Letters*, it is no longer Mon. Du Fosse who stands in for the Revolution. Instead, it is Williams herself.

In the face of a violent Jacobin government, Williams is forced to abandon her domestic plot and to focus on more general questions about revolution and writing. The change is evident beginning in Volume III: "When we consider the importance which this event [the arrest of Louis XVI on 10 August 1792] may have in its consequences, not only to this country, but to all Europe, we lose sight of the individual sufferer, to meditate upon the destiny of mankind" (III, 1). Williams makes the leap from the particular to the general—and she does this at the moment she dates as the end of the true revolution. But in giving up her "true stories" to actually become the story, Williams does not give up domesticity as a theme. It becomes, in fact, linked to writing itself. The move is subtle, but in taking the place of Mon. Du Fosse, Williams becomes taken up with the question of how to be reunited with her audience. "Mere private acts of writing and reading," says Kelly, "uniting individuals in an invisible relationship, are subversive in the eyes of a regime hostile to autonomous subjectivity and domestic affections of any kind, even those subsisting between reader and writer" (*Women* 57). It is not domesticity *per se* that is stifled by the Terror; rather, it is writing. But it is clear from the *Letters* that for Williams writing is connected to the interior, the feminine, and thus the domestic. For example, and as Favret explains, "Williams focuses on the prison as an alternative salon: it provides the image of a home created by violence, an interior space produced by a totalitarian regime" (291).

Within her new "salon," writing is cast in terms of escape in at least two ways. First, it is an escape from the boredom and uniformity of prison life—an escape via imagination. As Williams says in the preface to her translation of *Paul et Virginie*, she wrote "… amidst the turbulence of

the most cruel sensations … in order to escape awhile from overwhelming misery" (8). But second, writing is understood as an escape, ultimately, from violence—that is, as a way out of, or beyond, arbitrary power. The *lettre de cachet* associated with pre-revolutionary domestic tyranny is displaced by the epistle that connects the interior states of readers and writer. To the extent that it can be called a principle, domestic feeling is that which will eventually, like the repressed letter, escape from the tyranny of the prison—or indeed of the home itself. Like Mon. Du Fosse and Mlle. C, Williams's letters arrive back in England, and hopefully on the heels of a "revolution" the story they recount has helped to set in motion.

In her *Letters*, though, Williams does not shy away from the problem of violence; nor does she simply equate it—as her narrative strategy might lead her to do—with the *ancien regime*. In comparing the French Revolution to the Revolution of 1688, Williams finds little call for the British people to reproach their neighbors. Pointing to the Jacobite uprisings that followed the accession of William and Mary, as well as to the trade wars that were a staple of Hanoverian rule, Williams argues that "the establishment of our liberties cost us many wars—and amidst the civil dissensions caused by the contest of principles against ancient error, our history records a sad catalogue of crimes and cruelties committed on all sides" (IV, 5). She suggests, rather realistically, that "… no people ever travelled to the temple of liberty by a path strewn with roses; nor has established tyranny ever yielded to reason and justice, till after a severe struggle. I do not pretend to justify the French, but I do not see much right that we at least have to condemn them" (IV, 5).

Williams concludes that the Revolution in France will ultimately succeed in "maintaining its freedom." But she believes that the violence accomplished in its name will keep it from spreading abroad. Like Price and Godwin, Williams is able to assert that revolution—if not *the* Revolution—will go forward, despite setbacks or shortcomings:

> In the early ages of the world, the revolutions of states, and the incursions of barbarians, often overwhelmed knowledge, and occasioned the loss of principles: but since the invention of printing has diffused science over Europe, and accumulated the means of extending and preserving truth, principles can no more be lost. (IV, 5)

We can conclude that Williams's *Letters* will continue to disseminate its own kind of revolution—that is, the one linked in her writings to domesticity. For writing may achieve change in England even though

violence in France has succeeded in changing English minds about such a course. Again, like Price, Williams believes that there is still much to be accomplished in Britain. However, unlike Price, and for reasons very much relating to the political exclusion of her sex, Williams does not focus her energies on a repeal of the Test Acts. Instead, and like many women writers in the period—republican, reformist, and conservative alike—Williams condemns the "slave-merchant traffic in blood" (VIII, 1).

This was a theme familiar to Williams's writing. In her poem *A Farewell, for Two Years, to England*, written in 1789, Williams mixes her lament for leaving a land that pioneered freedom with her excitement for visiting one that has taken up the mantle of liberty, and that might in turn teach England a thing or two about it. Her *Letters*, as I have suggested, was to be part of that very project. She says in her poem,

> Haste! Since, while Britain courts that dear-bought gold,
> For which her virtue and her fame are sold,
> And calmly calculates her trade of death,
> Her groaning victims yield in pangs their breath. (ll. 183–86)

When she returns to this theme in the *Letters*, she claims that she "cannot conclude" her sketch of the Revolution without mentioning the English barter of human life: "Ah! let us, till the slave-trade no longer stains the British name, be more gentle in our censure of other nations" (VIII, 1). She even suggests that the abuses of slavery extend beyond the Revolutionary crimes of the French.

As in her poem, *Farewell*, then, Williams ends her *Letters* with the example of slavery. But where in the poem Williams hopes, like Price, that France's example will light the way back in England, in her *Letters* Williams can only point to the negative example of French violence in hopes that it might stir the imagination—that the horrors of the latter might remind England of its own crimes. There is, however, a difference between the two horrors. Williams attributes the violence in France to "imperious necessity," and argues that the "ancient system was over-thrown, not because it was unphilosophical, but because it could be upheld no longer" (IV, 4). But in Britain this is no longer the case; Britain has a constitutional monarchy like that Williams characterizes as marking the golden age of the French Revolution. Thus it turns out to be important for Williams to attribute a certain degree of violence to Britain's own revolutionary experience. Violence is associated with the initial moments of necessity—the birth pangs of revolution. But Britain, presumably, is beyond these, its revolution having grown up to be

an example to the rest of Europe. Thus Williams can argue, really, for a different revolution, one from within—writing—rather than from without: violence. There is no need to import the excesses of France. What is needed is a further domestication of British institutions.

As such, writing is more useful than violence. To go back to the writing / *lettres de cachet* analogy mentioned earlier, writing is not characterized as some version of revolutionary violence; rather, it is a reformed version of the *lettre*. Such writing is not linked to the arbitrary rule of the father but instead to the domestic affections of a mother or child. Kelly makes the argument that "if [for Williams] Britain has social and intellectual advantages despite its unrevolutionized government and institutions, these are due to greater feminization and domestication of culture" (*Women* 45). But it should be stressed that for Williams, Britain's government *has* been revolutionized and that it is precisely those institutions of old that have persisted into the present age, like slavery, that need to be reformed to meet the advanced state of government and society. Slavery and the British constitution seem incompatible to Williams. Thus the former should "fall" because it is both inhumane and "unphilosophic."

Bodies and embodiment

A second example of an attempt to institutionalize in the realm of the literary what is excluded in the political can be found in the work of Mary Wollstonecraft. As discussed in Chapter 1, it is in the literary realm that Wollstonecraft's oppositions to insinuating political institutions—print and the female body—come together. Although much of her literary career was spent railing against the excessive effusions of gothic and sentimental novels, Wollstonecraft does, it seems, find a use for fiction. Like Godwin, she employs an alternative generic strategy for the continuation of her political–philosophical aims. She does this, however, without turning from an Enlightenment conception of literature.[46] While her novel, *The Wrongs of Women*, is a fragment, it nevertheless offers a kind of solidarity that is impossible in Godwin following his turn away from a public sphere of print.

The aim of the *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* was to present arguments that "[rose] naturally from a few simple principles" (RoW 106). But Wollstonecraft claims in the advertisement to the *Vindication* that a second volume will attend to more particular investigations: "especially the laws relative to women" (106). In this volume, wrote Wollstonecraft, she would "elucidate some of the sentiments, and complete many of the sketches begun in the first" (106). Whether or not Wollstonecraft's

unfinished novel, *The Wrongs of Woman*, is in fact that second volume, as critics have suggested, it certainly does attend to the laws relative to women, just as it elucidates some of the sentiments begun in the *Vindication*.

Indeed, in the fragment of a preface she left behind Wollstonecraft claims to have "embodied" those very sentiments while presenting characters that might exhibit the misery and oppression "peculiar to women" (WoW 59). In addition, she asserts that she would "make her story subordinate to a great moral purpose, that of exhibiting the misery and oppression, peculiar to women, that arise out of the partial laws and customs of society" (WoW 148). Taken as a whole, Wollstonecraft's project aims to demystify those laws and customs that Burke would compare to the outrageous costume of a French queen. Unlike Burke, though, Wollstonecraft does not allow her imagination such a free reign. (In Burke's writings imagination is given more liberty than those people he writes to condemn.) She explains that her moral view "restrained her fancy" (148). In other words, hers was to be a reasoned fiction. Whereas the *Vindication* is a political–philosophical attempt to critique existing institutions in society and construct a domestic citizen, so to speak, the *Wrongs of Woman* is a novel attempt to "embody" that citizen—to give her, as Burke might say, flesh and blood.

That said, however, the reader of *Wrongs* will notice a curious fact: not one of the characters in the novel even remotely resembles an idealized domestic figure as constituted in the *Vindication*. If anything, their combined stories comprise the opposite. In *Wrongs* the home is a prison, a gothic abode where Maria is trapped and tormented by her husband—George Venables—as well as by her own thoughts and mistakes. Such descriptions in Wollstonecraft should make us look more closely, though. For as a reviewer at the *Analytical* it was just such descriptions that led Wollstonecraft to direct her critical disdain at the genre. Of Charlotte Smith's *Emmeline*, for example—and this of an author she generally regarded very highly—Wollstonecraft exclaims that "… the false expectations these wild scenes excite, tend to debauch the mind, and throw an insipid kind of uniformity over the moderate and rational prospects of life; consequently adventures are sought for and created, when duties are neglected, and content despised" (*Collected Works* VII, 26). Maria may not be a typical gothic heroine, but she is, by her own admission, a "romantic" one.[47] Indeed, the initial mistake she laments and blames for all the torments that followed is her marriage to the libertine, Venables. She says "my fancy had found a basis to erect its model of perfection on; and quickly went to work, with all the happy credulity of youth, to

consider that heart as devoted to virtue, which had only obeyed a virtu-ous impulse" (*Wrongs* 102). Maria comes to realize that the "virtuous" Venables was indeed a product of her imagination. Indulging in this fancy allowed her an opportunity to escape a home-life where she was treated as a second-class citizen.

But even her most reasonable uncle initially believes Venables to be good husband-material. That is, the mistake is not Maria's alone. Indeed, Wollstonecraft is quick to point out that Venables is not born evil. Rather, it is the laws and customs of society that propel him along his path. Maria admits that he was "gradually fashioned by the world," and that "he did not quickly become what I hesitate to call him—out of respect for my daughter" (102). This is important. For while Wollstonecraft does highlight Maria's innocence and her given-ness to fancy as con-tributing to her own downfall, it is also part of her "argument" to show how society's laws corrupt men like Venables. Wollstonecraft's use of the novelistic genre is meant to highlight both Maria's given-ness to fancy and Venable's given-ness to libertinism as stemming from—as well as perpetuating—a common institutional source.

We are told that Maria *does* learn from her experience: she herself explains that "the bitter experience was yet to come, that has taught me how very distinct are the principles of virtue, from the casual feelings from which they germinate" (102). By the end of the novel (or by the end that we are left with), however, it appears that this is not the case. She has not really learned anything. Building again her castle on the sandy founda-tions of fancy, Maria falls for ex-libertine Darnford. And while he does not torment her in the same way that Venables does, he does leave with a chunk of her money and an even bigger chunk of her affections. He preys on her open affections and fragile state, especially upon learning that she has lost her child. The two situations are comparable. For with Venables we are told that Maria was "too unsuspecting, too disinterested" (103) to notice his true motives: to capture her uncle's fortune. In the case of Darnford, though, the narrator points to a "peculiarity in Maria's mind: she was more anxious not to deceive, than to guard against deception; and had rather trust without sufficient reason, than be for ever the prey of doubt" (138). As with Venables, Maria finds in Darnford a form of escape from her condition—and who could blame her for this? Maria's natural goodness is taken advantage of in a world that turns virtue into Venables. No longer in a physical hell, at the novel's end Maria nevertheless swallows laudanum in order to escape "from this hell of disappointment" (147).

There are several clues throughout the novel that suggest Maria might come to such an end. For one, her choice of reading. When given "a fresh

parcel of reading" by her caretaker, Jemima, Maria, opts for the fictional selections: "she took up a book on the powers of the human mind," we are told, "but, her attention strayed from the cold arguments on the nature of what she felt, while she was feeling, and she snapt the chain of the theory to read Dryden's Guiscard and Sigismunda" (69). Like those poets that only imitate fashion, Maria would be better employed in analyzing her thoughts—in "reflecting on their operations" ("On Poetry" 10). Instead, she tries to imagine the face and the character of the man who writes such "animated" notes in the margins of her newly acquired books. She remains, in other words, in the grip of fancy. In addition, the character she does sketch in her mind only partly resembles the real Darnford. But as she has again grounded her thinking in fancy, it does not matter that Darnford talks openly of his own libertinism and of his inability to direct his affections toward an object for any duration. He becomes for her another savior. Darnford, too, uses Maria as a means of escape: first from the tedium of captivity; second, from a charge brought by the law; and third, using money provided him from her inheritance, from Maria herself.

Wollstonecraft's narrator, however, makes sure the reader can understand what Maria's romantic disposition keeps her from seeing. And, we must assume, the reader will see that it is precisely such a romantic disposition that keeps Maria from seeing all of this in the first place. For it is not simply innocence that keeps Maria imprisoned. Nor is it even the institutions of marriage, property, or law. Her romantic notions continually keep her from exercising her reason when it is needed most. It is not that Maria's intentions are not good. To act in such a way as to not deceive others; to keep oneself open to affection and love; to extend one's friendship and material resources to those in need: all of these are good in and of themselves. The problem is that the object of such intentions turns out consistently to be constructed from fancy rather than from understanding. Like the heroine of Wollstonecraft's earlier "fiction," Mary, it seems that Maria, with her innocence and her good intentions, is not fit for this world.

Oddly, though, Maria herself comments on how the laws and mores render society a prison. "Was not the world a vast prison," she says, "and women born slaves" (64)? She explains how women are the "out-laws of the world"—that is, how they find no protection in laws that are designed to keep them dependent. This point is reinforced after she states her case to a court of law:

> I claim then a divorce, and the liberty of enjoying, free from molestation, the fortune left to me by a relation, who was well aware of

> the character of the man with whom I had to contend.—I appeal to the justice and humanity of the jury—a body of men, whose private judgment must be allowed to modify laws, that must be unjust, because definite rules can never apply to indefinite circumstances. (144)

Like Wollstonecraft in the first *Vindication*, Maria argues that laws must grow with the times, that institutions must address nature, and not simply imitate themselves. Innocently, again, we must assume, she appeals to a notion of progress. The judge, responds by alluding to "the fallacy of letting women plead their feelings, as an excuse for the violation of the marriage-vow." "For his part," we are told, "he had always determined to oppose all innovation, and the new-fangled notions which incroached on the good rules of conduct" (145). Maria's feelings are compared to dangerous French principles: both would "open a flood-gate to immorality," and what is more, bring down those cherished institutions of old.

Maria, though, as I have said, does not really learn. What she does do, however, is write. She writes so that her daughter, or more generally, the reader, *might* learn. "From my narrative, dear girl," she writes, "you may gather the instruction, the counsel, which is meant rather to exercise than to influence your mind" (95). To exercise rather than to influence. If only Maria herself took such a lesson to heart. She does not seem to apply those lessons she writes about in her narrative. Instead, she is merely diverted by her writing.

For as with Williams's *Letters*, Maria writes as a form of escape. First, from tedium, from uniformity—as a "cure" for listlessness:

> writing was the only alternative, and she wrote some rhapsodies descriptive of her state of mind; but the events of her past life pressing on her, she resolved circumstantially to relate them, with the sentiments that experience, and more matured reason, would naturally suggest. They might perhaps instruct her daughter, and shield her from the misery, the tyranny, her mother knew not how to avoid. (66)

In this passage, however, we see the means of a second kind of escape: from "tyranny" itself. Maria may eventually chastise herself for writing when she should have been "contriving to escape" from her imprisonment. But what the reader must realize is that it is in her writing only that Maria does escape from her imprisonment. For in her "more matured reason" Maria says what she never accepts "in her heart"; that is, she delineates things as they are. It is in her writings only that Maria shows the understanding as well as the nurturing that Wollstonecraft

elsewhere argues the domestic woman must possess in order to perform her duties.

Thus while Maria—not to mention the various other characters in the novel, like Jemima—may not be the "embodiment" of Wollstonecraft's ideal woman, the writing itself (Maria's writing, the text, the narrator) is. As in Godwin's *Caleb Williams*, it is the narrative itself that stands in, so to speak, for the hero. The text, then, exercises the minds of its readers—of those real bodies that take it up. The fragmented ending may be more significant than Godwin originally thought. For it is the reader that must complete what is started in the text. What we are left with at the novel's end is a new kind of bond: one between women, between classes, and between mother and daughter. The bond between Maria and Jemima is rendered strong via narrative—that is, via the telling of stories. It is the product of understanding and sympathy and represents the same bond to be produced between the narrator and the reborn reader who sees the matter, the nature, beneath the generic veneer. "[Wollstonecraft's] pastiche," says Burgess, "registers the intransigence of the historical matter—the real bodies and real economies that lie behind and beneath the sentimental text—that the writers of the Revolution debate subsume in generic wrangles" (149). Wollstonecraft undoes the seams; but she does this to show that what lies beneath is truly capable of serving as a foundation to build upon. Such is the relationship between "poetry" and understanding. Like Godwin, hers is a rational fiction. Both take up the terrain of the domestic to fight the insinuation and violence of political institutions. And in doing so, both attempt to render that terrain an institution in itself: something that stands, that has a history, and something that might be made to stand—that is, something to be *instituted*.

However, where Godwin does this by taking the novel and distancing it from its own foundations, Wollstonecraft remains within its history, so to speak. She may distance herself from certain strains of the genre: the gothic or the sentimental, for example. But she does not throw out that class of readers that the novel had long been associated with. This is a significant difference between her approach and Godwin's. Both seek "manliness." But for Wollstonecraft manliness starts with women—with a revolution in female manners. As in *Wrongs*, the men who control the political institutions are wont to give up control and oppose innovation. As primary victims of institutional violence, women like Wollstonecraft found the need to construct alternative institutions—institutions that might usurp that control that was not to be given up freely. The institution of literature was one such institution, and what's more, it was a non-violent one.

Godwin, too, may have seen in the political institution of literature a non-violent means of change. But he also saw in it an individuated realm where the violent proclivities of the collective were to be tamed. Wollstonecraft's view is more radical—though she too emphasizes non-violence. Like Jemima and Maria at the end of *Wrongs*, her political institution of literature does not exclude solidarity, but instead holds out the possibility of an alternative solidarity: that between women.[48] Lacking the physical strength of their male counterparts, women would not seek to fight a violent war. As Wollstonecraft says in *Rights of Woman*, such a war is no longer justifiable, any way. For Wollstonecraft, it will be a defensive war; and fiction will comprise a kind of basic training. Wollstonecraft's self-conscious use of genre does not seek to move readers less able to understand, as, say, Godwin hints.[49] It aims to exercise the mind of its readers. Wollstonecraft's goal is precisely the employment of reason on a mass scale.

This act of understanding is complemented by an imaginative positing of a new dawn of freedom, a new *body* politic. Here it is not the image posited but the act of positing that is of significance: for it is the latter that becomes, in Wollstonecraft, the embodiment of a necessity grounded in the female body and in literature itself.

Revolution and institution

In Godwin, Williams, Paine, Wollstonecraft, Wordsworth, Burke, Mathias, the many literary and political publications, and elsewhere, we find a late eighteenth-century version of what Swift termed the battle of the books. The terrain has been further politicized—and "battle" is hardly just a metaphor. In addition, and despite Burke's longing for the days of chivalry, this was no battle between ancients and moderns.[50] Rather, it was a battle over the very terrain of modernity itself. To our twenty-first-century eyes, it may well look the pinnacle of Romantic idealism, this claim that literature can play a role in such a struggle—that, as Mathias said, such a struggle would in fact be determined by it. But such a claim was far older than Mathias or any of the participants in this late eighteenth-century battle. One could do worse than to return to Swift, in fact, for a precursor. What is of great interest in Godwin's writings of this period is that in them, the whole battle is re-enacted. Certainly Godwin had his intellectual and political opponents. And certainly, as Philp argues, his circles of friends were the very foundation of his approach and his ideas. But these larger public debates are the very stuff of Godwin's writing in the 1790s: they fuel his move toward a literary sphere that

transcends such conflicts. Godwin is in many ways a contradictory figure. His ideas resonate with the left, though they do not always qualify as leftist. Unlike, say Wordsworth, in whom many have found *the* Romantic model of development, of maturity, in Godwin it is those obstacles to development—or to progress, we should say—that most claim our attention.

Godwin's revisions to the *Enquiry* and his post-*Political Justice* writings all point toward the private, or domestic, as a fruitful site of investigation into the political. It is small wonder, then, that his ensuing "studies" employ the fictional as a means for *insinuating* a more radical strain of thinking into those very opinions by which the political is maintained.[51] Indeed, Godwin seems to view fiction's relation to government not in terms of its providing a mask or a softening effect, as Burke does, but rather as a corrosive, of sorts—that is, as a means of dissolving the latter while attempting to institute the possibilities inherent in the former. In turning to *Caleb Williams*, I have suggested that Godwin's fiction in the 1790s was a product of his search for a genre capable of clarifying the pervasive effects of government on individuals and of countering a universal, or "Enlightenment" historiography with a different kind of history: a history of private individuals struggling against the very institution that was supposed to have made them free. This search, as well as the first of its products, *Caleb Williams*, in turn altered Godwin's conception of the political and led him to a theorization of genre that both legitimated novels and distinguished them from history by characterizing them as *Literature*—that is, by rendering them an institution in their own right.

