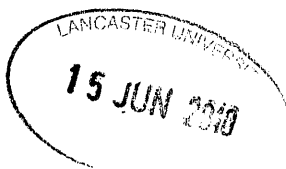


Textuality and Travel from Gray to Byron

Zoe Ann Bolton (B. A. (hons), M. A.)

This thesis is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the
Department of English & Creative Writing, Lancaster University
July, 2009



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ABSTRACT

Zoe Ann Bolton (B.A. (hons), M. A.)

‘Textuality and Travel from Gray to Byron’

This thesis is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the Department of English & Creative Writing, Lancaster University (July, 2009)

This thesis explores the relationship between textuality and travel in the writings of a key selection of eighteenth-century and Romantic authors. While existing critical work on the travel literature of this period tends to concentrate only on published versions of texts and does not fully address issues of form and textual status (Korte, 2000; Blanton, 2002; Thompson, 2007); this study focuses on composition, editing and publication, and considers important questions about the relationship between the experience of travel and its expression in certain textual forms – journals, letters and poetry. How is a writer’s relationship with travel articulated at the compositional stage through the use of particular forms and generic spaces? To what extent does the private or public status of a text determine a writer’s engagement with travel? How does the physical act of travelling impact on the creative process? What effect does editing and publication – authorial and non-authorial – have on the experience of travel represented in a text? What are the implications for modern editors and critics?

This study aims to answer these questions through a series of writer-specific case studies, informed by the work of Donald Reiman (1983; 1997), Jack Stillinger (1991; 1994; 1999) and Jerome McGann (1983, 1991). The first of two chapters on Thomas Gray examines the relationship between letter writing, poetry and place in his Grand Tour correspondence with Richard West (1739-1741); while the second explores the evolution of his *Lake District Journal* (1769) from private document to public Picturesque work. The third chapter considers travel as a context for textual self-

translation in Mary Wollstonecraft's letters to Gilbert Imlay and *Letters Written During A Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark* (1796). The penultimate case study concentrates on exile and poetic composition in Lord Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage I-III* (1816); while the final chapter examines shared writing and travel in Percy and Mary Shelley's *History of a Six Weeks' Tour* (1817). These particular case studies have been selected because they reveal how the dynamic between textuality and travel operates: an understanding that can fundamentally alter critical perceptions of these writers and their texts.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is all my own work and that it has not been submitted in substantially the same form for the award of higher degree elsewhere.

Signature:

Date: 31st July 2009

Zoe Ann Bolton

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ABBREVIATIONS

- BCPW* Byron, Lord, *The Complete Poetical Works of Lord Byron*, ed. by Jerome McGann, 7 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980-86)
- BLJ* Byron, Lord, *Byron's Letters and Journals*, ed. by Leslie Marchand, 12 vols (London: John Murray, 1973-82)
- TGCP* Gray, Thomas, *The Complete Poems of Thomas Gray: English, Latin Greek*, ed. by H. W. Starr and J. R. Hendrickson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966)
- TGC* Gray, Thomas, *Correspondence of Thomas Gray*, ed. by Paget Toynbee and Leonard Whibley, with corrections and additions by H. W. Starr, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971)
- MSNSW* Shelley, Mary, *The Novels and Selected Works of Mary Shelley*, ed. by Pamela Clemit, 8 vols (London: William Pickering, 1996)
- LMWS* Shelley, Mary, *The Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*, ed. by Betty Bennett, 3 vols (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980)
- JMWS* Shelley, Mary, *The Journals of Mary Shelley 1814-1844*, ed. by Paula Feldman and Diana Scott-Kilvert, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987)
- HSWT* Shelley, Mary and Percy Bysshe Shelley, *History of a Six Weeks' Tour (1817)*, 2nd edn, ed. by Jonathan Wordsworth (Oxford: Woodstock Books, 2002)
- SPP* Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, 2nd edn, ed. by Donald Reiman and Neil Fraistat (New York: Norton, 2002)
- LPBS* Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. by Frederick Jones, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon, 1964)
- WCL* Wollstonecraft