For Godwin and Wollstonecraft, finally, "Literature" must affirm a political connection—and this not only because the domestic is a space ripe for comprehending the insinuation of government into private life, but also because "Literature" might be just such a non-coercive institution as projected in *Political Justice*. The obvious extension of this argument comes from Godwin's disciple, Shelley, and his concluding claim in the *Defense of Poetry* that poets are the "unacknowledged legislators of the world." But in Godwin, it is as if "Literature," too, can be understood as "sufficiently expressive of that relative form, whatever it be, into which individuals would fall, when there was no need of force to direct them into their proper channel, and were no refractory members to correct." One can think of the scum and surcharge of the press standing in for the "refractory members." The ambiguous "political institution" is only complete with "Literature" attached to it: Literature, after all, is that space within which an alternative to institutional history and the

history of political institutions can be written and read. Yet conceived of as a political institution neither can Literature fully do away with the coercive means by which subjects are directed into their proper channels. Perhaps Hazlitt was right in affirming that Godwin placed the bar too high—even for himself. As Godwin sees it, the *institution* of Literature takes up and attempts to hold its ground against the dehistoricizing machinations of abstract or idealist history as well as those fictions of state stability: custom, tradition and hereditary title, for example.

It holds its ground against revolution, however, as well. As Godwin says in his *Enquiry*, "revolution is instigated by a horror against tyranny, yet its own tyranny is not without peculiar aggravations. There is no period more at war with the character of liberty" (1798, 270). Thus Literature does not simply recapitulate revolution in words, as many have often said of Romantic-period literary works. It works to prevent revolution *and* government from disturbing the "salutary and uninterrupted progress which might be expected to attend upon political truth and social improvement" (273). "Institution," like "revolution" after 1789, is an ambivalent term. Where Revolution can mean a return as well as an overturning, so too does "institution" bring together in one word a dialectic of stasis and change. To institute something means to bring it about—to introduce it. Yet institution also means something that has stood the test of generations, as Burke might have it.[52] The term "political institution," then, vacillating as it can between that which has been and that which could be—between that which marks history and that which disrupts it—is a term ripe with possibility. And for Godwin, the attempt to institute it begins with the institution of Literature itself.

Part II
From the Bloodless to the Romantic Revolution

4
Jacobitism and Enlightenment

> Indeed, the most romantic parts of this narrative are precisely
> those which have a foundation in fact.
>
> Walter Scott, *Waverley* (1814)[1]

Jacobites and Jacobins

If you look up John Robison in the *Dictionary of National Biography*
(DNB), the first thing you'll find out about him is that he was "a scientific
writer (described by Sir James Mackintosh as 'one of the greatest mathe-
matical philosophers of his age')." He was born in Boghall, Stirlingshire,
in 1739, educated in Glasgow, and, in 1773, became professor of natural
philosophy at Edinburgh University. In addition, as a tutor to the son of
Admiral Knowles, a midshipman for General Wolfe, he traveled to
Quebec and "was employed in making surveys of the St. Lawrence and
adjacent country." In 1762 he was appointed by the board of longitude
and went to Jamaica "on a trial voyage, to take charge of the chronome-
ter completed by John Harrison the horologist." He would also visit
Russia, again with admiral Knowles, where he "acted as inspector-general
to the corps." He contributed articles on seamanship, the telescope,
optics, waterworks, resistance of fluids, electricity, magnetism, music,
and other subjects to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*; he was elected general
secretary to the Royal Society of Edinburgh upon its founding in 1783;
he "anticipated Mayer in the important electrical discovery that the law
of force is very nearly or exactly in inverse square"; and, perhaps most
impressively, he gave James Watt the idea for the steam engine.

Despite all this Robison is most famous as the discoverer of a plot to
take over the world. In 1797 he published a book entitled *Proofs of a
Conspiracy against all the Religions and Governments of Europe to be Carried*

out in the Secret Meetings of Freemasons, Illuminati, and Reading Societies. He claimed to have proof that these Freemasons, Illuminati, and Reading Societies were going to topple the governments of Europe and "[unite] the whole human race into one great and happy society" (74). As if that wasn't bad enough, they were going to use the venerable shield of Freemasonry and the vaunted liberty of the press to do it. The proof was gathered from archives, accounts, and from some letters acquired by Robison—a Mason himself. These letters, signed by people named "Spartacus" and "Cato," say things like the following: "The great strength of our order lies in its concealment; let it never appear in any place in its own name, but always covered by another name"; and, "A literary society is the most proper form for the introduction into any state where we are yet strangers." (These remarks are often followed by parenthetical exclamations, written by Robison, that tell us to "Mark This!") Robison's arguments are similar to those made by the Abbé Barruel, whose *Memoir pour l' Histoire du Jacobinisme* was first published in 1797. Both claimed that the French Revolution was a plot hatched in Masonic lodges and that the "monster of Jacobinism," as Barruel called it, was an Illuminati offshoot. The *DNB* makes mention of this part of Robison's career—almost as an afterthought and at the conclusion of the entry. "Although he was a freemason," it states, "Robison published in 1797 a curious work—'a lasting monument of fatuous credulity'—to prove that the fraternity of 'Illuminati' was concerned in a plot to overthrow religion and government throughout the world." Indeed, the publication of this conspiracy tract seems to stand as an embarrassing stain on an otherwise noteworthy record of scientific achievement.

However, Robison's book seems to have piqued the curiosity of Romantic-period readers. William Godwin read *Proofs of a Conspiracy* in January 1799, while writing *St. Leon*.[2] And it has been suggested that Robison's account of the Illuminati inspired Mary Shelley's decision to send young Victor Frankenstein to study in Ingolstadt, the place of the group's founding. In the fourth edition Robison expresses pleasure at the reception his book has received. "It gives me great satisfaction," he writes, "to learn that it has been received with favour and indulgence. This I may conclude from the impression's being exhausted in a few days, and because the publisher informs me that another edition is wanted immediately" (286).

The late 1790s offered a propitious political environment for publishing a book of this kind. As discussed earlier, the government had passed acts against speech and association, suspended Habeas Corpus twice between 1795 and 1801, arrested and tried seditious writers and members of

political associations like the London Corresponding Society, and given its backing to a vicious campaign in print targeting suspected radicals. It was the height of anti-Jacobin fervor and a time ripe for conspiracy. The French, the Irish, Dissenters, "unsex'd" females, terrorist writers—all posed a potential threat to a country poised on the brink of revolution. For Robison, however, it was not French sans-culottes or Irish rebels that were to be feared. It was the circulating librarian. For as one of the letters that comprise Robison's proof admits, "By establishing reading societies, and subscription libraries, and taking these under our direction, and supplying them through our labours, we may turn the public mind which way we will" (112). This was not an unrealistic plan given the period. Writers across the political spectrum, from Mathias to Godwin, saw literature as an "engine" capable of moving public opinion—and by extension, society. Robison's contemporary, Edmund Burke, famously blamed the Revolution in France on the "political men of letters." "The literary cabal," says Burke, "had some years ago formed something like a regular plan for the destruction of the Christian religion. This object they pursued with a degree of zeal which hitherto had been discovered only in the propagators of some system of piety" (211). As we've seen, it was thought that certain kinds of print could produce certain violent effects—for instance, the overthrow of religion or the state.

This fear finds its visual form in the prints, drawings, and paintings of another of Robison's contemporaries, James Gillray. His oil-on-paper painting, "Voltaire Instructing the Infant Jacobin," for example, shows an aged Voltaire giving instruction to a little monster while a host of ghouls bearing arms and a torch of Enlightenment stands by. Print is fore-grounded in the picture and is clearly the lesson. But the monstrous figures in the background seem projections of text—the lesson made visible in reality. Voltaire is just the sort of figure Robison writes against; for it was Voltaire who helped spark the French Enlightenment by popularizing—and as Robison will remark, perverting—English thinkers like Newton and Bacon. The image was originally meant to appear in the *Anti-Jacobin Magazine and Review*. (Gillray had designed his more famous "The New Morality," discussed in Chapter 2, as a fold-out insert for a 1798 issue of the *Anti-Jacobin*. The print illustrated a poem by Tory politician, poet, and journalist, George Canning, and showed writers like Coleridge, Thomas Paine, and Thomas Holcroft, moving toward the altar of revolutionary France, at the front of which is amassed a small mountain of printed texts.) But no print of "Voltaire Instructing the Infant Jacobin" survives. There are sketches for the transfer. In their unfinished state they almost resemble the threat Gillray and others like

Robison were trying to illustrate: the unfinished lines of print appear ghostly, like bits of text that have seeped into the paper to perform their seditious labor unawares.

Behind this plan to infiltrate society and instigate universal benevolence lay a continental brand of Freemasonry, one that had "tricked up" a "homely Free Masonry imported from England" and exported it back in the most insinuating and ultimately incendiary of forms. The essence of this perversion lay in what Robison calls "cosmo-politics." "Of late," he writes, "the cosmo-political doctrines encouraged and propagated in the lodges, and some hopes of producing a revolution in society ... seem to be the cause of all the zeal with which the order is still cherished and promoted" (54). By my count Robison uses the words "cosmo-politics," "cosmo-political," and "cosmopolitism" a combined 31 times. Add to this countless references to "universal citizenship," "citizenry of the world," and "universal brotherhood," and it becomes clear that for Robison the plot to bring happiness to all humankind has as the first of its targets the borders that comprised the nation—Britain's in particular.

"Cosmopolitan" is a nineteenth-century word. "Cosmopolite" is the earlier equivalent. According to the *OED* the word "cosmopolite" was common in the seventeenth century and was then revived in the nineteenth, where it was often contrasted with patriotism. The first use of the word "cosmopolit*ism*" is given as 1797—the same year as Robison's *Proofs*—and attributed to the *Monthly Review*. Coleridge uses it in his *Friend* of 1809 to describe "the false philosophy ... which would persuade him that cosmopolitism is nobler than nationality." The word "cosmo-political," relating to all states and polities, is dated from 1798, and also attributed to the *Monthly Review*. Robison uses the word a year earlier than this and in a variety of ways: sometimes it denotes citizenship of the world, sometimes the radical politics, atheism, and levelling principles that will characterize this world citizenry. But if Freemasonry was imported from England, as Robison goes to some lengths to demonstrate, "cosmo-politism" (like terrorism) was exported from France—where, says Robison, "it had been the favorite topic of enthusiastical oeconimists" and where it "was now become a general theme of discussion in all societies of cultivated men" (72).

Freemasonry was established in England out of the expansion of the medieval guilds of stone-masons. As Iain McCalman notes, "Sometime around the 1630s, it had emerged, or reemerged, in Britain as a chain of speculative secret clubs professing ideals of benevolence and fraternity, and using secret signs, symbols, and rites based on the biblical allegory of rebuilding the Temple of Solomon" (37). Modern Freemasonry is

usually dated from 1717 with the establishment of the Grand Lodge in London. An official constitution was drafted in 1723. In England Freemasonry was decidedly apolitical; it held to "the solemn declaration" that "no subject of religion or politics shall ever be touched on in the Lodge" (59). As Robison explains, it was "merely a pretext for passing an hour or two in a sort of decent conviviality, not altogether void of some rational occupation." This was not always the case in France, however, where Robison found "… that the lodges had become the haunts of many projectors and fanatics, both in science, in religion, and in politics, who had availed themselves of the secrecy and the freedom of speech maintained in these meetings, to broach their particular whims, or suspicious doctrines …" (4). In fact, Robison will argue, "in their hands Free Masonry became a thing totally unlike, and almost in direct opposition to the system (if I may get such a name) imported from England" (5).

How it got into their hands in the first place is an interesting question, one that Robison answers selectively. In short, he claims, they got it from the Stuarts. When James II fled to France, following the bloodless Revolution, he took English Freemasonry with him. Once there, "it was immediately received by the French" (15). All lodges on the continent "received their institution from England and had patents from a mother lodge in London. All seem to have got the mystery through the same channel, the banished friends of the Stuart family. Many of these were Catholics" (35). But this is not the whole story. Although it is the case, as Margaret Jacob notes, that "the first Masonic lodges on the continent in the 1720s were led by Jacobite aristocrats" (128), Robison ignores the radical currents of England's Revolution as they too made their way across the channel. According to Jacob, "that originally British institution, transmitted clandestinely by the radicals and later officially by Whig politicians, provided the social milieu of the radical enlightenment on the continent" (111). Robison's is a limited account; but these limitations can tell us something about what Robison might have been up to in this strange work. Linking the corruption of Freemasonry with the exiled Stuarts is an interesting move on Robison's part as it puts the origin of the conspiracy not in Masonry itself or even in anything the Masons rejected but rather in something the English rejected at the time of their revolution: the Stuarts. There is an interesting link between the problem posed by a Catholic absolutist monarch and that posed by a radically democratic cosmo-political order: both recognized borders that extended beyond the nation.

From the French lodges—especially the *Loge des Chevaliers Bienfaisants* at Lyons—this corrupted form of Masonry spread to Germany, where

it came to find its most pronounced cosmo-political conspirator in a professor of Canon Law at the University of Ingolstadt, Dr. Adam Weishaupt. Weishaupt founded his Masonic offshoot, the Illuminati, in 1775, and it is from this moment that Robison dates "the great epoch of cosmopolitism" (57). In Germany, especially after the Illuminati was banned in 1786, the conspiracy spread to include the book trade, reading societies, and circulating libraries—the so-called "German Union." Back in France, it would culminate in that grand "cosmopolitical enterprise," the French Revolution. "That the Illuminati, and other hidden cosmo-political societies had some influence in bringing about the French Revolution … can hardly be doubted" (206), Robison concludes. By the time Robison published his book in 1797, this cosmo-political conspiracy had found its way into Britain—via Freemasonry, reading societies, and circulating libraries. It threatened not just the "innocent merriment" of the London lodges but the nation itself—in fact, it threatened the very idea of a nation. For Robison—as for Burke—the French Revolution represented a violent break from the past and from the nation. As he notes, "… the French aimed, in the very beginning, at overturning the whole world. In all revolutions of other countries, the schemes and plots have extended no farther than the nation where they took their rise. But here we have seen that they take in the whole world" (233).

While the plot of this conspiracy wanders around Europe like some Gothic heroine, the overall narrative offers some striking consistency. The reader notices a pattern whereby something English leaves the country, is corrupted on the continent, then returns to threaten the original. For example, the brotherhood and benevolence extended to fellow Masons in England becomes universal brotherhood in France; Newton's "principle of material nature by which all bodies of the solar system are made to form a connected and permanent universe" becomes in the hands of philosophes like D'Holbach the ground for a materialist atheism that undermined this connection; and the radical tactic of preserving the nation that made the Revolution of 1688 so glorious becomes—again in France—a basis for overturning the nation. Voltaire, as Gillray shows, is a prime culprit here. He helped to make popular on the continent the writings of Newton and Bacon and the principles of 1688, thus instigating some of the excesses that came to be associated with French Enlightenment and later, Revolution. To men like Gillray, Robison, Burke, and even Wordsworth, it seemed as if those post-1688 rituals and institutions of modern British nationhood had become the foundations for a plot to topple British nationhood. In Robison's account, you get the distinct sense that these two—the idea of nation

and the British nation—mean the same thing. The opposite of "cosmo-political" is not just nationalist, then, as in the Coleridge example; it's British. The proofs offered are as much about this as anything. In addition to the letters, accounts, etc., that have already been alluded to, we also find proofs of a different kind: lengthy passages from the "immortal Newton" about how in the system of Nature God is the organizing principle; an extended analysis of 1688 that shows that it was only a revolution in the older, astronomical sense of a return or restoration; and pointed responses to remind us that "freemasonry has retained in Britain its original form, simple and unadorned," and that "the good sense and sound judgments of Britons … have made them detest and reject the mad projects and impious doctrines of cosmopolites, Epicurists, and Athiests" (299).

Indeed, Robison ends his account with an exhortation to "rally around our own standards." "Let us take the path pointed out by Bacon," he says, "let us follow the steps of Newton" (304). Then comes a quote from the "highest authority": "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's cloathing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves—BY THEIR FRUITS YE SHALL KNOW THEM" (304). But this might just as well read "by their fruits ye shall know yourself." For while Robison argues that Britons should follow the true path set out in the works of its best thinkers, this is made possible only by the negative path opened up by the cosmopolites. In Robison's *Proofs* the nation is articulated in threat, the community imagined, to use Benedict Anderson's formula, against a negative future glimpsed across the channel. Like many Romantic-period writers, Robison works to establish the limits and integrity of the kingdom, coloring the lines of some ideological map in order to keep what's truly British in and what isn't out—or to put it another way, to distinguish the apples and oranges of British and French Enlightenment: the one leading toward the other away from nation.

While Robison seems to support a narrowing of the literary space, he seems not to think of his work as a turn away from what I have been calling the values of Enlightenment or, as the *DNB* implies, from his career in natural and mechanical philosophy. The question then arises, what is Enlightenment to someone like Robison? Which Enlightenment is Robison a part of (or is it the case, as we saw with "nation," that Enlightenment and Britain mean the same thing)? Robison's *Proofs of a Conspiracy* can be situated at the tail end of the Scottish Enlightenment, a period when certain readings of Newton and nation were being "reoriented" in a Romantic direction.[3] Edinburgh, though a fringe city, had been at the heart of Enlightenment in the eighteenth century—it

was a place where the very concepts of modernity were forged in the work of Adam Smith, David Hume, Adam Ferguson, and William Robertson, to name but a few. The Scottish Enlightenment in particular, though, and as I will discuss below, was conservative and even defensive: it worked first and foremost to secure the Revolution and Settlement of 1688–89 and the Union of 1707 not only for Scotland but for a united Britain, and it did this against the looming threat of Jacobitism. As part of this defense the Edinburgh literati were much more open to continental exchange than their counterparts south of the Tweed. If eighteenth-century Scotland was not "cosmopolitical" it was at least cosmopolitan.

Jacobitism was an internal threat, not just to Scotland but to the Revolution and Settlement and everything it meant to a recently United Kingdom. The Pretender resided in France but his followers and his claim to the throne alike were firmly grounded in a Scotland of the past—in a pre-modern age of violence and intolerance. The moderate literati of Edinburgh, as Richard Sher calls them, responded with a theory of modernity that brought a post-1689 Scotland into the present and placed the claims of the Stuarts beyond reason as well as beyond history. The cosmopolitan reach of Scottish thought was evidence of its claim to modernity. Scottish Enlightenment historicism posited a theory of progress where modernity was articulated in response to a threatened return to the past.

By 1797, though, Jacobitism was dead. Charles Edward Stuart died in 1789, and the threat of Jacobitism had been extinguished well before then at Culloden in 1746. By Robison's time, Jacobitism was a curious relic of the past soon to be taken up by Walter Scott for a new brand of romance. The new threat was Jacobinism, an ideology that might be called hyper-modern and that sought a complete break with a past that had more than a little in common with Britain's present. But Jacobinism posed a threat from outside, one that targeted the Revolution of 1688. The same cosmopolitan reach that helped counter the threat of a *reactionary* Jacobitism was now seen as a potential helping hand to the infiltration of a *radical* Jacobinism. Robison, who retreats from this Enlightenment cosmopolitanism nevertheless puts forth the same (Scottish) Enlightenment defense of 1688. If one sees Enlightenment in Scotland as a strategy for maintaining and propagating that peculiar settlement with modernity that is 1688 (as this chapter will argue), and cosmopolitanism as part of that strategy, then one can see Robison's book not as a turn away from Enlightenment, but as a continuation of Enlightenment's motivation: the defense of Britain's bloodless Revolution.

Like Walter Scott a little later, Robison maintains continuity where Enlightenment cosmopolitanism had led to a break. In both Robison and Scott, the move is similar in tactic to the Revolution of 1688: a radical reorientation of form is introduced as a means for preserving the integrity of content.

Robison's *Proofs* may be out of step with his more systematic scientific output, but it was well in keeping with the age. What unites these "narrative situations" is a common reading of 1688.[4] Like many Romantic-period writers, Robison offers a narrative of a nation defining itself against a threat embedded in narrative. It is not as a systematic account of Freemasonry that Robison's *Proofs* retains its interest. Rather, in the excesses of conspiracy one can glimpse what might be called an ideological truth, one that goes beyond facts—or as in the Scott example that heads this chapter, one that radically re-imagines these facts. This same ideology can be glimpsed in more subtle and sophisticated forms in the works of some of Robison's contemporaries, as well. One example of this is Burke's idea of a natural rather than a systematical form of government. Burke's reading of 1688 is in some ways a product of Scottish Enlightenment historicism—particularly Hume's. When Paine puzzles over Burke's defense of the American Revolution in light of his attack on the French Revolution, he inaugurates a canonical gesture of Romantic-period criticism, one that describes the literary output of the period as anti- or counter-Enlightenment. But as I'll discuss below with regards to Robison, it is possible to read Burke's defense of America not as a defense of Enlightenment principles but rather as a Revolution based on the principles of 1688. In this sense, the French Revolution is very much a different animal—and a very dangerous one, too, in Burke's reckoning, precisely because it threatens that older Revolution.

A second example can be seen in the pattern of return noted in Wordsworth's poetry. In Book ten of *The Prelude*, Wordsworth chronicles a period in his life when he was led by the abstractions of continental philosophy and by the work of that great British Enlightenment synthesizer, William Godwin. These abstractions, Wordsworth learns, "did not lie in nature" and "furnished out materials for a work of false imagination" (1805, X, ll. 143–47). The emphasis on imagination is intriguing; for Godwin aimed to represent "things as they are." In order to create a work of true imagination, Wordsworth retreats to a place within "the limits of experience and of truth," limits that correspond *politically* with the native soil of England's own bloodless Revolution, and *formally* with the generic realm of the essay (Bacon) and the experiment (Newton). As discussed in Chapter 2, Wordsworth's Preface to *Lyrical*

Ballads makes an implicit comparison between Wordsworth's own "true" poetic experiments (and the prefatory essay itself) and various continental borrowings like the Gothic and system, which are shown to be false translations of English thought. Wordsworth's attempt to reclaim an idea of English-ness that has been corrupted on the continent and Burke's defense of 1688 against comparisons with 1789 both point to a cultural preoccupation that goes well beyond Robison's paranoia, and suggest a couple of things about the relation between nation and period. First, these examples suggest that by the end of the eighteenth century Scotland was no longer on the outside forging Enlightenment concepts as the requisite entry fee to modernity, but was rather firmly within what Ian Duncan has lately termed "the borders of Romanticism." Second, they suggest that the excesses of Robison's text and their rootedness in a defense of 1688 can help us to account for the so-called anti-Enlightenment features of Romantic-period writing generally—to see this writing not only or simply as a turn from Enlightenment values, but as a defense of what Enlightenment in Britain had arisen to legitimate: *bloodless* Revolution.

The first part of this book made the argument that the Romantic-period categorization of literature marked a turn away from the more broadly conceived Enlightenment category of letters. This turn, I suggested, was part of a renewed engagement with bloodless Revolution—an attempt to prevent the violent effects said to stem from certain kinds of print by limiting what qualified as literature. In this concluding section I will look at British—and even more specifically, Scottish—Enlightenment and argue that the path from the bloodless to the Romantic Revolution leads through Scotland. Literary history, Duncan has recently argued, often looks to Scotland as a place of an "inauthentic" Romanticism. "Rather than being a site of Romantic production," he writes, "Scotland's fate is to have become a Romantic object" (1). In arguing against this tradition of scholarship, Duncan suggests that "the case of Scotland may ... provoke a salutary defamiliarization of some of the fundamental categories that structure literary history, including the temporal borders of periodization and the topological borders of nationality" (10). This chapter and the next participate in this important project by suggesting that the reading of 1688 that was to become so crucial in the Romantic period—and which has been described in the previous pages—was a Scottish production. From the philosophical historicism of the Scottish Enlightenment literati to the historical romances of Scott, 1688 and the Act of Union serve as twin pillars upon which rested a national—that is, British—culture that defined itself against the

violence and values of revolutionary upheaval. Indeed, I will argue that the history of the historical novel is in part the history of the ways in which 1688 is reread and rewritten in the eighteenth century. Up until this point the turn from an Enlightenment to a Romantic category of literature has looked like a break. In many ways, it is. But to look at the "case of Scotland" is to see this same turn in terms of a continuity: between Enlightenment and Romanticism and between England in 1688 and post-1789 Britain.

The history of the historical novel

In arguing that Walter Scott is the progenitor of the historical novel, Georg Lukacs in a sense must take him out of his time and place. That is, Scott's works are grasped *sui generis*, as one of a kind productions that achieve their form and status despite the literary moment they emerged from. This may sound strange considering that the whole point of Lukacs's argument is to demonstrate the relationship between history (the French Revolution, Waterloo, etc.) and Scott's novels, and to show how in Scott's fiction we see humankind grasping history for the first time on a mass scale. Although he explains that England in the early nineteenth century is already a "post-revolutionary country" where "history is grasped more concretely than in France" (21), Lukacs goes on to claim the following: "what is expressed [in Scott's novel], above all, is a renunciation of Romanticism, a conquest of Romanticism, a higher development of the realist literary traditions of the Enlightenment in keeping with the new times" (33). It is not not that Lukacs is wrong in claiming that Scott rejects Romanticism (though in some ways he surely does not). Rather, it becomes clear from the argument that follows that Lukacs is placing Scott's work within a more broadly defined European context. This applies to his discussion of realism—for he goes on to talk of Scott's progeny: Balzac, Flaubert, Pushkin, etc.—as well as of Enlightenment.

But there is good reason to narrow this context. For one, the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century—the work of Isaac Newton, John Locke, the Royal Society—gave way to a corresponding movement in literature, one that sought, like its scientific counterpart, to accurately describe the world.[5] I am talking about the novel. Ian Watt, for example, finds in this correspondence the basic feature of the genre itself: formal realism. "Formal realism," says Watt,

> Is the narrative embodiment of a premise that Defoe and Richardson accepted very literally, but which is implicit in the novel form in

general: the premise, or primary, that the novel is a full and authentic report of human experience, and is therefore under an obligation to satisfy its reader with such details of the story as the individuality of the actors concerned, the particulars of the times and places of their actions, details which are presented through a more largely referential use of language than is common in other literary forms. (32)[6]

Though Watt too mentions the classical realists, like Balzac, he focuses on earlier and English writers that shaped the genre and epistemology that Scott himself would take up in his historical novels. That Scott was interested in eighteenth-century writers is evident from the editions, prefaces, and histories he wrote about them (especially Defoe, Swift, and Fielding).[7] It was in fact Scott's work that helped to make the novel "literary." Anthologies, scholarly editions, prefaces, encyclopedia entries: all of these helped Scott to render literary what for the most part had been seen throughout the eighteenth century as feminine and vulgar. Homer Brown explains that it was Scott who "instituted" the novel as it became known at the time—and as it is still known. That is, his critical and biographical introductions to the *Ballantyne Novelist's Library* "played an important part in the early recognition of the novel as an institution" (168).

The realism of the novel also emerged from the aftermath of that other English revolution of the late seventeenth century, the "bloodless" Revolution of 1688. In addition to assisting the assimilation of the novel into a literary tradition, Scott helped with the corresponding political step of assimilating 1688 and 1707 into a Scottish and a British framework. But this process was not done by Scott alone. Scott is in many respects an heir of the Enlightenment.[8] And here it is important to note that 1688 gave way to a very different kind of Enlightenment from the one generally understood from the term. Enlightenment in Britain in many ways merged with Enlightenment on the continent. As in the writings of Voltaire, Diderot, Condorcet, Kant, and others, Enlightenment thinkers in Britain stressed the importance of reason and advocated civil and commercial institutions as a means for achieving a prosperous and peaceful society. They applied the "experimental" method of Newton to other areas of life—most notably, government and morals. The title page of David Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature*, for example, announces that it is "An Attempt to introduce the experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects."

But Enlightenment in Britain also had its own distinct features that served to set it apart from what has come to be known as the

Enlightenment more generally. That Britain was a "post-revolutionary" society is as important for understanding Enlightenment as it is for understanding historical realism. Roy Porter claims that it was in Britain that the "modern world" was created—at least our categories for conceiving it. He argues that many have made cases against a British Enlightenment on the grounds that "there was no English revolt to match [the French Revolution]"; and explains, "that John Bull proved the bulwark of counter-revolution, seems to lend support to the idea that there can have been no English Enlightenment worthy of the name" (9). Porter's is an interesting argument in that it links Enlightenment with revolution—and perhaps more implicitly, violence. The fact that England did not have a violent revolution thus augers against its having had an Enlightenment to spur it on, as in the case of France. Porter does not explicitly invoke the bloodless Revolution of 1688, but he does discuss the unprecedented changes that followed that Revolution and the favorable conditions produced for Enlightenment to blossom in England (most notably, the growth of print).[9] One question that emerges from Porter's account, however, is the following: what kind of Enlightenment goes with a bloodless revolution? Porter does an admirable job of enumerating the various peculiarities of the English Enlightenment: its antipathy to systematic thought, its protestant (and in many cases dissenting) backbone, its empirical rather than materialist bent, and others. But what Porter does not adequately qualify is the fact that Enlightenment was not always—or even mostly—the same thing in England and Scotland. This is in large part because of the ways in which 1688 was received in each country—and in Britain as a whole, following Union in 1707.[10]

So how did Scotland deal with the question of violence and Enlightenment? As critics like G.M. Trevelyan and Murray Pittock have pointed out, the events of 1688–89 "…followed more bloodily in Scotland and in Ireland" (Trevelyan 3). But it was not an act of English propaganda that wrote the violence of 1688 out of its retellings. In large part this act came from Scotland itself. Just as the "bloodiness" of 1688 might be said to have been displaced on to the borders of the nation Scottish historians in turn displaced this violence elsewhere—to the past, for instance. From the periphery historians like Hume, William Robertson, and later Walter Scott, theorized the modern world they wished to enter by displacing the violence that accompanied it into the dark ages of the past—a past in large part associated with that other response to 1688: Jacobitism. Jacobitism and Enlightenment represent two distinct responses (in eighteenth-century Scotland) to the political

changes ushered in by the Revolution and Settlement of 1688–89—one violent, the other not. Indeed, as I discuss later, Enlightenment in Scotland specifically directed itself against the violent tendencies of Jacobitism and toward a "bloodless" model as established in 1688. Before I get to this I need to say a few words about Jacobitism.

The Jacobite threat

The Jacobites were first and foremost opposed to the Glorious Revolution and Settlement—a settlement that stripped the Stuarts of their claim to the throne. In many respects reactionaries, the Jacobites looked back to a past of absolute hierarchies along with Stuart rule. Following the Act of Union, in many ways an extension of 1688–89, the Jacobites claimed a nationalist agenda, as well.[11] "Jacobites were implacably opposed to the union," writes T.M. Devine, "since they viewed it—correctly—as a means of buttressing and perpetuating the Revolution of 1688–89 and so ensuring that the Stuarts would never again return to their rightful inheritance" (17).

Jacobitism was and is often still understood as a violent reaction to a largely peaceful revolution. Linda Colley explains that "… we need to consider what a Stuart restoration would have entailed in terms of violence, disruption, and political change" (72). Indeed, the Jacobites were seen as a group that wanted to challenge not only a peaceful revolution, but also what had become, following it, a peaceful society. David Hume, while weighing the advantages and disadvantages of Hanoverian or Stuart rule, remarks the following: "… the settlement in the house of Hanover has actually taken place. They have, since their accession, displayed, in all their actions, the utmost mildness, equity, and regard to the laws and constitution" (220). For Hume the actions of Hanoverian rule argue in its favor much more than any theoretical speculations that might be made about the Stuarts. But the Jacobites subscribed to no such logic. For them the priority of Stuart rule was a principle that could not be compromised.

Jacobitism may in fact have been about disrupting the new monarchical succession as established in 1689/1701 and about access to military power, as Colley notes. But it was about much more than that, as well. The Jacobites included in their ranks not only Catholics and highland Scots, but also nonjuring Episcopalians and old country Tories who saw in the modernity that came with 1689 and in the Whig corruption that followed a decaying of old hierarchies and values. That the vast majority of these families—in lowland Scotland and in England—never

took up with the young prince Charles as he marched into England as far as Derby does not change the fact that Jacobitism maintained itself as a powerful ideology well into the century. Dryden, Pope, Swift, Johnson: all have been described as Jacobites in some degree or other, though it seems unlikely that any of them would have actually wielded a sword in defense of the Pretender.[12] Scott, too, as a Tory and as a Scot, would have found an easy bridge to Jacobitism—though he had enough of the Whig and the enlightener in him to balance out the rebellious and nationalist sentiment that came with it.[13]

Scott's Jacobitism is a bit like his character Waverley's by the novel's end: it has been rendered safe by the distance between the '45 and Scott's present—as well as by his representation of it. Historians like Devine and Colley argue that Jacobitism was dying well before the last soldiers were "cut down" at Culloden in April 1746. "The reality was," says Devine, "that Jacobitism did not simply or suddenly die on the field of Culloden or in the immediate aftermath of the battle. The forces making for its decline and final extinction went much deeper than that" (47). The "centrality of trade" and a Protestant disdain for the French and for Catholics were just two of the bigger factors that hindered the Jacobite movement.[14] The Jacobites for the most part sought to go back; and to the people of Britain the century of Stuart rule that preceded their own must have looked like a morass of blood and confusion in comparison. The inertia that came from power abroad and growth at home, as well as the newer ideology of liberalism that served to underpin it, proved as formidable a foe to Jacobitism as Cumberland's army did on the field of Culloden.

Paradoxically, however, for the same reason that Jacobitism died a slow death in the first half of the eighteenth century, its ghosts have remained to haunt the island ever since. That there was no unified Jacobite movement and no coherent ideology may have led to its downfall—especially in a period of economic growth and comparative political stability. But as Paul Monod argues there were many movements that might be classed as "Jacobite." "Organized political movements," writes Monod, "are often studied through the history of institutions—clubs and associations, legislative bodies and trade unions." "Jacobitism," he continues, "cannot be examined in this light. It had no institutional existence, except at the Stuart court, which exercised only minimal control over its supporters" (95). Jacobitism exists into the present not as an institution, then, but as a critique of institutions—most notably, that institutional change called the "bloodless" Revolution. If Jacobitism failed to become the dominant military and

political voice of Britain it nevertheless maintained a hold on political institutions (and literature) because it was a place from which a critique could be waged against the government. As can be seen in its alliance with the nationalists, post-1707, and much like Marxism in Western societies today, Jacobitism remained a powerful ideology of critique even though its material bases of power (access to military, land, and money) disappeared.

Jacobitism, then, was about much more than military might. Though at base reactionary, it became—like Romanticism did later—a powerful position from which to critique the evils and corruptions of modernization. Indeed, as Monod concludes, "the rhetoric of the Stuart cause was flexible enough to absorb many of the 'progressive' currents of the eighteenth century …" (92). This, I would argue, is part of the legacy of Jacobitism that passed to Walter Scott—in addition to the military defeat at Culloden. A recent biographer remarks that "Scott found strong echoes of the present in the period of Britain's earlier civil wars. Both eras were marked by confusion, rebellion, and disorder" (Sutherland 226). Although Scott found 60 years sufficient time to reopen the history of the last Jacobite uprising, one wonders whether this other facet of Jacobitism—as critique, as a British cousin of the other nasty "ism" of the age, Jacobinism—was something that Scott wished to lay to rest? It was one thing for Jacobitism to be against 1689 or 1707. Like Hume or the young Waverley, there were many people—English and Scottish—who were sufficiently pleased with the current settlement and the resulting state of things. But when Jacobitism began to distance itself from its foundational opposition to 1689 and to become more a "myth of moral legitimation" than "an excuse for royal power," it became dangerous again—not as an attempt to go back, but as a new will to go forward, beyond 1688 (perhaps to 1789?).[15] At that point it needed to be contained all over again.

Jacobitism was a kind of culture in itself—non-institutional, critical, a position linked not to the present government but to the past. It represented a place outside the state but well within the nation. Clifford Siskin argues that "with its overlapping forms (political, social, religious) of coherence and difference within a United Kingdom, Jacobitism provided the eighteenth century with a paradigmatic experience of the hierarchical doubling that came to be called *culture*" (*Work* 85). This was fine when wielded by Tories like Pope or Johnson. But as opposition to the Revolution subsided and the claims of larger groups of people came to the forefront of critical attention, the oppositional voice of Jacobitism was liable to upset the very nation as it had defined itself throughout the

century.[16] Perhaps Scott found in the novel a proper institutional base for this ideology without a home? After all, better there than some other institution (as in, say, a National Assembly). To kill something off is to be haunted by its ghostly presence (*a la* the gothic). But to come to an arrangement, a compromise, is to render safe such a threat (*a la* the Act of Union)—to place it at a secure distance.

The Enlightenment response

No such arrangement was sought, though, by Scott's predecessors: the Edinburgh literati that have come to be classed under the term "Scottish Enlightenment." The term was first used by William Robert Scott in 1900 and later defined by Hugh Trevor-Roper as "that efflorescence of intellectual vitality that became obvious after the defeat of the last Jacobite rebellion in 1745."[17] Richard Sher marks the connection more definitively when he argues that the Jacobite challenge to the religious and political status quo "provided the first major opportunity for the moderate literati of Edinburgh to formulate in words and defend in deeds the principles of their emerging ideology."[18] Jacobitism and Enlightenment were closely tied—flip sides of an eighteenth-century Scottish coin, in some respects. But what came to be known as the Scottish Enlightenment was not so much an attempt to contain a Jacobite threat as it was to institute a competing ideology—a culture, in essence—that would render Jacobotism as dead ideologically as the English army had done militarily. Thus in a sense, Enlightenment in Scotland becomes everything that Jacobitism was not: institutional, pro-1688 and 1707, forward thinking, and non-violent. It is, in fact, many of these very features that serve to make the Scottish Enlightenment unique compared to the European Enlightenment more generally.

   For example, Enlightenment in Scotland emerged almost entirely from an institutional context. This would serve to differentiate it from England, as well, where many Enlightenment thinkers wrote from a dissenting background. "Unlike the position in France," writes Devine, "the Scottish philosophers faced no political constraints from the government of the *ancien regime*. The dominant figures in the Enlightenment were integral parts of the political establishment, virtually all whig Hanoverians who regarded Jacobitism as a deadly threat to Protestant liberties and freedoms" (81). With the important exception of David Hume, who could not gain a university chair because of his supposed atheism, nearly all of the Scottish Enlightenment figures were either university professors or high-ranking Kirk officials, or both. Francis Hutcheson

held the chair in moral philosophy at Glasgow University that Adam Smith would eventually fill in 1758. William Robertson was principal of Edinburgh University. Hugh Blair held the chair in Rhetoric and Belle-Lettres at Edinburgh University in 1760. The list goes on. As Sher explains,

> The Moderate Regime in Scotland rested upon a bifurcated institutional foundation. The kirk constituted one pillar of the moderate system; the University of Edinburgh, and to a lesser extent the other Scottish universities, constituted the other. At the center of it all stood the imposing figure of William Robertson, who used his office as principal of Edinburgh University as a power base for managing ecclesiastical as well as academic affairs. (147)

Though battles were waged within the institutions of the church and the university—and even, on occasion, against the government (as with opposition to the Militia Act of 1757)[19]—the fact that Robertson, Smith, Blair and others occupied such positions within the power structure rendered the resulting "Enlightenment" a much more conservative one than, say, occurred in France.

Conservative but not reactionary. The Scottish Enlightenment thinkers for the most part looked back no further than 1688—that is, to a settlement they wished to conserve and even to propagate. As Devine remarks, "to them, the Protestant Revolution of 1688–89 and the Union of 1707 had produced the ideal combination of liberty and order" (81). As much as the Jacobites despised the Glorious Revolution so the Scottish Enlightenment thinkers valorized it. In his sermon commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Revolution, William Robertson exclaims that the Settlement that followed no longer even needs proof or justification, but only celebration. "… [A]t this juncture," he says,

> when the happy experience of mild and equal government during a century, has induced our fellow subjects of all denominations to acquiesce in the Revolution establishment, when even those whose political and religious opinions were deemed most repugnant to it, now join with us [in] professing loyalty and offering up their prayers for a Sovereign whose title to the throne is founded on the maxims and principles which that event established, a formal vindication of what was undertaken and accomplished, can not be deemed necessary. (Robertson 176)

As a result of this, Robertson's sermon offers a recap, an aggrandized history of the peace and progress that have followed from 1688–89. Indeed, Robertson's sermon seems to correlate the Revolution and Settlement" with Enlightenment itself:

> The acquisition of those liberal sentiments was much facilitated by the labours of several learned and ingenious men, who investigated the principles of civil policy with freedom and discernment, and being now permitted to publish the result of their inquiries without disguise or restraint, they diffused the light of liberty and of truth through the nation. In consequence of this, every defect in the Constitution was observed, the proper remedys were discovered, and in each successive reign since the Revolution, something has been done to perfect or strengthen that fabrick towards the rearing of which the accumulated experience and wisdom of ages was required. (178–79)

Both Robertson and Hume had their histories of Scotland and England, respectively, culminate in 1688. Hume renamed his History of Britain *History of England.*

For ministers like Robertson and Blair—and contra Jacobite propaganda—1688 was a moment of moral regeneration, not degradation.[20] Scotland, too, they said, could reap the benefits of such a settlement, and could leave the dark ages of the past behind.[21] Indeed, argues Tom Nairn, "It was by no means the fact of union which had counted, but the fact that this unification had enabled Scots to benefit from the great revolution in the neighbour kingdom" (98). Looking toward England, the Scots saw a polite and refined society, one based on laws and commerce. Indeed, it was those conditions that followed from the Revolution that made Enlightenment possible; for as Hume remarks in his essay, "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences," "from law arises security: from security curiosity: and from curiosity knowledge" (Hume 63). That 1688 had disrupted the monarchical succession did not pose a problem for someone like Hume (nor did it for Robertson), especially considering the benefits that had accrued as a result. By the time Hume wrote the Hanoverian succession had itself become customary. "… [S]o long a possession," writes Hume, "secured by so many laws, must, ere this time, in the apprehension of a great part of the nation, have begot a title in the house of Hanover, independent of their present possession" (Hume 220). The Revolution and Settlement paved the way

for a society where inquiry was tolerated and where the arts could flourish—for Enlightenment, in other words.[22]

   This view was echoed in the first issue of the *Edinburgh Review*, published in 1755. The *Review*'s run was rather short: it extended only to two issues. Though in many ways a flawed and untimely project, the *Edinburgh Review* set out to highlight the rich literary culture of Scotland. Alexander Wedderburn, whom James Buchan describes as the "prime mover" of the journal, "… set out a unionist view of Scots history that has survived more or less intact to the present day" (97). In this view, the flourishing literary culture to be celebrated in the magazine is explicitly linked to 1688:

> At the Revolution, liberty was re-established, and property rendered secure; the uncertainty and rigor of the law were corrected and softened; but the violence of parties was scarce abated, nor had industry yet taken place. What the Revolution had begun, the Union rendered more compleat. The memory of our ancient state is not so much obliterated, but that, by comparing the past with the present, we may clearly see the superior advantages we now enjoy, and readily discern from what source they flow. The communication of trade has awakened industry; the equal administration of laws produced good manners; and the watchful care of government, seconded by the public spirit of some individuals, has excited, promoted and encouraged, a disposition to every species of improvement in the minds of people naturally active and intelligent.[23]

The modernity and cosmopolitan reach of eighteenth-century Scottish thought were in some senses obscured by the provincial focus of the *Review*. Curiously, Walter Scott's novels, so rooted in local Scottish culture, would have a terrific reception not only in England, but on the continent.

   The Scottish Enlightenment thinkers looked forward to a time when all of Scotland might catch up, as it were, with England; and to a more peaceful society—one rendered comfortable by commerce and refined by the arts. This vision was the very antithesis to the violence and disruption threatened by the Jacobites. Indeed, some of the very concepts that we attribute to the Enlightenment—concepts like civility and even literature—were conceived in opposition to Jacobitism, to violence, and to a highland society that seemed to exist a century behind the rest of the nation. As John Keane explains,

> the threat (and fear) of violence always seems to have been lurking behind the concern with civility. Uncivility was the ghost that

permanently haunted civil society. In this respect, civilization was normally understood as a project charged with resolving the permanent problem of discharging, defusing, and sublimating violence. (19)

Ferguson especially takes up this problem in the second part of his *Essay on the History of Civil Society*. Hume addresses it in his *History of England* and in several of his essays. For example, in "Of Commerce," Hume contrasts the ancient warrior state of Sparta (championed by Rousseau) with the more peaceful and commercial modern state of Britain.[24] The older society was based on force—the laborer was compelled to extract profit from the land. But the newer society uses desire to its advantage: the want of things—of "luxuries"—spurs the laborer where force was previously required:

> Thus the greatness of the sovereign and the happiness of the state are, in a great measure, united with regard to trade and manufactures. It is a violent method, and in most cases impracticable, to oblige the labourer to toil, in order to raise from the land more than what subsists himself and his family. Furnish him with manufactures and commodities, and he will do it for himself. (Hume 100)

Hume, and more famously, Adam Smith, envisioned a peaceful commercial society, one where arts and trade alike flourished. As Porter puts it, "the past had belonged to might; civilization must now look to mind, as swords were beaten into teaspoons" (201).

Toward a Modern Literature

But the Stuart past was not only associated with violence, not even in the minds of the Edinburgh literati. It was also associated with the arts—with the kind of flourishing literary scene that was thought to come with absolutist rule (as in the reign of Louis XIV, for example). Even in the eighteenth century, the Stuarts had their artists—or, at least, the artists had their bit of Jacobitism. Some of the names already mentioned—Dryden, Pope, Swift, Johnson—read like an anthology of eighteenth-century literature. But the writings of Dryden and Pope represented the antithesis to the modern, commercial society lionized by the Edinburgh literati. For example, in 1689 Gilbert Burnett asked Aphra Behn to write a poem for the coronation of William and Mary. Instead she wrote a poem to Burnett himself celebrating her refusal to write for William and her continued loyalty to James II. Interestingly, Behn calls the Revolution not "Glorious" but "unpresidented," and attributes its

unprecedented nature to the workings of the "Nobler Pen":

> Oh Strange Effect of a Seraphick Quill!
>   That can by unperceptable degrees
> Change every Notion, every Principle
>   To any Form, its Great Dictator please:
> The Sword a Feeble Pow'r compar'd to That[25]

Behn's poem attests to the fact that writing had become a powerful political tool in seventeenth-century England—that it helped to bring about an institutional change in English government.[26] For Behn, though, it is not art or what would come to be called Literature that had effected such a change. William's success, in part due to Burnett's writing, is associated with propaganda—a degraded form of writing even for a professional writer like Behn.[27] The implication is that in staying loyal to James, Behn stays loyal to "true" writing. In addition, this connection between James—or Jacobitism more generally—and "Literature" suggests that what was perhaps glorious for old England seems hardly to have been so for what we now call "English."

But this was not the case for the Scottish Enlightenment literati—who practically invented what we now call "English." Just as they had made a virtue out of professionalism and specialization, so they saw writing as a vital part of this modern, professional society. For one thing, and as Hume notes in his "Of the First Principles of Government," "as force is always on the side of the governed, the governors have nothing to support them but opinion. It is therefore on opinion only that government is founded" (16). Being on the side of those governing institutions, the Scottish literati used their talents to help sway opinion in their (the institutions') favor—and against, say, the cause of the Stuarts (and of force). As with many Enlightenment thinkers—in England (Godwin) and on the continent (Kant)—the Scottish philosophers saw writing as a tool for advancing not only opinion, but through it, civilization itself. This idea of the writer as thinker was one that the Scottish philosophers took to heart—perhaps even helped to invent.[28] Hume was in many respects the quintessential eighteenth-century man of letters. He wrote in a variety of genres: history, essay, system, biography. Much of his career, in fact, was spent rewriting his "failed" *Treatise of Human Nature*—of taking it out of its systematic form and republishing its findings in a series of enquiries and essays.

Like his contemporary, Samuel Johnson, Hume had reason to do this. For unlike his fellow philosophers, Hume did not have an institutional

source of income or power. He had to write for money. In this Hume was not characteristic of the Scottish Enlightenment thinkers. But what developed in the course of his literary career became a key characteristic of the Scottish Enlightenment more generally. I mean the institutionalization of writing. Hume could not use his power as minister or professor to disseminate his opinions (or to support himself). He turned instead to writing. As a result, he became a popular literary figure, and managed to use the press as Robertson used his pulpit. The Scottish philosophers themselves came more and more to rely on this, especially when fighting battles within the Kirk (over tolerance and church moneys, for example). They defeated institutional policies via their power as writers.[29] In several instances, for example, many of these institutionalized figures defended Hume's writings against charges of atheism. And they used Hume's weapon, print, to defeat other institutionally seated antagonists. What we find in the course of the mid- to late-eighteenth century is a group of institutionally powerful figures coming to rely more and more on writing rather than on the power their affiliations gave them. It is in this sense that the Scottish Enlightenment thinkers worked to institutionalize writing itself.

But the Scottish philosophers did not simply excel in the newly literary and professional genres of the eighteenth century—essay, system, etc.—and thus follow in the footsteps of the master of polite writing, Addison. They institutionalized writing in ways more specific than this. They took the great writing of the past and returned it as English Literature. As Robert Crawford puts it, provocatively, "the subject of English Literature was, ironically, a Scottish invention" (15).[30] Crawford and others argue that in eighteenth-century Scotland there was a drive to promote good English and to rid the language of "scotticisms." Scotland had excellent universities that prepared young men to work as lawyers, doctors, ministers, etc. But Scots were discriminated against in England because of the way they spoke and wrote. The study of great writers was supposed to provide fine examples of proper written and spoken English. In this way the project was not far off from Johnson's great *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755).[31] "Britishness," argues Crawford, was largely the responsibility of the Scots. In other words, it was up to them to fit in to this more "advanced" post-1688 society. In 1749, Adam Smith, who thought the study of literature would help to create moral citizens—indeed, to help counter the greed of an otherwise unfettered capitalism—introduced a series of lectures at Edinburgh University on Rhetoric and Belle-Lettres. After Smith left for the chair of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow University these lectures were carried on

by Robert Watson and later by Hugh Blair, for whom a chair in Rhetoric and Belles-Lettres was created in 1760.[32] As Franklin Court suggests, it was Adam Smith who first thought "that the study of the English language and its literature could be treated as an academic discipline …" (13).

The Scottish philosophers, then, institutionalized writing not only in the sense that they professionalized it and used it as a seat, so to speak, of power, but also in the sense that they rendered it a discipline—something with rules and conventions.[33] In doing the former they competed with the Jacobite ideology that was disseminated in various and multiple forms throughout the eighteenth century. But the Scottish philosophers did more than simply combat Jacobitism. They promoted a vision of tolerance within the church, commerce within society, and of a civilization that championed the arts and the politeness that followed from them. I said before that theirs was a forward-looking ideology, and in many respects it was (especially compared with Jacobitism). But it was also an ideology of the times: it was professionalism, disciplinarity—in short, it was liberalism, the theoretical underpinning to the more material world of commodities and capitalist profits that were unleashed with the relinquishing of government controls on trade in the late seventeenth century.

In doing the latter—in institutionalizing English Literature as a discipline—the Scottish philosophers also did more than rebut Jacobite opinion. They envisioned a Scottish professional class that could compete with any in Europe—and especially within Britain—and they made literature a corrective of sorts to the excessive greed and immoral practices that stemmed from the very commercial society most of them heartily embraced. But in a very roundabout way this too, perhaps, helped to rebut the Jacobite cause. For in institutionalizing and professionalizing the literature of the past—including, of course, examples from the century of Stuart rule—the Scottish philosophers came to their own settlement with Jacobite opinion. They made Behn's "true" writing true on their own terms. And they opened a space for genres like essay and, eventually, the novel—genres that blossomed in the wake of 1688—to find their place in that same institution. That this ideology of writing would become as powerful as any propagated under absolutism is clear from the direction literary study continued—and continues—to move in. As Court argues, this "institution" of literature

> gradually evolved into a recognizably hegemonic phenomenon that by the end of the nineteenth century combined, in its capacity as a cultural and political determining force, not only the controlling ideologies but also, as Louis Althusser suggests, the formal state

apparatus which made possible the transmission through time of those ideologies. (4)

One of the ways in which this institutionalization of the literary continued its course was through the canonization of the novel as a literary and a national form.

Scott's synthesis

Walter Scott introduces his first novel, *Waverley; or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since*, by highlighting a contemporary formal problem: that of mixing morals with amusement.

> Some favourable opportunities of contrast have been afforded me, by the state of society in the northern part of the island at the period of my history, and may serve at once to vary and to illustrate the moral lessons which I would willingly consider as the most important part of my plan, although I am sensible how short these will fail of their aim, if I shall be found unable to mix them with amusement,—a task not quite so easy in this critical generation as it was "Sixty Years since." (5)

The political problem of bringing to life the painful episode of the '45 is for the most part passed over. In fact, it is the Jacobite struggle that will serve as a vehicle to illustrate those moral lessons Scott describes. That is, Jacobitism will provide the amusement. That the Jacobite uprising against the government could be rendered a vehicle for moral instruction as well as a kind of amusement in itself is an interesting story, one that suggests a political and a formal trajectory from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century. It suggests a synthesis of the Enlightenment–Jacobitism dialectic that would have been unthinkable sixty years since.

Connections between Scott and his Enlightenment forbears are not new. The connections posited here between Enlightenment, Jacobitism, and the historical novel are not simply an attempt to add something to this list of connections. As with Robison, they argue a connection between Scotland and British Romanticism.

That the Scottish Enlightenment philosophers instituted what we now call English Literature does not mean that they were uninterested in promoting a Scottish literature. That they were anti-Jacobite does not mean that they lacked a sense of national pride—and even a competitive spirit. For example, in pushing for their friend John Home's *Douglas* to be staged in Edinburgh the Enlightenment literati argued for a national

theater where a Scottish Shakespeare might find an audience.[34] In the first issue of the *Edinburgh Review*, published in 1755 by Adam Smith, Hugh Blair, William Robertson, and others, editor Alexander Wedderburn exclaimed that "… all obstacles to a Scottish literary revival had since been removed," and referred to the improvements in industry, government and manners that followed from 1688 and 1707.[35] It was the Enlightenment literati, as Richard Sher and Katie Trumpener point out, who pushed James Macpherson to publish his Ossian poems.[36] Not only did they "… [hail] the first translations as a great, lost patrimony," writes Trumpener, but "their financial support for Macpherson's tours through the Highlands to gather further materials amounted … to a virtual commissioning of the *Poems of Ossian*" (75).[37] In these "translations" from Gaelic myth, the Scottish philosophers found an embodiment of martial valor and melancholy sentiment—an identity they wished to assert in the form of a national literary culture as well as in their drive for a Scots militia.

Walter Scott continued for a time in this spirit with his collection of Scottish ballads, the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802–03), and with his longer narrative poems like *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805). But in giving back to English Literature a modern Scottish contribution, Scott was more like the Scottish historians, Robertson and Hume, in that he rewrote history from an effectively British perspective—one that centered on 1688. As Colin Kidd remarks of Robertson, Hume, and the philosophical historians, "despite recognition of their distinct North British personality, Scotland's modern Whig historians adopted an Anglo-British institutional identity" (99). Scott did likewise—and in doing so he transformed both history and the novel, making each, in a sense, a post-1689 British institution.

The history of the historical novel begins with 1688 and follows a dialectical path through Jacobitism, Enlightenment, and their synthesis in Scott's historical romances.[38] Indeed, in Scott's fiction we see the dialectical other of Enlightenment—Jacobitism—re-emerge not as a violent threat or even as a critique of 1688, but rather as a tool for continuing the institutionalization of Britishness. In other words, as a vehicle for promoting the very thing it once aimed to destroy.

That Scott could create a model of assimilation that worked for the novel and for the nation is a point that has less to do with his greatness as a writer and more to do with the case of Scotland more generally and the case of the Scottish Enlightenment more particularly. As Trumpener argues,

> The artist appears here as a figure between and beyond class categories, an embodiment of tradition who must use his repertoire of consonances

and dissonances to create a social order even as he creates and performs his own works. Scott's formulation at once insists on the social meaning of art and on the social autonomy of the artist, suggesting that his social (and economic) dislocation is a precondition for his indispensable role in guaranteeing social (and economic) stability. (124)

That these "dissonances" that Scott harmonized remain pressing and potentially disruptive seems evident given Scotland's—indeed, Britain's—political present.[39] A parliament sits in Edinburgh—the result of devolution—for the first time since 1707. Independence is a real possibility (though certainly no forgone conclusion). Even the monarchy itself is under fire, with a recent issue of *The Guardian* devoted to the question of whether the succession laws of 1689/1701 are consistent with new European human rights laws.[40]

To conclude, where Lukacs sees in Scott the beginning of something (the historical novel), I am more interested in positing a kind of end in his novels. Scott's novels represent the end of a political and a formal process in eighteenth-century Britain. Historically speaking, Scott follows the Enlightenment literati in developing a realistic stance on 1688. But while his ends are similar, his means differ both formally and ideologically. As Sher explains, Scott's work does not mark a "decline" of Enlightenment culture but rather a "reorientation" (308). Unlike his contemporary Godwin, however, Scott succeeds in assimilating the past. As discussed in Chapter 5, this is in part due to the kind of Enlightenment he followed from. For in essence, the Scottish Enlightenment philosophers—contra Jacobitism—took a quintessentially English Revolution and made it British. Scott, almost ironically in line with this logic, takes a quintessentially Scottish ideology—Jacobitism—and fashions the English novel. In the next chapter I turn to the specifics of the process and show how this dialectical transformation of Jacobitism into Enlightenment is indicative of a larger process in Scott's fiction—one that helped him not only to assume a place in the emerging canon of the novel, but to help shape that emerging canon. Where Godwin's generic "reorientation" fails to overcome the problems that plagued his philosophy Scott succeeds in (1) creating characters who transcend the violence of history; and (2) in subordinating the political import of the novel to the cultural progress of the nation. Like Wordsworth's lyrical ballads, Scott's historical romances mimic the Revolution and Settlement of 1688–89.

5

Bloodless Revolution and the Form of the Novel

> Perhaps no important revolution was ever bloodless
>
> William Godwin, *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*

Romantic novels

In synthesizing the Jacobite—Enlightenment dialectic in his historical fiction Walter Scott did more than just render amusing a particularly painful historical episode. His synthesis helped to solidify the novel as a literary and a national form. In this, Scott seems to have succeeded where Godwin failed. In this chapter I present these two writers side-by-side and compare the sense of history and Enlightenment implicit in their fictions.

A recent special issue of *Novel: a Forum on Fiction* (Spring 2001) takes up the question of the Romantic novel. What was it? What is it now? Why was it so violent? I want to follow up such questions by attending to the work of two writers who feature prominently in the issue: Walter Scott and William Godwin. Specifically, I want to look at how each writer represents the relationship between individuals and historical violence and how this representation helped to define the novel in the Romantic period.

In his answer to the question "What is a Romantic Novel?" Robert Miles argues that it is a novel that highlights the ideological fissures of a nation defining itself on the brink of revolution—"philosophical romance," he calls it (Miles 191). Thus Godwin, as a writer of philosophical romances, is a—perhaps *the*—Romantic novelist. But being classified as a Romantic novelist has not always served Godwin's reputation as a fiction writer; for Miles explains that the Romantic novel has been a

"source of embarrassment" for its critics almost since the time it emerged (185). This is because the Romantic novels of Godwin and others have not appeared to fit traditional rise-of-the-novel scenarios that culminate with Jane Austen uniting the omniscient narration of Fielding with the subjective ethos of Richardson. This is also because of the "anti-philosophical romances" penned by Godwin's contemporary, Walter Scott, who "… subordinates the methods of philosophical romance to the purposes of nationalist ideology" (Miles 194).[1] The ideological fissures that remain open in Godwin are closed in Scott. And this, as the story goes, has been to the benefit of the novel and the nation.

Yet these openings in Godwin's fiction reveal what much of the literature of the Romantic period had to confront: what in this chapter I refer to as the problem of political violence.[2] To write novels in a nation poised on the brink of revolution is almost necessarily to engage the problem of violence. Following the outbreak of revolution in France and especially the escalation of violence in late 1792 and 1793 there was a real fear of revolutionary violence in England. This fear manifested itself in the "gagging" acts of 1795, the suspension of *habeas corpus* twice between 1794 and 1801, and the treason trials of 1794. It can be seen in the increasingly anti-Jacobin press that continued the Pitt program of censorship by other means as well as in the so-called "church-and-king" mobs such as the one that destroyed Joseph Priestley's house and library in 1791. Such fear is evident, too, in the literature of the period. In Book seven of *The Prelude*, for example Wordsworth is shaken from his passive musings on a London beggar by the thought of mass violence:

> What say you then
> To times when half the City shall break out
> Full of one passion, vengeance, rage, or fear,
> To executions, to a Street on fire,
> Mobs, riots, or rejoicings? (1805 ll. 645–49)

Wordsworth's solution to the problem is to see the parts "… but with a feeling of the whole" (1805 l. 713)—that is, to retreat in language and image to an abstracted sense of "the people," one in which he can posit "Composure and ennobling harmony" (1805 l. 741).[3]

These arresting images of violence also occupy the novels of the period. As in the Wordsworth example, the formal problem of how to represent violence is often tied up with the national problem of how to avoid it.[4] In tellingly different ways, the novels of Godwin and Scott exhibit real concern over the problem of violence that plagued Britain

in the Romantic period. Each writer employs what Ian Duncan has described as a typically Gothic strategy and displaces the threat of violence to the historical past (Duncan 24). The period that each writer displaces that threat to, however, is different. Godwin looks to the revolutionary upheavals of the 1640s. Scott repeatedly turns to the "bloodless" Revolution of 1688 and its aftermath. This difference in turn conditions the kind of resolution each writer achieves regarding the problem of political violence.

   To keep Miles's terms, in Godwin the problem of political violence remains "open." Scott comes much closer to achieving closure. Scott's works are more successful as novels and as nation-builders because they continue and in some ways recast a certain eighteenth-century reading of the "bloodless" Revolution of 1688, one that staves off the threat of civil war while maintaining the illusion of progressive popular change. Godwin's writing, which is more explicitly engaged with the problem of violence, rehearses a different reading of 1688. For Godwin, the path of progress leads directly through the problem of political violence—not, as in the case of Scott, away from it. This rendering shifts the focus away from the 1680s and back to the 1640s. Godwin questions the progress of the nation in terms of the violent marks left on real individuals. Scott on the other hand shows how individuals transcend the violence of history precisely through coming together as a nation, as a people. His "anti-philosophical romances" address political violence as a historical *and* a literary problem. In addition, they are rooted in a particular historical solution: for it was precisely the violence of the 1640s that 1688 was meant to close off.[5]

A picture marred by violence

I say that Godwin's writing was more explicitly engaged with the problem of violence for two reasons. First, while his philosophy promoted the "dissolution" of government, Godwin argued from the start that this should be a gradual and non-violent process. "The great cause of humanity," he writes in his *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793), "… has but two enemies; those friends of antiquity, and those of innovation, who, impatient of suspense, are inclined violently to interrupt the calm, incessant, the rapid and auspicious progress which thought and reflection appear to be making in the world" (*Enquiry* 261). The "friends of antiquity" would be an obvious target for the left following Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. But as the

progenitor of the "new" philosophy, Godwin was considered by many to be the most infamous of the "friends of innovation." So how is it that they too figure in his attack? Like Burke, and for some of the same reasons, Godwin had his problems with the friends of innovation. To Godwin, these "friends" were associated with collective rather than individual action. And collective action was associated with violence. In a chapter of the *Enquiry* entitled "Of Political Associations," for example, Godwin compares organizations like the London Corresponding Society to the government—in terms of ignorance and propensity to violence.[6]

In the two major revisions that Godwin made to the *Enquiry*—in 1796 and 1798—he took great pains to emphasize that his was a gradualist, non-violent model for change. He did this because of the second reason his writing was more explicitly engaged with the problem of violence: nobody believed him. While Whiggish radicals like the young Wordsworth hailed the political import of the *Enquiry*, reviewers saw it as a piece of French systematizing—and often as a potentially violent act in itself.[7] T.J. Mathias refers to the "cold-blooded" indifference of Godwin's new philosophy, and says "I looked indeed for a superstructure raised on the revolutionary ground of equality, watered with blood from the guillotine; and such I found it" (Mathias 32). The attacks continued even after Godwin "uniformly declared" himself "the enemy to revolutions."[8] Then he was simply forgotten.[9] "No one thinks it worth his while even to traduce or vilify him," reports Hazlitt in 1825 (17).

In addition to the revisions to the *Enquiry*, Godwin experimented with other genres as a means for communicating his political principles. Some of these principles themselves changed in the process. In the Preface to *St Leon*, Godwin expostulates upon his turn from a politics based on public discussion to one based on private affections:

> for more than four years, I have been anxious for opportunity and leisure to modify some of the earlier chapters of [*The Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*] in conformity to the sentiments inculcated in this. Not that I see cause to make any change respecting the principle of justice, or anything else fundamental to the system there delivered; but that I apprehend domestic and private affections inseparable from the nature of man, and from what may be styled the culture of the heart, and am fully persuaded that they are not incompatible with a profound and active sense of justice in the mind of him that cherishes them. (xxxiii–xxxiv)

In his non-fictional writing Godwin casts this transition from public to private in terms of a move away from French Revolutionary principles—principles which had by this time taken on the "[savour] of barbarism" (*Enquirer* 78). The Preface to *St. Leon* makes explicit the fictional connection to the failure of Godwin's gradualist system and his move toward a more individualist, less public-oriented kind of writing.

But if Godwin could not ultimately rid his philosophy of its violent connotations neither could he write it out of his fiction. As discussed in Chapter 3, there is a striking passage in *Caleb Williams* (1794) that attests to this. Just prior to sending off an account of his story Caleb stops to ponder the contents of Falkland's trunk. It was his curiosity over the contents and the potential clue they might provide about Falkland's role in Tyrrel's murder that got him into trouble with Falkland in the first place. But Caleb has changed his mind about what is contained in the trunk:

> The contents of that fatal trunk, from which all my misfortunes originated, I have never been able to ascertain. I once though it contained some murderous instrument or relic connected with the fate of the unhappy Tyrrel. I am now persuaded that the secret it encloses is a faithful narrative of that and its concomitant transactions, written by Mr Falkland and reserved in case of the worst (326)

What was thought to contain a "murderous implement" turns out to contain a written narrative. This move from a dagger to a text is telling: for it is precisely the move to writing and discussion that Godwin endorses in his *Enquiry*.[10] What is significant, however, is that this move leads Caleb to the same act as Falkland—namely, murder. In the revised ending to the novel it is Caleb's "faithful narrative" that succeeds in killing Falkland. "I have been his murderer" (336), he concludes.

Godwin's *Mandeville* (1816) is even more direct in highlighting the failure of the individual to rise above the violence of history. *Mandeville* tells the story of a man born into violence and confusion amid the rebellion of Irish Catholic landowners in 1641. It follows him through the English civil wars, where he makes a decision that brands him a traitor and a coward (he is suspected of betraying the Royalist cause) and that alienates him from society. In his isolation, Mandeville gives way to extremism and to the very violence that he was born into. "I shrank from no violence," he explains, "I was willing to engage in the widest scene of blood and devastation ..." (321). In a duel with his lifelong nemesis, Clifford, Mandeville receives a Cain-like mark that makes

explicit his failure to rise above his historical circumstances:

> I had received a deep and perilous gash, the broad brand of which
> I shall not fail to carry with me to my grave. … My wound is of that
> sort, which in the French civil wars got the name *une balafre*. I have
> pleased myself, in the fury and the bitterness of my soul, with tracing
> the whole force of that word. It is *Cicatrix luculenta*, a glazed, or shining
> scar, like the effect of a streak or varnish upon a picture. (325)

Clifford's sword gives to Mandeville a perpetual grimace; it makes him
less a misanthropic Gulliver, which he has been throughout the novel,
and more a yahoo of sorts—a beast. As in *Caleb Williams*, the "knowledge
of past violence" becomes for Mandeville "a source of criminal guilt"
(Clemit 101). It tarnishes the picture painted: by the conniving lawyer
Holloway, by Mandeville, by Godwin himself.

   A comparison with Scott's fiction is telling. Scott's narratives, too,
are peopled by men that have ended up on the wrong side and that have
witnessed scenes of intense violence. Yet unlike Caleb and Mandeville
these men transcend their violent circumstances. In Godwin's fiction
these circumstances haunt the text and inhibit closure. In Scott, they are
sublimated in an overarching narrative of progress. Edward Waverley,
for example, is a character who vacillates between competing positions.
His uncle, Everard, to whom Edward is heir presumptive, is an old Jacobite,
suspected in 1715 of shipping arms to the rebels and imprisoned in 1745
because of Edward's defection to the cause. His father, Richard, who
could not survive so easily on such principles, is "an avowed whig, and
friend of the Hanover succession" (*Waverley* 6). Waverley's education
is forged in the loose space between these two positions, a process
that leads not so much to a balanced view as to a lack of discipline and
a penchant for flights of fancy.

   Romantically inclined and with a new post in the Hanoverian army,
Edward heads off to Scotland. It is there where his romantic bent meets
the greater forces of history; and it is there where Edward receives his
true education. Where at first he projects himself onto the barren land-
scape of the Scottish Highlands he is later forced to confront the reality
behind his romantic fixations. From Flora Mac-Ivor to Rose Bradwardine;
from Vich Ian Vohr to Colonel Talbot; and from the romantic cause
of the Pretender to the more realistic and common-sensical one of
the House of Hanover: in all of these we see what Waverley himself
comes to understand near the end of the novel—namely, "that the
romance of his life was ended, and that its real history had now

commenced" (283). History, for Waverley, occasions a romance; it provides him with a field on which to act a great part, like the heroes of old sung in the poems so loved by Flora. But while occasioning a romance it concludes much more reasonably: "a sadder and a wiser man" quips the narrator about Waverley, using Coleridge's description of the wedding guest upon hearing the Mariner's tale.

As things turn out reasonably well for Waverley, the description of his being sadder and wiser should be regarded as borrowed finery. In his acceptance of the Revolution and Settlement of 1688–89 and all it means for Scotland, Waverly may be accorded the status of "wiser." But he is hardly sadder. Waverley seems downright upbeat compared to the dour disposition he holds at the novel's start—or compared to Flora Mac-Ivor. Unlike Godwin's protagonists or Coleridge's Mariner, and unlike Fergus Mac-Ivor, Waverley does not finally have to choose one thing or another. In fact, it is his initial choice to side unequivocally with the Jacobites that leads him into trouble. Rather, Waverley finds a way to exist between extremes. His resulting stance can be compared to Tully-Veolan, the Bradwardine estate that Waverley purchases at the end of the novel. Tully-Veolan sits on the border between the Highlands and lowland Scotland, between primitivism and modernity, and between Romanticism and Enlightenment. Waverley finds a place between those poles that had initially led him to the flimsiness of fancy. His romantic disposition has been taken up and transformed into something more complex as well as more solid—for example, property.

Like Scott, who was a Scottish Tory, Waverley finds a way to negotiate a place between two seemingly opposite positions. This may sound like good old-fashioned English common sense. But it is more than this. Waverley's negotiation resembles the Revolutionary Settlement of 1689 which subordinated the monarchy to the parliament and the Act of Union of 1707 which made Scotland part of the United Kingdom while allowing it to retain some of its national institutions. Pardoned by the English government, Waverley is free to enjoy his love of things Scottish: songs, arms, relics, dress. He is even given a financial responsibility for the Mac-Ivor clan upon Fergus' execution by the British government. Yet he does this while upholding the English Constitution. Whereas at first the Highland culture spurs a romantic disposition, by the end the result is a politically enlightened one. The question is, how? What happens that allows for Waverley to be enlightened while his fellow Jacobites are being executed, or while Godwin's characters are struggling unsuccessfully to rise above the violence into which history has cast them?

One answer to the question is that in Scott's novels a separation is maintained between the political and the cultural.[11] Waverley learns to separate these two in a way that Caleb Williams never does. Of course, Scott's political motives were in many ways different from Godwin's. In a letter to Benjamin Robert Hayden, for example, Scott includes along with his contribution of £10 to Godwin's relief fund the following remark: "I should not wish my name to be made public as a subscriber (supposing publicity to be given to the matter at all), because I dissent from Mr. Godwin's theory of politics and morality as sincerely as I admire his genius, and it would be indelicate to attempt to draw such a distinction in the mode of subscribing" (October 1822). What is interesting in addition to Scott's contribution is that he believes it possible—though indelicate—to make a distinction between Godwin's genius and his politics.

There are several instances in *Waverley* where Scott's genius for avoiding messy political situations is evident. Consider the following passage: "Waverly riding post, as was the usual fashion of the period, without any adventure, save one or two queries, which the talisman of his passport sufficiently answered, reached the borders of Scotland. Here he heard the decisive battle of Culloden. It was no more than he had long expected ..." (293). Waverley always remains just outside the fray, an observer rather than a fighter. Instead of killing anyone on the field of battle Waverley acts to save the English Colonel Talbot. Just as he is not called upon to help decide important matters of strategy and battle, so he is not called upon in the end to pay for how such matters have played out. But Scott's readers knew what happened at Culloden. As the story becomes more about Waverley's individual character and less about the historical setting, the Jacobite uprising is rendered less central to the plot. Edward passes through the rebellion and so do we. There is no need to attend to the gruesome details of what happened next.

In fact, while the Duke of Cumberland—also known as "the butcher"—is decimating the Highlands lest such an uprising ever happen again, Waverly is showing off his newly mounted arms and a portrait of himself with friend Fergus in full Highland regalia:

> It was a large and spirited painting, representing Fergus Mac-Ivor and Waverley in their Highland dress, the scene a wild, rocky, and mountainous pass, down which the clan were descending in the background. ... Raeburn himself (whose Highland Chiefs do all but walk out of the canvas) could not have done more justice to the subject; and the ardent, fiery, and impetuous character of the unfortunate

Chief of Glennaquoich was finely contrasted with the contemplative, fanciful, and enthusiastic expression of his happier friend. Beside this painting hung the arms which Waverley had borne in the unfortunate civil war. The whole piece was generally admired. (338)

Compare this description with the one from *Mandeville*. Mandeville's face wears the scar of the Catholic uprising of 1641 (Clifford, the one who leaves the scar, is a converted Catholic). This mark is compared to "a streak or varnish upon a picture." The violence of history mars the portrait; it is a defect even though it is also an outward sign of Mandeville's inner turmoil—his own propensity to violence. But with Waverley it is otherwise. The picture of him posing in Highland dress with a ferocious chieftain and complemented by the very arms he used against his government is offered as a work of "genius"; it is "spirited" and "generally admired." At the novel's start, Waverley admires the curious picture of the northern people—specifically, Evan Dhu—and is led off upon a journey that culminates in his taking up arms against the government. By the novel's end, Waverley himself is in the picture where Evan Dhu should be standing. But it is only a picture, a "romantic" work. Evan and Fergus die offstage. Culloden happens while Edward settles down to the domestic life that Scott's historical romance has taught him, and presumably us, to desire.

   In Scott's text violence does not serve to mar the picture but rather to heighten its charm. This is because the violence of Fergus, of Jacobitism, is kept at a distance—"sixty years since." The act of writing itself helps to effect this distance between the violent and the domestic, the political and the cultural. Again, consider the following passage:

The impression of horror with which Waverley left Carlisle, softened by degrees into melancholy, a gradation which was accelerated by the painful, yet soothing, task of writing to Rose; and, while he could not suppress his own feelings of the calamity, by endeavoring to place it in a light which might grieve her, without shocking her imagination. The picture which he drew for her benefit he gradually familiarized to his own mind, and his next letters were more cheerful, and referred to the prospects of peace and happiness which lay before them. (328)

A sadder and a wiser man indeed! The process that is invoked here is the same as that of the picture adorning Waverley's wall. A painful and violent experience is mollified and familiarized by the act of representation. Is this not what Scott is doing for his readers and for himself? In the

Preface to *Caleb Williams*, Godwin explains that "the spirit and charac-
ter of the government intrudes itself into every rank of society" and that
his novel is to be a "vehicle" to teach this "valuable lesson" (*Caleb
Williams* 3).[12] Scott's *Waverley*, in comparison, might be understood as a
vehicle to do the opposite. That is, in *Waverley*, Scott's narrative works to
assimilate such spirit and character so that the insinuations of govern-
ment will not seem so intrusive.

That the state eliminated the Jacobite threat via the very same
violence initiated by the Jacobites is not a question Scott would have us
ask. There are good reasons for this. The violence of the uprising can be
represented because the actual Jacobite threat to the state has been
quashed. But the Hanoverian state must be presented as a progressive
and civil alternative to Jacobite violence—especially because the stabil-
ity of this state itself relies upon the threat of violence. Cumberland's
victory was exceedingly violent. But the victory insured that there
would be no future Jacobite threat. In brushing history "against the
grain," like Walter Benjamin's historical materialist, we can see not only
that Scott left Culloden out of *Waverley*'s story but that this absence
becomes the very condition for the production of the portrait and of the
romance itself.[13] The absence of this violence from the text does not sig-
nify that it never happened. Rather, it signifies that violence against the
state is no longer a present threat—and in addition, that the state can
deal with such uprisings when it has cause.[14] The victory at Culloden is
thus absolutely crucial for establishing the distance necessary for making
the Jacobite threat safe for cultural consumption.

Indeed, in the non-fictional world of early-nineteenth-century
Britain, Scott showed himself to be a proponent of the necessity for state
violence. Following the Peterloo massacre of 1819, for example, in
which at least six demonstrators were killed and hundreds injured by
British troops upon St. Peter's Field in Manchester, Scott wrote "anxious,
angry, and even threatening" letters to the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal*.
"These letters," says James Chandler, "supported the decision of the
Manchester magistrates who ordered the dispersal of the August demon-
stration and urged the British government to hold the line against the
activities of the Reformers" (342–43). John Sutherland remarks that
"excessive and bloodthirsty reaction to any sign of popular uprising was
to be a regular feature of Scott's politics" (50). Perhaps there is a delicate
distinction between how violence is to be represented and how it is to
be really used to uphold the state. As with his contribution to Godwin's
relief fund, though, Scott seems perfectly willing to assume this distinction
without highlighting it in his narrative.

Enlightenments

It is strange to think that in *Mandeville* Godwin tried to imitate Scott.[15] But as William St. Clair notes, the "historical romance" was "a genre in which Godwin regarded himself as an earlier master" (395). In fact, Godwin was for a short time suspected of having written *Waverley*.[16]

As I have tried to suggest, however, while both Godwin and Scott mix the historical and the fictional in ways that have come to define the historical novel, the formal resolutions that emerge in *Waverley* and *Mandeville* could not be more different. The theoretical underpinnings to these differences can be glimpsed in two essays: Godwin's "Of History and Romance," written in 1797, and Scott's *Essay on Romance*, written for the *Encyclopedia Britannica* in 1824. Scott claims that "the progress of romance … keeps pace with that of society" (134). His comment implicitly privileges society by making it that which romance has to keep up with. But while romance is given the posterior position in the equation this does not mean that its role is passive—that it merely reflects society. The role of romance is to assimilate the "progress" of society by naturalizing history via a certain kind of historicism. Romance for Scott helps not so much in understanding history as in accepting it. Scott's romances serve what we might call the Burkean end of making the nation lovely: they do not challenge the national institutions but rather accouter them in the generic clothing of romance.

In "Of History and Romance," though, the relation between history and romance is represented in another way. Godwin stresses an approach to history that aims to "understand the machine of society, and to direct it to its best purposes" (362). The relation here seems initially to privilege society as the machine that needs to be understood. But the essay makes clear that for Godwin, romance occupies the loftier position in the hierarchy. Romance is cast as a kind of political institution, one that will eventually *direct* society. This is not far from the rationalist motivations expressed and repeatedly revised in Godwin's *Enquiry*. But Godwin gives this motivation an alternative means in romance, one more in keeping with the individualist foundations that seemed to be obscured in his systematic philosophy precisely by the violence associated with political institutions.

Implicit in Godwin's privileging of romance over history is a kind of historicism that is directly opposed to Scott's. Scott's historicism accepts the present state of society as a given. Its premise is "things as they are." Godwin's historicism aims to redirect these things. There are two remarks in particular that underscore this difference. The first is Godwin's descant

against the "abstractions" of historians who chart the "progress and varieties of civilization" rather than "the varying character of individuals" ("Of History and Romance" 360). As Jon Klancher explains, Godwin is writing against those precursors of Scott, the "philosophical historians" of the Scottish Enlightenment. Philosophical historians regard history "in a mass," says Godwin, and thus lose its true import: the effects produced by history on individuals. The second remark is closely related to the first:

> The period of the Stuarts is the only portion of our history interesting to the heart of man. Yet its noblest virtues are obscured by the vile jargon of fanaticism and hypocrisy. From the moment that the grand contest excited under the Stuarts was quieted by the Revolution, our history assumes its most insipid and insufferable form. (367)

Both post-1688 history and the "philosophical" historicism used to justify it are regarded as "insipid" and "insufferable."

At first glance it would seem that Scotland is a strange place to look for justifications for post-1688 history. As historians from the eighteenth-century to the present have pointed out, the events of 1688–89 were far from bloodless in places like Scotland and Ireland.[17] Godwin himself makes this point in his *Enquiry*:

> If we look at the revolution strictly so called, we are apt to congratu-late ourselves that the advantages it procured, to whatever they amount, were purchased by a cheap and bloodless victory. But if we would make a solid estimate, we must recollect it as the procuring cause of two general wars, of nine years under king William, and twelve under queen Anne; and two intestine rebellions (events worthy of execration, if we call to mind the gallant spirit and generous fidelity of the Jacobites, and their miserable end) in 1715 and 1745. (271)

On the other hand, it is often those who are the latest to conform that are the most defensive. Compare Waverley's thoughts about the Settlement:

> Since [1689], four monarchs had reigned in peace and glory over Britain, sustaining and exalting the character of the nation abroad, and its liberties at home. Reason asked, was it worthwhile to disturb a government so long settled and established, and to plunge the kingdom into all the miseries of civil war, to replace upon the throne the descen-dants of a monarch by whom it had been willfully forfeited? (140–41)

As with Godwin and Scott's conceptions of romance, we see in these examples different stances on society. Godwin *questions* the legitimacy of the Settlement not on the grounds of its having displaced the rightful monarch but on the grounds of what followed from it: violence and war. Scott's Waverley *accepts* the Settlement on the grounds of what followed: peace and stability. "Reason" itself, says Waverley, would stop one from thinking any other way.

This "reason" in large part comes from the Scottish Enlightenment thinkers that preceded Scott—particularly David Hume and William Robertson. The so-called "moderate literati of Edinburgh" saw post-1688 Britain as a peaceful, commercial, and civilized society.[18] Contrary to the Jacobites, who argued and fought for a Stuart restoration, the Scottish Enlightenment thinkers portrayed seventeenth-century Scotland as violent, wayward, and thankfully cut off from the civilized present by the Settlement of 1689 and Union of 1707. As T.M. Devine notes, Robertson "dismissed the Scottish past before the Revolution of 1688 as a dark story of anarchy, barbarism and religious fanaticism, and his scathing critique was repeated many times over in the volumes of other writers of less renown" (29). The Settlement and Union afforded Scotland the opportunity to assimilate the values of a post-revolutionary society and in turn to assimilate into the economic and political advantages that followed from the Revolution in England.

Where seventeenth-century English writers debated the validity of William's claim to the throne and whether or not this compromised the integrity of the constitution, Scottish Enlightenment writers like Robertson and Hume stressed the positive advantages secured by the Revolution. In his short essay "On the Protestant Succession," Hume, sounding a little like Waverley, asks,

> What wise man, to avoid this inconvenience [of a disputed title], would run directly upon a civil war and rebellion? Not to mention, that so long possession, secured by so many laws, must, ere this time, have begot a title in the house of Hanover, independent of their present possession: So that now we should not, even by a revolution, obtain the end of avoiding a disputed title. (220)

For Hume the Hanoverian succession has become part of things as they are; it has become customary, second nature. The effect of the revolution for Hume and for Waverley seems to be that it staves off the need for revolution and leaves room for nothing but acceptance. As I noted

earlier, twentieth-century historian G.M. Trevelyan argued that "[t]he true 'glory' of the Revolution lies not in the minimum of violence which was necessary for its success, but in the way of escape from violence which the Revolution Settlement found for future generations of Englishmen" (4). If future generations of "Englishmen" found in 1688 an "escape from violence" this was in large part through the historical and theoretical lens of the Scottish Enlightenment literati and later, Burke and Scott. It is in this sense that Hume, Robertson, and their contemporaries helped to justify the Revolution and Settlement to Scotland, and equally importantly, to Britain as a whole.

Against these abstractions and justifications Godwin pits the more individualistically grounded romance. Yet in doing so he does not make that typically Romantic gesture against Enlightenment itself—a move seen, for example, in Wordsworth's line "we murder to dissect" or Blake's negative alignment of angels and reason in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. Godwin gestures against a certain *kind* of Enlightenment. He does this from his own, different Enlightenment tradition—a tradition more in keeping with the radical possibilities of reason which were often toned down or altogether ignored in the writings of the philosophical historians. To put it in an overly schematic way, Godwin follows an English, roughly Lockean version of Enlightenment from the Stuart to the Romantic period while detouring through French thinkers like Holbach. Scott, as I've suggested, follows the Scottish Enlightenment thinkers while detouring through Burke's *Reflections*. These "Enlightenments" comprise variant responses to the problem of political violence in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In being generically recast in the Romantic period these responses in turn helped to shape the novel.

Much of the recent work in the period has looked to situate Enlightenment in its British contexts. Roy Porter's *Britain and the Creation of the Modern World*, for example, claims that Enlightenment began in Britain. Porter claims this despite the fact that England did not have its own bloody revolution. The fact that England's revolution was bloodless implicitly grounds his claim that Enlightenment in Britain differed in significant ways from Enlightenment in France. But as I discussed in chapter 5. Enlightenment in Britain was not always and everywhere the same thing. As we've seen, this had much to do with the ways in which the "bloodless" revolution was received in the eighteenth century. For Porter, it is John Locke who is "crucial to the repertoire of the British Enlightenment" (70). But this is to focus on only one of several British Enlightenments. Locke's epistemology and politics are "crucial" to the

radical and mostly English dissenting tradition that Godwin comes from. Indeed, epistemology and politics are intimately connected in this tradition. But this is not the case with the philosophical historians; nor is it the case for Edmund Burke. Hume may have followed Locke's epistemology just as Burke drew on Locke's theory of sensation. But Locke's political theory appealed more to those "political men of letters" that Burke wrote against.

Locke's *Second Treatise of Government* eventually came to be read as a theoretical justification of 1688. But it was hardly read that way in the eighteenth century.[19] As Richard Ashcraft has shown, the *Second Treatise* argued that the people could resist the king—with force, if necessary (Ashcraft 332). In the eighteenth century these radical connotations in Locke's work were not so easily assimilated into his larger epistemology. According to Margaret Jacob, Locke left "an arsenal of ammunition for the radicals." She explains that "[h]is arguments were seldom, if ever, sighted by the post-revolutionary Whigs in justification of the events of 1688–9. Having secured their properties and prerogatives, their church and constitutional monarchy, they sought not to encourage political reforms and revolutions but largely to prevent them" (Jacob 85). What was crucial for the post-revolutionary Whigs that comprised the Scottish Enlightenment was not Locke but rather their own institutional status. The theories and histories of the philosophical historians were produced not against institutions but from them—and in their defense.[20] 1688 offered an institutional arrangement that held off the divisions that led to violence in the 1640s. This "escape from violence" became the very means of Enlightenment in a post-1688 Scotland where the alternative was a violent Jacobitism. Modernity was to come from accepting these institutions. Dissenters in England were denied such institutional power and thus, like some of their French contemporaries, naturally directed their critiques against the church, state, and universities.

A dissenter himself, Godwin argued for an end to these institutions and to the abstract historicism used to justify them. Against the abstractions of the philosophical historians Godwin privileges what he calls "historical romance," which, as he claims,

> consists in a delineation of consistent human character, in a display of the manner in which such a character acts under successive circumstances, in showing how character increases and assimilates new substances to its own, and how it decays, together with the catastrophe into which by its own gravity it naturally declines. (372)

Godwin's characterization of "historical romance" differs from Scott's in that it does not assimilate catastrophe but rather traces the violent marks left on individuals following this assimilation. In addition, his use of the mid-seventeenth century as a historical setting—indeed, a historical problematic—reopens the wounds that 1688 was thought to have closed. In the Preface to his *History of the Commonwealth* (1824–28), for example, Godwin remarks that "it is the object of the present work … to restore the just tone of historical relation on the subject, to attend to the neglected, to remember the forgotten, and to distribute an impartial award on all that was planned and achieved during this eventful period" (v–vi). This might be understood as the object of his fiction, as well. *Mandeville* was set largely around the civil wars of the seventeenth century. And as Maurice Hindle states in his Introduction to *Caleb Williams*, Godwin's Falkland takes his name from the seventeenth-century Viscount Falkland, who was "… drawn unwillingly into the Civil War on the side of the Cavaliers" and who "ended his days by deliberately riding into a hail of enemy bullets at the first battle of Newbury" (Hindle xliv n. 81). The first half of the description sounds like it could be the beginning of any of Scott's novels; the second half, with Falkland deliberately riding into a hail of bullets, sounds like the ending to almost all of Godwin's.

As with the privileging of romance over abstract history, Godwin's turn to the seventeenth century is not a turn toward the pre-modern, precapitalist society championed by Romantic poets from Wordsworth to T. S. Eliot. Rather, Godwin seems to find in the seventeenth century an alternative modernity to the one championed in Scott. As Jon Klancher argues,

> Godwin's far regions of "romance" were not those of Burke's immemorial English antiquity or aristocratic idealism but the Roman republic and the age of Cromwell. What Godwin calls "historical romance" has the political charge of a republican romance, which seeks imaginatively to reopen that possibility in English history—the moment of 1642—which the Scottish philosophical historians, and most notoriously Hume in the first volume of the *History of England* (1763), had been especially anxious to close. (159)

Klancher suggests that the mid-seventeenth-century civil wars take on the character of an unfinished project—one temporarily closed off by the institutional compromise of 1688.[21]

But while "sixty years since" was sufficient time to allow Scott to reopen the painful episode of the '45, the 150 or so years that separated Godwin's time from the uprisings of the 1640s was not enough to allow

for revisiting. This is in large part because of the proximity to the esca-
lating violence in France and the fact that the execution of Louis
the XVI in 1793 reminded many in England of the execution of Charles I.
In addition, though, 1688 had become an accepted compromise—
especially in light of 1789. The 1640s suggested a different story—
especially in light of 1793. There was no reason to reopen that moment.
No new author was needed to rewrite the ending. What for Godwin was
an insipid resolution to the problems opened up in the earlier period
was for many more an acceptable and bloodless end to a tumultuous
and trying time. In a country facing the real threat of political violence
the 1640s left too many republican and dissenting currents open for it
to be considered a viable model for political change. The link both writ-
ers make between the political and the fictional becomes important
here. For the reasons that made the 1640s a bad model politically also
made the period a bad model for philosophical romance. Like
the Revolution and Settlement of 1688–89, Scott's historical romances
close off those awkward and politically suspect openings that make "the
ideological visible as ideology" (Miles 189).

1688 and the reform of the Romantic novel

If looking at the relationship between individuals and historical violence
can tell us something about why Godwin has not always fared well as a
Romantic novelist, it can also tell us something about why Scott has
fared better. Scott's novels succeed in literature by doing what Burke did
in politics: they uphold the Settlement of 1689 against the violent
alternative of revolution. They do this not only in content but also in
their very form—by subordinating the political voice of critique to the cul-
tural project of shoring up the nation. Like his Enlightenment forbears,
Scott institutionalizes a mode not of ridding the nation of its institutions,
but of maintaining them—of making the institutions as well as the
romance mode itself national, and thus that much more unassailable.[22]

Nowhere is this link between the form and the content of bloodless
revolution more recognizable than in Scott's *Old Mortality*. Like *Waverley,
Old Mortality* tells the story of a man—Henry Morton—who is caught
between extremes and who is forced to take up arms with a group of
violent extremists against an unjust government. In *Waverley*, this gov-
ernment is a post-revolutionary Hanoverian one. In *Old Mortality* it is a
pre-1689 Scottish government—an institution in many ways as violent
as the Presbyterian Church that opposed it. As Fergus says to Waverley
moments before his execution, and referring to Scotland's legal autonomy

following Union,

> —This same law of high treason … is one of the blessings, Edward, with which your free country has accommodated poor old Scotland—her own jurisprudence, as I have heard, was much milder. But I suppose one day or other—when there are no longer any wild Highlanders to benefit by its tender mercies—they will blot it from their records, as leveling them with a nation of cannibals. (326)

The "glorious revolution" in Scottish law occurred shortly after, in 1747: too late for Fergus.

Henry Morton belongs on neither side of the conflict, as the narrator explains:

> He had formed few congenial ties with those who were objects of persecution, and was disgusted alike by their narrow-minded and selfish party spirit, their gloomy fanaticism, their abhorrent condemnation of all elegant studies or innocent exercises, and the envenomed rancour of their political hatred. But his mind was still more revolted by the tyrannical and oppressive conduct of the government, the misrule, license, and brutality of the soldiery, the executions on the scaffold, the slaughters in the open field, the free quarters and exactions imposed by military law, which placed the lives and fortunes of a free people on a level with Asiatic slaves. (187)

In a society that affords no existence in the middle, Morton is forced to choose a side, something he does begrudgingly. His choice pits him against his friends and neighbors and against the family of his beloved, Edith Bellenden. In a letter to her uncle, Major Bellenden, read also by his political foe and fellow suitor to Miss Bellenden, Lord Evandale, Morton exclaims,

> but God, who knows my heart, be my witness, that I do not share the angry or violent passions of the oppressed and harassed sufferers with whom I am now acting. My most earnest and anxious desire is, to see this unnatural war brought to a speedy end, by the union of the good, wise, and moderate of all parties, and a peace restored, which, without injury to the king's constitutional rights, may substitute the authority of equal laws to that of military violence, and, permitting to all men to worship God according to their own consciences, may subdue fanatical enthusiasm by reason and mildness, instead of driving it to frenzy by persecution and intolerance. (297)

His words are to no avail. Major Bellenden responds more to his religious affiliation and to his class than to his sentiment. "Were Saint Paul on earth again, and a Presbyterian," he quips, "he would be a rebel in three months—it is in the very blood of them" (298). Such was the association that Robertson wished to dispel—the Presbyterian as "wolf-cub" (298). But Scott is not so concerned to reclaim Presbyterianism from its violent connotations. His project is bigger. Robertson implies that Presbyterianism has grown up, as it were—that it has proven itself to be a fit moral authority for a modern Scotland, despite its violent past. For Scott, though, it is Scotland itself that has done this.

The Presbyterians are defeated at Bothwell Bridge. Yet tolerance and peace do find a foothold in Scotland. Henry is not as fortunate as Waverley; he does not secure a pardon but is instead exiled to the continent. But he returns, auspiciously, with William of Orange himself (406)—the Revolution and its Scottish embodiment arriving to restore and to uphold the liberties of the English constitution. Morton's wish for a union of the "good, wise, and moderate," comes to pass as he returns home to find a different Scotland. For the Glorious Revolution not only "transformed the structure of Scottish parliamentary politics" (Devine 4); it extended tolerance to the various protestant sects that had virtually defined conflict in the seventeenth century:

> As the murmurers were allowed to hold their meetings uninterrupted, and to testify as much as they pleased against Socinianism, Erastianism, and all the compliances and defections of the time, their zeal unfanned by persecution, died gradually away, their numbers became diminished, and they sunk into the scattered remnant of serious, scrupulous, and harmless enthusiasts, of whom Old Mortality, whose legends have afforded the groundwork of my tale, may be taken as no bad representative. (*Old Mortality* 401)

In this the English government plays the part of the peaceful mediator, just as Morton does earlier in the story. Indeed, by the novel's end it is not just Henry who resides in the middle. This middle space is forged and finally occupied by none other than the state itself. To repeat a point made in relation to *Waverley*, this is not merely a manifestation of English common sense: the so-called middle ground between extremes. It is the very form of history as it comes to be understood in eighteenth-century Britain—a history told for as well as from the perspective of those institutions that emerged in the wake of the Revolution.

It is also the form of Scott's novel. The narrative structure of *Old Mortality* reproduces the middle ground forged by the Revolution and embodied in

Henry Morton. The politics of the various competing sides are subordinated in the tale of Henry Morton, who would let toleration and freedom do the work that cudgels and bayonets had previously done. Likewise, the extremism of the tale is curbed by the narrator, who comes upon the tale in the form given by Old Mortality, a kind of keeper of Covenanting monuments. Because the narrator wishes to address "… the sedate and reflecting part of mankind" (51), he makes the editorial decision to "embody" the anecdotes of Old Mortality. The tale thus shifts from the body of "the only true whig," Old Mortality himself, to that of Henry Morton. It is clear from the narrator's comments that Morton's place in the middle is shared by him, too. Of Old Mortality he says: "I have been far from adopting either his style, his opinions, or even his facts, so far as they appear to have been distorted by party prejudice" (68). Scott's narrative frame assimilates the tale of Old Mortality and in doing so mediates the violence of the story. It is as if the narrative too has been transformed by the Revolution.

Old Mortality the man is a monument to the past—to an age of violence and extremes. But *Old Mortality* the text is a living embodiment of Scott's present: an embodiment institutionalized in the novel form itself. As Homer Brown puts it, "for Scott, romance both chronicles and shapes the institution of modern culture—that is to say, romance is a story of institution that itself becomes institutional" (16). That Scott remains a key figure in the institutionalization of the novel is an argument that has been made many times of late. He made it more masculine, more historical, more literary. His novels, prefaces, introductions, editions, essays, etc. "… decisively transformed the novel" (Duncan 4). It is for this that Scott maintains a prominent place in the history of the novel. I have tried to suggest that this institutional change in literature depended upon a prior institutional change—that of the Revolution and Settlement of 1688–89—and that this model of institutional change itself became crucial following the escalation of violence in France and the real possibility for such violence in Britain. Both institutional changes—the revolution and the novel—open up the space of representation just enough to close off the violence of the recent past.

In short, Scott's fiction is able to recoup the collective without the violence that was often associated with it and to maintain what Kathleen Wilson has described as "the almost mythical stature [of 1688] as an example of popular and non-violent change" (362). Godwin, on the other hand, rejected 1688 as such an example. He also rejected the collective in every form: class, party, nation—even the public sphere of letters. But isolated individuals do not transcend historical violence. This may be the biggest hole in Godwin's theory. A political irony that

could not have escaped the humorless Godwin, Scott seems to have learned the lesson that Godwin's own characters never do. This may explain William Hazlitt's love of the "Scotch novels" and hatred of the author or Georg Lukacs's claim that Scott's historical consciousness transcends his conservative politics.[23] It may also explain the place of Scott in literary history—which, like Godwin's "abstract history," has a tendency to subordinate the debilitatingly political to the culturally progressive and to lose sight of those individual texts that fail to demonstrate the features of this progress.

Austen and Scott

In chapter 14 of the *Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge describes the division of labor that resulted in *Lyrical Ballads*:

> The thought suggested itself (to which of us I do not recollect) that a series of poems might be composed of two sorts. In the one, the incidents and agents were to be, in part at least, supernatural; and the excellence aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions, as would naturally accompany such situations, supposing them real. … For the second class, subjects were to be chosen from ordinary life; the characters and incidents were to be such, as will be found in every village and its vicinity, where there is a meditative and feeling mind to seek after them, or to notice them, when they present themselves. (264)

Such was the plan behind that remarkable volume. One poet would start from the unreal, the other from the real. The two would meet in a re-imagined middle space. Coleridge would make the supernatural natural by giving it "… a semblance of truth sufficient to procure … willing suspension of disbelief" (264). Wordsworth would "… give the charm of novelty to the things of every day, and … excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural" (264). This middle space was anything but common. It was forged; it was an imagined space. It depended on how one regarded it.

Wordsworth's and Coleridge's task in some ways reworked a problem common to the eighteenth-century novelist: namely, how to represent everyday life in a way that was more interesting than everyday life. This problem too has oft been thought to have found its solution at this time. I began this chapter with a suggestion that Austen's novels consolidated certain eighteenth-century trends in novel-writing in such a way as

to leave "Romantic" novelists like Godwin out. As Miles puts it, Austen's form of the novel "became naturalized" in the nineteenth century; and as a result "matters became increasingly difficult for the philosophical romance in terms of the resistance its practitioners encountered" (194). But this, as Miles himself says, is only "one half of the picture." For the other half we have to turn to Scott. I want to conclude by suggesting that the efforts of Scott and Austen form a division of labor akin to that described by Coleridge for *Lyrical Ballads*. That is, I want to conclude my argument about bloodless Revolution and the form of the novel by showing how Scott and Austen complete the picture.

Wordsworth wrote about the poet as we now imagine him/her. Austen wrote novels that look like what we think novels look like. She also wrote novels that look like England—or "English." Her delicate style and her attention to the details of common life helped to bring the novel into the present in a way that writers before her had not—or could not. Scott himself was quick to praise the author of *Emma*, writing in the *Quarterly Review* (1815) that,

> We, therefore, bestow no mean compliment upon the author of Emma, when we say that, keeping close to common incidents, and to such characters as occupy the ordinary walks of life, she has produced sketches of such spirit and originality, that we never miss the excitation which depends upon a narrative of uncommon events, arising from the consideration of minds, manners, and sentiments, greatly above our own. (231)

Like Wordsworth, Austen writes about "such characters as occupy the ordinary walks of life." And just as Wordsworth "gives the charm of novelty to things of every day," so Austen, "keeping close to common incidents," produces "sketches of such spirit and originality, that we never miss the excitation which depends upon a narrative of uncommon events." For Scott, Austen heightens our understanding of and appreciation for the real. Indeed, she "excites a feeling analogous to the supernatural."

That makes Scott the Coleridge of the pair. And like Coleridge, we can take Scott's own word for it. In the introductory chapter to *Waverley*, Scott explains that "the object of my tale is more a description of men than manners" (4). Instead of giving "a vivid reflection of those scenes which are passing daily before our eyes," he says, he will instead look to uncommon events—like Jacobite uprisings, or later, the Glorious Revolution—in order to illustrate "… those passions common to men in all stages of society, and which have alike agitated the human heart …" (5).

In Scott's romances the grand events of history are made common by representing them through "such characters as occupy the ordinary walks of life." Waverley and Emma are surprisingly alike as characters, for example. Scott's characters require a push from history in the same way that the Mariner requires a push from the spirit world. But once these characters get going the apparatus fades into the background—and we believe. It is not a coincidence that for both, this often occurs at a moment when history is about to turn violently ugly.

But Austen's characters start out this way. If in Scott a certain reading of history is naturalized, in Austen it is the society this reading gives way to that is naturalized. Yet Austen's novels, like Wordsworth's verse, participated in what Marilyn Butler called "the war of ideas." As Butler notes, the novel was a "dangerous" genre, associated as it was with "moral relativism" and "English Radicals," who, after the Revolution, "made use of it to circulate their ideas" (31). Wordsworth's "language of real men" was similarly dangerous. While Austen's plots are not disrupted by Jacobite uprisings or covenanting wars, they nevertheless betray an engagement with the problem of political violence. The "Beechen Cliff" scene from *Northanger Abbey* can serve as an example. In this scene, Catherine Morland says to her new friend, Miss Tilney, "I have heard that something very shocking indeed will soon come out in London." "Indeed!" says Miss Tilney, "and of what nature?" "That I do not know, nor who is the author," replies Catherine, "I have only heard that it is to be more horrible than any thing we have yet met with … It is to be uncommonly dreadful. I shall expect murder and everything of the kind." "You speak with astonishing composure," says Miss Tilney, "But I hope your friend's accounts have been exaggerated; — and if such a design is known beforehand, proper measures will undoubtedly be taken by government to prevent its coming to effect." After a bit of teasing from her brother Henry about the government's ambivalence concerning such a plot, Miss Tilney continues: "Miss Morland, do not mind what he says;—but have the goodness to satisfy me as to this dreadful riot." "Riot!" shouts Catherine, "what riot?" It is this curious drift from Catherine's "something very shocking" to Miss Tilney's "riot" that requires explanation; and it is explanation that Henry provides:

> My dear Eleanor, the riot is only in your own brain. The confusion there is scandalous. Miss Morland has been talking of nothing more dreadful than a new publication which is shortly to come out, in three duodecimo volumes, two hundred and seventy-six pages in

each, with a frontispiece to the first, of two tombstones and a lantern—do you understand?—And you, Miss Morland—my stupid sister has mistaken all your clearest expressions. You talked of expected horrors in London—and instead of instantly conceiving, as any rational creature would have done, that such words could relate only to a circulating library, she immediately pictured to herself a mob of three thousand men assembling in St. George's fields; the Bank attacked, the Tower threatened, the streets of London flowing with blood, a detachment of the 12th Light Dragoons, (the heroes of the nation,) called up from Northampton to quell the insurgents. (100–01)

Catherine speaks of a book and her friend Eleanor Tilney thinks she is speaking of something more. The scene is typical of comedy in its dependence on a slippage between reality and representation. Henry, in providing a key to the confusion, suggests that such talk of horrors could *only* refer to a novel. So clear are Catherine's verbal markers, says Henry, that his sister is accused of being overly fearful and silly—even stupid—in her misunderstanding. Henry's patronizing response, however, makes a connection in denying it and demonstrates an understanding of contemporary debate on both literature and politics. Austen herself may be poking fun at readers who were prone to such dramatic connections. But the way she sets up the scene and the way in which her own fiction develops—in this novel and in her later works—suggests that the connection between political and literary terror was not so silly after all. One might see Catherine Morland's coming of age not as a move from (Gothic) novels to reality but rather as a move to a different kind of novel—the kind that Austen herself would go on to write.

   The scene in question begins when the party of three—Henry and Eleanor Tilney, Catherine Morland—sets off to Beechen Cliff, near Bath. "I never look at it," says Catherine, "without thinking of the south of France." Henry asks if she has been abroad. "Oh! No," she replies, "I only mean what I have read about." Catherine mentions Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho* and proceeds to a discussion of novel reading. She is surprised by Henry's love of the genre. The conversation then moves to history, pedagogy, the picturesque, "to oaks in general, to forests, the inclosure of them, waste lands, crown lands and government" (99). Finally it moves to politics—"and from politics," we are told, "it was an easy step to silence." Austen's narrator continues, however: "The general pause which succeeded his short disquisition on the state of the nation, was put to an end by Catherine, who, in rather a solemn tone of voice,

uttered these words, 'I have heard that something very shocking indeed, will soon come out in London' " (100). And with this we're back where we started. The connection is twofold: in having nothing to say about politics Catherine returns to the subject that initiated the whole scene: the Gothic novel—thus implicitly suggesting that those who read novels are indeed not very clever (Catherine has nothing to say about politics). But her return to the novel is also extremely political—and, if we consider the narrator's voice, extremely clever, too.

As we have seen, reviews of novel output at the time (and especially of gothic Novels) confirm this. Indeed, late-eighteenth-century reviews provide countless examples of the link between political and literary terror. Eleanor Tilney's remark that she hopes the government will take measures to prevent this "something horrible" is thus also double-edged: it may show a misunderstanding of her friend; but from a more general narrative perspective, it shows an awareness of the danger of certain forms of writing. And as we know, the government did in fact take proper measures of prevention.

Northanger Abbey has long been described as a parody of the Gothic—the gothic, for instance, is what the quixotic Catherine must move beyond to complete her education. But there is more than a certain sensibility at stake, I think. As suggested in Chapter 2, Michael Gamer's argument about high literary productions of the Romantic period struggling against the popular obsession and critical disdain for the gothic has to be expanded. The genre was not tied to the popular by taste alone. It was also associated with *popular* violence. This connection between literary and political terror is parodied in *Northanger Abbey* by Henry Tilney. But the "double perspective" brought out in the scene runs contrary to Catherine's education and suggests that Austen's own fiction was constructed, in part, against the popular in both senses of the word: as in taste and unrest. Austen, perhaps unlike Catherine but very much like Waverley, moves toward a real, an ordinary, a common, that *is* distinctly aware of this connection. Her later fiction seems to keep such a notion of the popular at its margins (Emma's visit to the poor or the attack by "gypsies"; the fragile peace which reunites Anne Elliot and Captain Wentworth in *Persuasion*; the troops stationed in Brighton during Lydia's stay there in *Pride and Prejudice*). All of this strikes me as Austen's attempt not to banish history and politics from the framework of her novels but rather to ensure the integrity of the form as she developed it. In Austen's fiction, too, history has given way to common life. Both Scott and Austen break with the philosophical romance and its particular engagement with the popular. Unlike Austen, Scott may not be

quintessentially English. But like 1688, his novels have become a British institution. The picture they complete shows English becoming British. The border remains to mark the difference.

That Scott died in 1832, the year of the Reform Act, is one of those fortuitous instances that makes concluding a book a little easier. Scott may have been against the passage of the Reform Bill, but like Wordsworth, who also opposed it, his work mirrors the processes that turned the Romantic period from revolution to reform.[24] Even though I hope that my work—in pointing out pre-1789 contexts of Romantic literature—has helped to challenge easy periodizing schemes, there is some satisfaction in the fact that the end of the narrative of institutionalization that I have been describing these 200 odd pages corresponds with the institutionalization of reform in Britain—the moment when the settlement of 1688 was expanded, just a bit, in part to prevent violent revolution. The Reform Act solidified the post-1688 social order by widening the franchise just enough to stave off full-scale revolution. My argument suggests that Romantic literature—the literature of "bloodless" Revolution—helped. The culmination of this political and literary process in the work of Walter Scott makes him a fit figure with which to conclude my study. Like the government franchise itself, literature was and remains a political institution. In Scott this institution found embodiment in the novel, thus widening its own franchise while giving to 1688 what might from our viewpoint on history be called a literature of its own.

Notes

Introduction

1. See for example Kathleen Wilson, "Inventing Revolution: 1688 and Eighteenth-Century Popular Politics."
2. James R. Hertzler remarks that even the appellation "glorious" suggests Whiggism: "To call the Revolution 'glorious' was to invoke the power of pulpit propaganda in favor of Whiggish notions" (581). Hertzler explains that it may have been Gilbert Burnet who first named the Revolution "Glorious"—though "the specific name, 'Glorious Revolution,' does not appear in sermons regularly until the event itself was some eighteen to twenty years in the past" (582–83). While "bloodless Revolution" is a common term for the event in the twentieth century, by 1720 it was referred to as "a Revolution the most bloodless" (580). In the later eighteenth century, as is discussed, writers like Thelwall and Godwin would contest the description of 1688 as bloodless.
3. Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution, 1603–1714*, pp. 220–39; Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, pp. 147–48.
4. The literature on the subject is vast. In addition to Hill's *The Century of Revolution*, see G.M. Trevelyan, *The English Revolution, 1688–89*; Eveline Cruickshanks, *The Glorious Revolution*; Cruickshanks, ed., *By Force or by Default: The Revolution of 1688–89*; J.C.D. Clark, *English Society, 1688–1832: Ideology, Social Structure and Political Practice During the Ancien Regime*; J.G.A. Pocock, ed., *Three British Revolutions: 1641, 1688, 1776*.
5. "… What was preserved," writes Nairn, "was the essence of rule from above, in that 'transitional' mode established by 1688: an elite social class took the place of the failed English absolute monarchy—a collective 'Prince' which now employed the symbolism of the crown for its own ends" (15).
6. See for example Anderson, "Origins of the Present Crisis," and Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain* (Nairn) pp. 1–79. See also Ellen Meiksins Wood, *The Pristine Culture of Capitalism*, pp. 1–19.
7. Meiksins Wood, pp. 22–28.
8. I mention the French painter Jacques Louis David because his *Death of Marat*, as discussed in T.J. Clark's remarkable book, *Farewell to an Idea*, serves as a contemporary French example of the problems and processes that will be discussed in this and the first chapter—in particular, how art can represent a revolution. David's *Marat*, as Clark reads it, is not only a sign of the French "problem of the people"; in its "detail of politics" it represents "the kind of contingency Modernism is made of" (21).
9. And perhaps fittingly, William's laureate, Thomas Shadwell, was the butt of Dryden's *Mac Flecknoe*.
10. Though as Michael McKeon has argued, the very stabilities achieved in their poetry can be used to reveal the political instability of post-1688 society—an

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instability distinctly related to the changes brought about by that revolution. The dissatisfaction with the present settlement expresses itself as a desire to replace it—"… Augustan satiric reform betrays the instability of an ambition not only to further, but also to replace by a literary substitute, the exercise of political power" (55). See his "Cultural Crisis and Dialectical Method," pp. 45–46.

11. Zwicker, "Representing the Revolution," p. 168.
12. Antonio Gramsci, *The Prison Notebooks*, pp. 6–14.
13. The scholarly literature on this topic is vast and varied, but some good references include the following: Mark Philp, ed., *The French Revolution and British Popular Politics*; see also Philp's entry on "Revolution" *An Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age British Culture, 1776–1832*, ed., Iain McCalman; Ian Christie, *Stress and Stability in Late Eighteenth-Century Britain: Reflections on the British Avoidance of Revolution*; E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*; George Rude, *The Crowd in History*; Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution, 1789–1848*; Perry Anderson, "The Notion of Bourgeois Revolution," *English Questions*, pp. 105–220.
14. See for example M.H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature*; Harold Bloom, *The Visionary Company: A Reading of English Romantic Poetry*; Geoffrey Hartman, "Romanticism and Antiself-Consciousness," *Romanticism: Points of View*, eds., Robert F. Gleckner and Gerald E. Enscoe, pp. 287–98.
15. *Tribune*, No. XLIII (1785), *The Politics of English Jacobinism*, p. 300.
16. Arno Mayer, in his *The Furies: Violence and Terror in the French and Russian Revolutions* suggests that "no doubt the one-line dictionary definition which makes physical coercion the quintessence of violence is unduly restrictive. Given its protean nature, there is something to be said for the premise that violence is a political, legal, and cultural construction" (73).
17. "Annotations to *An Apology for the Bible*," *Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, p. 611.
18. Erdman, *Prophet Against Empire*, p. 164. Blake completed only the first book of the work.
19. On system as an eighteenth-century genre see Clifford Siskin, "The Problem of Periodisation: Enlightenment and the Fate of System," forthcoming in the *Cambridge History of English Literature*, ed. James Chandler.
20. See *Romanticism, Nationalism, and the Revolt Against Theory*, pp. 64–83.
21. In addition to Keen see Siskin, *The Work of Writing*, pp. 29–102.
22. See Raymond Williams, *Keywords*, 183–88, and *Marxism and Literature*; Alvin Kernan, *Samuel Johnson and the Impact of Print*, 3–23; Siskin, *The Work of Writing*, 1–28; Jonathan Kramnick, "The Making of the English Canon," 1087–1101. See also Eagleton, "The Rise of English," *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, pp. 17–22.
23. McKeon argues that post-1688 England initiates a whole new middle-class ideology of virtue—what he describes as the "transvaluation of honor" (155). "After 1688," argues McKeon, "the strict inheritance of monarchical virtue was a bankrupt aristocratic fiction which all but the Jacobites were obliged to repudiate with force" (209). The "transvaluation of honor" is a "question of virtue" the novel emerges to mediate. See *The Origins of the English Novel*, pp. 150–59.

24. The literature on this subject is too big to note here, but to my mind, two of the very best studies of the genre are McKeon's *Origins of the English Novel* and Ian Watt's *The Rise of the Novel*. See also William Warner, *Licensing Entertainment*; J. Paul Hunter, *Before Novels*; Lennard Davis, *Factual Fictions*; and Margaret Anne Doody, *The True Story of the Novel*.

25. Brown's argument thus differs from Mckeon, who sees the novel emerge as a "simple abstraction" in the 1740s, and in the work of Fielding and Richardson. Brown's argument suggests that the novel is instituted as a literary genre only in the early nineteenth century, and largely in the work of Scott. See also chapter one of Ian Duncan, *Modern Romance and Transformations of the Novel: The Gothic, Scott, Dickens*; and Clifford Siskin, *The Work of Writing: Literature and Social Change in Britain, 1700–1830*, pp. 155–171.

26. Because my study is concerned primarily with the novel and its relation to Romantic readings of 1688, I will not engage some of the eighteenth-century poetry that clearly "sings the praises" of the Glorious Revolution—especially the work of James Thomson. See Christine Gerrard, *The Patriot Opposition to Walpole*; and John Barrell, *English Literature in History, 1730–80*, especially pp. 51–109.

27. M.H. Abrams, and later the so-called "consciousness school" of Romantic criticism, for example.

28. See for example, Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution* and ed. Hunt, *The New Cultural History*; Francois Furet, *Interpreting the French Revolution*, trans. Elborg Forster; Catherine Gallagher, *Nobody's Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writer's in the Marketplace, 1670–1820*; Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashinioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980). For some theoretical underpinnings see Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*.

29. Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism; or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, p. 188. For a discussion of Jameson's critique of new historicism see James Chandler, *England in 1819: The Politics of Literary Culture and the Case of Romantic Historicism*, pp. 53–58.

30. See Watt, *The Rise of the Novel*, pp. 21–34.

31. See McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel*, pp. 1–22.

32. See Waler Scott's *Lives of the Novelists*, William Godwin's *History of the Commonwealth* and "Of History and Romance," and Richard Price's *Discourse on the Love of our Country*.

33. Foucault, drawing on Kant's 1784 statement, characterizes Enlightenment specifically as a leaving, a breaking away. He explains that "Kant defines *Aufklarung* in an almost entirely negative way, as an *Ausgang*, an 'exit,' a 'way out' " (34), and goes on to suggest that from such a conception of Enlightenment it is possible to derive a kind of critique that will "separate out, from the contingency that has made us what we are, the possibility of no longer being, doing, or thinking what we are, do, or think." "What is Enlightenment," p. 46. See also Immanuel Kant, "An Answer to the Question: 'What is Enlightenment?'," Theordo Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1972), Tom Nairn, *The Break-Up of Britain* (1981).

Notes to Chapter 1

1. For example, Michael McKeon has argued such a rise in terms of a displacement of religion—the "assumption by 'art' of those tasks that traditionally were performed by religious belief and experience" ("Politics" 50); Trevor Ross suggests that the emergence of literature reflects "a change from production to consumption, invention to reception, writing to reading" (Ross 397); Jonathan Kramnick, in his "the Making of the English Canon," claims that "literature" comes out of the canonization of Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton in mid-eighteenth-century England. Both Alvin Kernan and Clifford Siskin see literature as something that happens to and as a result of an expansion in print at the end of the eighteenth century. For Siskin this has to do with a "disciplinary displacement" of philosophy as the "center" of knowledge and the emergence of literature as the *ur*-term of specialization—Wordsworth's "breath and finer spirit" of all knowledge. I will discuss this last more fully in the next chapter.
2. This applies especially to the work of critics interested in the canon or the profession—critics such as Kramnick, Siskin, and also John Guillory.
3. See Siskin, *The Work of Writing*, pp. 1–28 and pp. 29–102.
4. Quoted in Kernan, *Samuel Johnson and the Impact of Print*, p. 48.
5. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, pp. 17–35.
6. Quoted in Virginia Crompton, " 'For when the act is done and finisht cleane,/ What should the poet doe, but shift the scene?': Propaganda, Professionalism and Aphra Behn," p. 139.
7. For L'Estrange and licensing practices in seventeenth-century England, see Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making*, pp. 239–40.
8. Paula McDowell, *The Women of Grub Street: Press, Politics, and Gender in the London Literary Marketplace, 1678–1730*, p. 63.
9. For Pope, politics, and party hacks, see Pat Rogers, *Grub Street: Studies in a Subculture*, pp. 94–174.
10. Lois G. Schwoerer, "Propaganda in the Revolution of 1688–89," p. 849; p. 859.
11. There are many books and articles that could be named here. The following have been especially influential for my treatment of Romantic politics: Marilyn Butler, *Romantics, Rebels, Reactionaries*; Marjorie Levinson, *Wordsworth's Great Period Poems*; James Chandler, *Wordsworth's Second Nature*; David Simpson, *Romanticism, Nationalism, and the Revolt Against Theory*; and Clifford Siskin, *The Work of Writing*.
12. See Wilson, *The Sense of the People*, pp. 29–54.
13. In *The Making of English Reading Audiences*, Jon Klancher describes "a real or imagined radical antagonist," against which "middle class writers and readers … helped produce a self-consciously dominant culture" (99). That is, for Klancher the threat of a radical, populist public sphere helped give rise to a middle-class dominant culture that worked to close off such a space—and thus mitigate the threat.
14. See E.P. Thompson's study of Blake's poem in *Witness Against the Beast*, pp. 174–94. In particular, see Thompson's discussion of Blake's use of the word "charter'd"—changed from "dirty"—on pp. 175–79.

15. For a further discussion of Burke and stylistic mixture, see Carol Kay, *Political Constructions: Defoe, Richardson and, Sterne in Relation to Hobbes, Hume, and Burke*, chapter five.
16. I discuss this more fully in Chapter 3.
17. Quoted in Keen, *The Crisis of Literature in the 1790s*, p. 156.
18. Thompson, *Making*, p. 107.
19. For Siskin this proliferation of writing in late-eighteenth-century Britain was "naturalized" and made "safe" even while it was maintained via disciplinary divisions of knowledge. For Siskin it is not, then, only a matter of literature's content, but also, even more so, of the form(s) this new technology— writing—took at the time. See *Work*, pp. 17–26.
20. Thompson, *Making*, p. 108.
21. Paulin refers to the "existential danger in Burke's style, the way he is forever on the brink of transgressing barriers, and the excitement this creates in the reader through the animation of his language, its direct intensity." See the introduction to *The Plain Speaker: The Key Essays*, p. xi.
22. Writes Clark: "Marat could not be made to embody the Revolution because no one agreed about what the Revolution was, least of all about whether Marat was its Jesus or its Lucifer. David's picture—this is what makes it inaugural of modernism—tries to ingest this disagreement, and make it part of a new cult object" (38).
23. See also Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, History*, pp. 274–94 and pp. 301–02.
24. For a discussion of revolution see Ronald Paulson, *Representations of a Revolution*, 48–52 and Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, chapters one and two; see also Arno Mayer, *The Furies: Violence and Terror in the French and Russian Revolutions*, pp. 23–44.
25. See for example Miranda Burgess' *British Fiction and the Production of Social Order, 1740–1830*, 127–34; and Adriana Craciun, *Fatal Women of Romanticism*, pp. 48–51.
26. One exception to this is Charlotte Smith, who uses her novel *Desmond* (1792)—and especially it's eponymous hero—as a vehicle to critique Burke's rendering of 1688. See also Mellor's *Mothers of the Nation*, pp. 107–08.
27. Furniss argues that custom serves as a "third term or supplement which is supposed to guarantee these differences by fusing the sublime and the beautiful with traditional forms and practices in order to ward off the sublime's democratic momentum" (132).
28. See for example Burgess, p. 132.
29. As Claudia Johnson remarks, "in Burke's hands, chivalric sentimentality … is the affective front of ideology, registering dominant values in and on the bodies of citizens; and it produces reverent political subjects disinclined to rape the queen or to lay a violent hand to the endearing frailty of the state" (6).
30. Craciun argues that "Wollstonecraft depicts the bodies of these violent women as the grotesque bod of the crowd, characterized by a lack of proper bundaries between sexes and classes, and most importantly by a lack of unified purpose …" (70). For Wollstonecraft, it would seem, women are the people. But they shouldn't be.
31. In her *Historical and Moral View of the French Revolution*, Wollstonecraft again links excess and imagination. She says: "The lively effusions of the mind, characteristically peculiar to the French, are as violent as the impressions are

transitory. … People who are carried away by the enthusiasm of the moment, are most frequently betrayed by their imagination, and commit some errour, the conviction of which not only damps their heroism, but relaxes the nerve of common exertions" (213).

32. For Wollstonecraft's critiques of sentiment see her reviews for the *Analytical Review*, in *Collected Works*, Vol. 7.

33. See Simpson, *Romanticism, Nationalism and the Revolt Against Theory*, pp. 40–63.

34. For an expanded critique along the lines of that launched in *Reflections*, see Burke's *Letter to a Noble Lord* (1796).

35. Though some in fact did, like Thomas Spence. Thompson, in his discussion of the reformist choice between "defiant rhetoric and capitulation" actually hints that the decision to disavow violence sometimes stifled the radical cause: "again and again, between 1792 and 1848, this dilemma was to reoccur. The Jacobin or Chartist, who implied the threat of overwhelming numbers but who held back from actual revolutionary preparation, was always exposed, at some critical moment, both to the loss of the confidence of his own supporters and the ridicule of his opponents" (*Making* 160). See also Ian McCalman, *Radical Underworld*, pp. 7–49.

36. Robert Miles, "Trouble in the Republic of Letters: The Reception of the Shakespeare Forgeries." Unpublished Essay.

37. For example, see Peter Laslett, Introduction, *Two Treatises of Government: A Critical Edition*, and Richard Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics and Locke's "Two Treatises of Government."*

38. My brief and schematic account of the 1680s and 1690s is largely taken from Christopher Hill's *The Century of Revolution*, and Richard Ashcraft's *Revolutionary Politics and Locke's "Two Treatises of Government."*

39. See also Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics*, chapters three and four.

40. See Hill, *Century of Revolution*, and Pocock, "The Fourth English Civil War."

41. For an argument that posits James II as a tolerant king whose intention was to establish religious freedom in England see Eveline Cruickshanks, *The Glorious Revolution*, pp. 1–3.

42. Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics*, chapter two.

43. Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics*, p. 23.

44. See, for starters, Douglass Hay *et al.*, *Albion's Fatal Tree*; Peter Linebaugh, *The London Hanged: Crime and Civil Society in Eighteenth-Century England*, Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra*, and Paul Monod, *Jacobitism and the English People*.

45. Warren Montag, "On the Function of the Concept of the Origin: Althusser's Reading of Locke," p. 17. (unpublished essay)

46. See Linebaugh, *The London Hanged*, pp. 7–41 and pp. 119–52; see also Monod, *Jacobism and the English People*, pp. 45–69.

Notes to Chapter 2

1. As Janet Todd notes of the period, "Almost all genres were politicised in some way, while the choice of genre became a political statement itself and each fictional plot and literary device had some implications." *The Sign of Angelica*, p. 224.

2. William Godwin, for example, makes such a claim early in *Political Justice*. He went on to change his mind about how to use such power as he revised his great system. This will be discussed more fully in the next chapter. For a discussion of literature as a powerful "engine," see Paul Keen, *The Crisis of Literature in the 1790s*, pp. 75–76.

3. For the pervasiveness of the gothic in late-eighteenth-century England see Robert Miles, "The 1790s: the Effulgence of Gothic," pp. 42–43.

4. *Gamer Romanticism and the Gothic*, pp. 103–05.

5. Also quoted in Gamer, *Romanticism and the Gothic*, p. 117.

6. For the political ambivalence of 1790s gothic writing see Miles, "The 1790s," p. 59.

7. David Bromwich suggests that if Wordsworth has any kind of consistent political position following this turn from Godwin, it might be characterized as "radical humanity." See *Disowned by Memory*, p. 7.

8. Ann Radcliffe, "On the Supernatural in Poetry," *New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal*, 1826.

9. The first citation for "terrorism" is also as given as 1795 and taken from *The Annual Register*: "It would renew the reign of terrorism."

10. And in fact the Jacobin novels of the 1790s—by Elizabeth Inchbald, Thomas Holcroft, William Bage, and Godwin—are extremely tame compared to, say, Lewis.

11. Cited in Emily Lorraine de Montluzin, *The Anti-Jacobins*, pp. 1–2.

12. Thomas Carlyle, *The French Revolution*, 757. Also cited in the *OED*.

13. Wilson's letter, as well as the reviews from the *British Critic*, are reproduced in the appendix to *Lyrical Ballads*, eds., R.L. Brett and A.R. Jones, pp. 334–39.

14. This is discussed more fully in Chapter 4. See also Roy Porter, *Britain and the Creation of the Modern World*, pp. 5–11.

15. See also Clifford Siskin, "The Problem of Periodisation: Enlightenment, Romanticism, and the Fate of System."

16. Siskin, "The Problem of Periodisation.

17. See the introduction to Perry's *Coleridge and the Uses of Division*.

18. For example, in the Preface to his *Shakespeare*, Samuel Johnson, also drawing on the language of mechanics, excoriates those critics of Shakespeare who focus on the three unities: "such is the triumphant language with which a critic exults over the misery of an irregular poet, and exults commonly without resistance or reply. It is time, therefore, to tell him by the authority of Shakespeare that he assumes, as an unquestionable principle, a position which, while his breath is forming it into words, his understanding pronounces it to be false" (2399).

19. See Kramnick, "The Making of the English Canon," pp. 1095–98, and Miles, "Trouble in the Republic of Letters."

20. See Simpson, *Romanticism, Nationalism, and the Revolt Against Theory*, p. 19.

21. See Tom Furniss, *Edmund Burke's Aesthetic Ideology*, introduction.

22. Siskin, "The Problem of Periodisation."

23. The original subtitle to Johnston's book was "Poet, Lover, Rebel, Spy," the last referring to Johnston's claim that Wordsworth was possibly a spy for the Home Office in 1798–99. This claim was heavily scaled back for the second edition of the book. See his preface to the Norton paperback edition, "A Tale of Two Titles," pp. ix–xvi.

24. David Bromwich writes that *The Borderers* "… tells a story that may be taken to imply the necessity of murder, exile, and self-reflection in the making of an individual mind" (46).
25. See the Introduction to the Cornell Wordsworth edition of *The Borderers*, p. 37.
26. Osborn also cites this comparison, p. 37.
27. See Osborn, pp. 30–31 and Roe, *Wordsworth and Coleridge, the Radical Years*, p. 219.
28. If the "friend" is in fact Hazlitt this makes the association even stronger as he was at the time a convert to Godwinian philosophy.
29. *Rights of Man*, p. 42. See also my chapter one, p. 31.
30. The 1850 version of *The Prelude* highlights the first "but" by breaking it into its own paragraph-thus connecting it with the new "but" that begins the "oppressors in their turn" section.
31. See also Jon Cook's Introduction to Hazlitt's *Selected Writings*, where he explains that "the history of personal identity that Wordsworth devised around 1800 came to echo the work that Burke had done for political and national identity some ten years earlier" (xiii–xiv).
32. See Meiksins Wood, p. 76. See also Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," pp. 1–14.
33. Both are discussed in Chapter 4.
34. Just as, in Clark's argument, David made ambivalence over the limits of Revolution a part of his *Marat*. "Marat could not be made to embody the Revolution," writes Clark, "because no one agreed about what the Revolution was, least of all about whether Marat was its Jesus or its Lucifer. David's picture—this is what makes it inaugural of modernism—tries to ingest this disagreement, and make it part of a new cult object" (38).
35. From *The Natural and Constitutional Right of Britons to Annual Parliaments, Universal Suffrage, and the Freedom of Popular Association* (1795), in Claeys, pp. 21–22.
36. And by words. In a recent article, "Vulgar Tongues: Canting Dictionaries and the Language of the People in Eighteenth-Century Britain," Janet Sorensen argues a relation between "the location of the vulgar within the nation" and the dictionaries of cant in later eighteenth-century England. "It was through this narrower sense of distinct cultural practices," she writes, "such as the use of the 'vulgar' language collected in [Francis] Grosse's work, that the people were defined and positioned within the nation, and not through their social relationships to a wider system of ownership, production, and distribution" (450).
37. See Jerome McGann, *The Romantic Ideology: A Critical Investigation*, pp. 1–14, and Marjorie Levinson, *Wordsworth's Great Period Poems*, pp. 2–17.
38. The first four stanzas of the "Intimations" ode.
39. Of course, Coleridge too revised his "Rime," though it might be said that this revision served to highlight the lack of resolution—as Conrad wrote of Marlow, Coleridges gloss to the Mariner's tale resembles "a glow that brings out a haze."

Notes to Chapter 3

1. From an analysis of his own character dated September 1798. Abinger Collection, Dep. b. 228/9.

2. *Bromwich Disowned by Memory*, p. 7.
3. See for example the "advertisement" to the 1798 edition of *Political Justice* (p. 74 of the Penguin edition).
4. Abinger Manuscript, Dep. b. 228/9.
5. Dep. b. 228/9.
6. See Furniss, *Edmund Burke's Aesthetic Ideology*, chapter 10, Siskin, *Work of Writing*, pp. 14–23, and Paul Keen, *The Crisis of Literature in the 1790s*. See also T.J. Mathias, *The Pursuits of Literature* (first published 1794). The fact that Mathias keeps coming back to Godwin attests to the fact that Godwin's work marked a focal point in the struggle over "Literature."
7. For an argument that asserts the primacy of private judgment in Godwin's philosophy, see Mark Philp, *Godwin's Political Justice*, part one.
8. This language of "moral" and "tendency" is repeated in an "apology" for Lewis' *The Monk* published in the *Monthly Mirror* in 1797. I have strong reason to suspect that Godwin wrote this review—a response to the attack on Lewis published in the *Critical* and recently attributed to Coleridge. The anonymous apologist in the *Monthly Mirror* explains that Lewis' "… beautiful romance is well calculated to support the cause of virtue." "The error of the principal objection," he writes, "viz. that of its vicious tendency, appears to me entirely to arise from inaccuracy of observation of the author's work, of the human heart, and of the meaning of the word tendency."
9. Philp, *Godwin's Political Justice*, p. 95.
10. For a discussion of the democratizing aspects of the bourgeois public sphere, see Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, pp. 27–30.
11. *Political and Philosophical Writings*, volume two.
12. For a good discussion of the differences between Thelwall and Godwin see Scrivener, *Seditious Allegories*, pp. 59–60. See also Jon Mee, *Romanticism, Enthusiasm, and Regulation*, pp. 109–28.
13. Though for writers like Thelwall, the move from public lecture to private literature was a way of maintaining political radicalism. See Scrivener, pp. 91–127.
14. Abinger MSS dep. b. 228/9.
15. For a defense of the first edition of *Political Justice* as an authoritative one, see Philp's General Introduction to *The Political and Philosophical Writings of William Godwin*, Vol. 1.
16. The term "political institution" is ambiguous and gives itself to various definitions throughout Godwin's text—indeed, throughout eighteenth-century political writing. As it is used here, however, at the start of the Second Volume of *Political Justice*, the term seems to express the possible future that Godwin will devote the rest of his *Enquiry* to exploring, having developed his ideas on past and present institutions in the First Volume. The passage in question remains unchanged throughout all three editions.
17. Or as Hazlitt shrewdly suggests, "By overshooting the mark, or by 'flying an eagle flight, forth and right on,' he has pointed out the limit or line of separation, between what is practicable and what is barely conceivable—by imposing impossible tasks on the naked strength of the will, he has discovered how far it is or is not in our powers to dispense with the illusions of sense. …" Hazlitt, *Spirit of the Age*, p. 23.

18. For example, critics such as Catherine Gallagher and Clifford Siskin have followed a tradition of post-Ian Watt scholarship in positing a rise in novel-reading that occurred not from Defoe to Richardson and Fielding, but rather in the last two decades of the eighteenth century and the first decade of the nineteenth century. Gallagher claims that "it was during this period that novels became the favorite reading matter of that common avatar of Nobody: Everybody. The market in novels during those decades appears to have expanded even faster than the swelling general marketplace of books" (*Nobody's Story* 220). See also Siskin, *Work of Writing*, pp. 155–71.

19. In his *Politics and History: Montesquieu, Rousseau, Hegel, Marx*, Louis Althusser offers us a way of understanding this move from philosophy to fiction. He concludes that Rousseau's *Social Contract*, both as a concept and as a text, masks the play of the very discrepancies which enable it. He argues that these discrepancies are consistently deferred until, finally, they approach the "real" (*la realite meme*). At this point there is a deferral or "transfer" of a different kind, that of "the impossible theoretical solution into the alternative to theory, literature. The admirable 'fictional triumph' of an unprecedented writing" (160). Althusser's claim is a productive one to follow up with regards to Godwin and the curious place of *Caleb Williams* in the development of the English novel (its "unprecedented" status)—not in terms of seeing it as a translation of *Political Justice*, but rather in terms of its being an attempt to resolve the philosophical difficulties that arise in the political theory in the alternative register of fiction. Godwin, of course, does not see the two as antithetical in any doomed way. And in fact his fictional reformulation has serious effects on his political philosophy as well.

20. Kelly, *English Fiction*, 33. In his *Godwin's Political Justice*, Philp offers a more balanced view: he explains that *Caleb Williams* is "not simply a deduction from the first edition of *Political Justice*: it both advances certain of Godwin's central concerns and offers us a modification of his arguments which prefigure changes which he makes to the second edition" (106).

21. In his 1795 *Dictionary*, the radical Thomas Spence defines literature as "learning."

22. Philp, General Introduction, *The Political and Philosophical Writings of William Godwin*, Vol. 1, p. 10.

23. St. Clair quotes one instance where Mackintosh was "reported to have said" the following: "Gentlemen ... you may be assured that if these self-called philosophers once came to have power in their hands ... they would be found as ferocious, as blood-thirsty, and full of personal ambition, as the worst men who sheltered themselves under similar pretensions in a neighboring country" (206).

24. See St. Clair, *The Godwins and the Shelleys*, p. 197; and (as cited in St. Clair) W.C. Proby, *Modern Philosophy and Barbarism, or a Comparison Between the Theory of Godwin and the Practice of Lycurgus* (1798).

25. *Pursuits of Literature*, 12th edition (1803), p. 387.

26. McCracken, "Godwin's Literary Theory," p. 115.

27. Klancher, "Godwin and the Republican Romance," p. 146.

28. And thus Godwin was part of a larger movement away from Enlightenment systematizing. Miranda Burgess argues that Romance in part "replaces"—indeed,

"enacts the abandonment of"—systematic political economy, and describes it as a "theoretically convincing Romantic alternative to it" (16). Unlike Godwin, though, Burgess makes a firm distinction between novel and romance. This is not the place to argue the difference of the two approaches, but my argument in the next section of this chapter touches briefly on what this meant for Godwin's notion of the literary.

29. See Gallagher, *Nobody's Story*; Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600–1740*; and Lennard Davis, *Factual Fictions: The Origins of the English Novel*.

30. See Klancher, "Republican Romance," p. 160.

31. See also Pamela Clemit's Introduction to *St. Leon* (Oxford), p. xiii–xiv.

32. Such a sentiment may very well be an allusion to the embattled ground of the English Constitution—a constitution, it should be stressed, that remained to be written. Writers like Hume and Burke looked to the Revolutionary Settlement as an exception to historical reasoning, as an anomaly. Both attempted to salvage the monarchy and to preserve the traditional form of government from this settlement—an attempt that led to certain glaring contradictions. Kay writes that "Stylistic mixture is a virtue in Burke and in the Declaration of Right—it is a sign of natural feeling—but it is a vice in the French revolutionary mentality and in the proceedings of the (English) Revolutionary Society." See Carol Kay, *Political Constructions: Defoe, Richardson, and Sterne in Relation to Hobbes, Hume, and Burke*, p. 275. In Godwin's writings, I am suggesting, there emerges the possibility of (re)writing the constitution in / as Literature.

33. For Burke on the organic versus the systematic see *Letters on a Regicide Peace*, especially the second Letter.

34. Catherine Gallagher, *Nobody's Story*, pp. xvi–xviii.

35. The latter being something Godwin himself had to be acutely aware of as a professional writer.

36. In their Introduction to *The Collected Novels and Memoirs of William Godwin*, Vol. 1, ed. Mark Philp (London: Pickering, 1992), Philp and Marilyn Butler claim that Godwin was "genuinely" a colleague of the women writers he was friends with, and argue that he "enhanced the possibilities of the literature of private life, by deepening the psychology of the naturalistic domestic novel ..." (45). But the work of Nancy Armstrong helps us to see the complexities of the domestic sphere that Godwin remained largely ignorant of—how, for example, in its seeming *not* to be political "domestic fiction could represent an alternative form of political power." See Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction*, p. 29.

37. For an exhaustive account of these trials as well as the role of "imagination" in 1790s political discourse, see John Barrell, *Imagining the King's Death: Figurative Treason, Fantasies of Regicide, 1793–1796*.

38. Of course, the direction of influence moved in two directions: writers like Inchbald, Hays, and Wollstonecraft were equally influenced by Godwin's *Caleb Williams* as well as by his new philosophy.

39. On the marketplace as "feminine" see J.G.A. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century*, pp. 103–123.

40. In his introduction to the Norton edition of *Caleb Williams* (1977) McCracken adds that "the direct and private confrontation of truth with

error, testing the power of truth, is what Caleb should have attempted, but did not" (xviii).

41. In his *Cultural Politics in the 1790s*, Andrew McCann describes a central tension in Godwin's work between his "… simultaneous valorization of public interaction as the basis of rational space and political life, and his fear of it as a domain of mass manipulation" (29). Godwin's turn toward private life—what I have argued as a turn away from an Enlightenment notion of letters—is, McCann suggests, "… a failure to conceptualize structurally differentiated economies of cultural production and reception … ." (29). See also McCann, pp. 71–82.

42. There is, for example, a new scholarly biography by Deborah Kennedy. And there is a recent Broadview edition of *Letters Written from France*, edited by Neil Fraistat and Susan S. Lanser.

43. Todd, *Sign of Angelica*, p. 195 (also quoted in Fraistat and Lanser, Introduction, *Letters Written in France*, pp. 28–29).

44. "The contradictory significations of femme fatales in the 1790s," writes Craciun, "were often distinctly politicized, like much of women's writing in this brief window of opportunity" (18). For a full treatment of these contradictions and how they persist into our own critical moment, see Craciun's introduction, pp. 1–20.

45. Jacqueline LeBlanc argues that "For Williams, the period of constitutional monarchy (1789 to the autumn of 1793) is an exceptional period in history when politics and the private sphere are democratized because they overlap through both the distribution of revolutionary symbols and the influence of ethical sensibility in government" (37).

46. Craciun writes that "Though feminists such as Wollstonecraft, Robinson, Macaulay, and Williams used the liberal discourse of universal rights and reason to give women equal access to this regime of reason, they always simultaneously addressed the role of the body in the construction of gender" (51). In some respects it is Wollstonecraft's focus on bodies that allows her to keep her turn toward imaginative writing connected to a practical political realm. Where Godwin ignores the masses and thus fails to work through the tensions his fiction generates, Wollstonecraft incorporates a highly theorized solidarity—that between women—into her novel's resolution.

47. *Wrongs*, p. 97.

48. Johnson argues that "Wollstonecraft's turn towards the female body in *Wrongs of Woman* is a decisive turn away from the moral and political normativity of the male body in conservative *and* radical discourse" (60).

49. See the Preface to *Caleb Williams*, for example.

50. See Furniss, *Edmund Burke's Aesthetic Ideology*, chapter two.

51. This despite Godwin's claim in the Preface to *Caleb Williams* that the novel form serves simply as a popular "vehicle" for the communication of political ideas. I discuss this more fully later. On opinion and government see *Political Justice*, part 2, book VI.

52. Brown explains that "institution … designates at once an act, an action, a process, and the product of that action or process—at once, action and stasis, lingering effect, trace, or remainder as such. From the Latin *instituare*, to institute means literally to cause to stand or stand up, to move something to standing or at least the illusion of standing in one place—that is to say,

something that stays." "Why the Story of the Origin of the English Novel is
an American Romance (if not the great American novel)," p. 19.

Notes to Chapter 4

1. P. 340.
2. Clemit, Introduction to *St Leon*, p. xix.
3. The term "reorientation" is from Richard Sher's *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment*. I discuss Sher's book and the idea of a reorientation of Enlightenment later in this chapter.
4. The term "narrative situations" is Ina Ferris'. She argues that the Romantic historiography following Enlightenment philosophical history was "sentimental"—"that equivocal, self-conscious mood of modernity which recognizes itself as free and knowing but also as belated and lacking wholeness." She argues that to see Romantic historicism in this way is to grasp it as "... anxiety about a diminished present" (78–79).
5. See also Richard Olson, *Science Deified and Science Defied: The Historical Significance of Science in Western Culture*, Vol. 2, 37–61; 93–128; and Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600–1740*, pp. 65–89.
6. See also Mckeon, *Origins of the English Novel*, pp. 65–89; pp. 118–30.
7. And as Katie Trumpener has pointed out, "... most of the conceptual innovations attributed to Scott were in 1814 already established commonplaces of the British novel" (130).
8. See for example P.D. Garside, "Scott and the Philosophical Historians," 497–512.
9. Porter, *Enlightenment*, pp. 72–95.
10. Colin Kidd, *Subverting Scotland's Past: Scottish Whig Historians and the Creation of an Anglo-British Identity*, *1689c.–1830*, p. 208.
11. Paul Monod, *Jacobitism and the English People, 1688–1788*, pp. 15–44.
12. See Pittock, *Poetry and Jacobite Politics in Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland*; p. 23.
13. See Kidd, *Subverting Scotland's Past*, p. 264.
14. Colley, *Britons*, 85. See also Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture, and Imperialism in England, 1715–1785*, pp. 101–16.
15. Monod, *Jacobitism and the English People*, p. 44.
16. Pittock argues that "Jacobitism is, in its varied forms, the prime root and first fruits of opposition to the British state ... ," *Poetry and Jacobite Politics*, p. 241.
17. Quoted in Richard Sher, *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment: The Moderate Literati of Edinburgh*, p. 4.
18. *Church and University*, p. 36. See also Devine, *The Scottish Nation*, pp. 64–83; and Christopher J. Berry, *Social Theory of the Scottish Enlightenment*, pp. 1–21.
19. The Militia Act created national defense forces in England and Wales (to defend against the French) but not in Scotland (because of the lingering threat of Jacobitism). See Devine, *The Scottish Nation*, p. 28; and Sher, *Church and University*, p. 240.
20. Sher, *Church and University*, p. 44.

21. As Sher notes, one of the points of Ferguson's *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* was "to demonstrate the superiority of the British constitution for the British people, given their particular 'character' and 'condition' " (194).
22. Hume, "Of the rise and progress of the arts and sciences," *Political Essays*, p. 61.
23. Also quoted in Buchan, p. 97.
24. See also Porter, *Enlightenment*, pp. 247–51.
25. Aphra Behn, *A Pindaric Poem to the Reverend Doctor Burnett on the Honour he did me of Enquiring after me and my Muse, The Poems of Aphra Behn: A Selection*, ll. 70–74.
26. In attesting to this fact, Lois Schwoerer claims that William "brought a printing press with him—along with soldiers and horses—as part of his invasion equipment." She goes on to explain that the use of writing and propaganda toward a singular end in 1688–89 was indeed unprecedented. "Propaganda in the Revolution of 1688–89," p. 856.
27. Paula McDowell explains that "the 'Great Dictator' in Behn's poem was not James II, but rather polemicists such as Burnet—wielders of the new instrument of political power in England … ." *The Women of Grub Street: Press, Politics, and Gender in the London Literary Marketplace, 1678–1730*, p. 3.
28. See Siskin, *Work*, pp. 79–99.
29. Sher, *Church and University*, chapter two.
30. See also Franklin E. Court, *Institutionalizing English Literature: The Culture and Politics of Literary Study, 1750–1900*, pp. 17–38.
31. Crawford explains that "the works which became canonical were those affording examples of the 'proper English' which would permit speakers of provincial dialect, even if they were unable to master correct southern pronunciation, to write a uniform, standard English purged of cultural peculiarity" (38). In Crawford's example we see a meeting of the literary and the professional. Good literature would train young men to be good professionals.
32. Sher, *Church and University*, p. 109.
33. Court, *Institutionalizing English Literature*, p. 13.
34. Sher, *Church and University*, chapter two.
35. Quoted in Sher, p. 68.
36. See Hugh Blair's *Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian*, where he argues that Macpherson's Ossian poems are not only authentic productions, but that these prose translations of Gaelic poetry compare favorably to the productions of Homer. See also Sher, *Church and University*, p. 254.
37. See also Sher, p. 254.
38. As Homer Brown explains, "Since the Jacobite rebellions began with and in a sense tested the validity of the 1688–89 Revolution, its subsequent settlements, and the Union between Scotland and England, they also chart the modern formation of the British State" (*Institutions* 145).
39. In *After Britain: New Labour and the Return of Scotland*, Tom Nairn explains that "assimilation or subordination of the non-English periphery was a necessary condition of Britain's great-power chase and imperial ambitions. Their desubordination is an equally necessary accompaniment of that phase's end" (5–6).
40. The headline for the issue published Wednesday, December 6, 2000, reads "A Challenge for the Crown: Now is the Time for Change." Inside, a picture of Buckingham Palace includes a "to let" sign on its gate.

Notes to Chapter 5

1. In her discussion of "nationalist gothic" and "annalistic novels," Katie Trumpener makes a similar point. These works, she writes, "… refuse this happy ending to stress the traumatic consequences of historical transformation and the long-term uneven development, even schizophrenia, it creates in 'national characters'. Although such novels now seem prescient in their critique of colonialism and modernization, it is Walter Scott's historical novel, with its stress on historical progress, that won out as the paradigmatic novel of empire, appealing to nationalist, imperialist, and colonial readers alike" (xiii).
2. Another contributor to the volume on the Romantic novel, Simon Edwards, addresses the historical novel's "… universal concern with violence" (295).
3. See also Saree Makdisi, *Romantic Imperialism*, where he argues that "London finally degenerates for Wordsworth precisely into an experience of terror, rather than the sublimity he associates with Nature" (38).
4. Wordsworth's Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, for example, cites the "the great national events which are daily taking place" as proof that poets are especially needed at present.
5. Hill, *The Century of Revolution, 1603–1714*, pp. 235–36; Trevelyan, *The English Revolution*, p. 4.
6. See the *Enquiry*, Book IV section 3.
7. David Simpson argues that after 1793 "everyone with any tolerance for system or theory was branded a Jacobin …" (55). See also pp. 63–84.
8. In his *Thoughts Occasioned by the Perusal of Dr. Parr's Spital Sermon* (1800).
9. As discussed in Chapter 3, even disciples like Percy Shelley had doubts about this non-revolutionary stance. A series of letters between the two concerning Shelley's scheme to push for Catholic emancipation in Ireland and a repeal of the Act of Union (1801) has Shelley advocating "Godwinian" arguments in defense of his scheme and Godwin maintaining that the "pervading principle" of his book is that "… association is a most ill-chosen mode of endeavoring to promote the political happiness of mankind." In his March 4, 1802 letter to Shelley Godwin explains that "you might as well tell the adder not to sting … as to tell organized societies of men … to employ no violence."
10. The first edition of the *Enquiry* (1793) contains a section on "Literature," which is one of the three ways, says Godwin, by which humans will advance toward political justice. His description depicts a "public sphere of letters" model of literature and was removed in subsequent editions of the *Enquiry*.
11. See Leith Davis, *Acts of Union*, p. 13.
12. Godwin's Preface was withheld from publication because, as he says, "Terror was the order of the day; and it was feared that even the humble novelist might be shown to be constructively a traitor" (*Caleb Williams* 4).
13. Here one thinks of Benjamin's oft-quoted claim that "there is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism" (256).
14. In his *Keywords* entry Raymond Williams explains that the word " 'violence'… seems to be specialized to 'unauthorized' uses: the violence of a 'terrorist' but not, except by its opponents, of an army, where 'force' is preferred and most operations of war and preparation for war are described as 'defense' " (329). See my introduction, pp. 12–13.

15. According to Pamela Clemit, Godwin had read Scott's *Guy Mannering* and *The Antiquary* prior to writing *Mandeville*; he read *Old Mortality* while revising it. See *The Godwinian Novel*, pp. 87–97.
16. James Chandler explains that "*Waverley* was initially thought by some readers to have been written by William Godwin" (213). See also William St. Clair, *The Godwins and the Shelleys*, p. 395.
17. See Trevelyan, for example, p. 3 and pp. 108–27.
18. "The moderate literati of Edinburgh" is Richard Sher's term. See his *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment* and my discussion in Chapter 4.
19. See Richard Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Theory*. Though published in 1690, Locke's *Second Treatise* was written during the much more volatile period of the Exclusion Crisis.
20. Sher, *Church and University*, p. 147. Hume, who was denied an academic post because of his atheism, is a notable exception to this.
21. It may have taken awhile but it seems that some literary critics are following up on Godwin's project. In the Introduction to their edited collection, *Refiguring Revolutions: Aesthetics and Politics from the English Revolution to the Romantic Revolution*, Kevin Sharpe and Steven Zwicker explain that "the recognition of 1649 and 1789 as starting and ending points suggests not only a new history but a new terrain of aesthetics and politics, a terrain yet to be explored and mapped" (6).
22. Sher, *Church and University*, p. 308.
23. "This truthfulness of historical atmosphere which we are able to relive in Scott," says Lukacs, "rests on the popular character of his art" (48).
24. In an essay comparing Wordsworth and Cobbett's responses to the Reform Act, Peter Manning remarks that "The Reform Bill, introduced in the House of Commons the previous Month, had deranged [Wordsworth's] equilibrium" (153). Wordsworth went to Scotland with his daughter in part to "escape his fears" that the Reform might pass in its present form—and thus subvert the constitution; and in part to visit Walter Scott. Manning argues that "Wordsworth's inability to see the Reform Bill as Cobbett and others saw it, as heading off worse violence, arose from the kind of sealed-off memory that operates affirmatively in the poems of *Yarrow Revisited*" (165). I would suggest that a similar process of "sealed-off memory" is present in Scott's fiction.

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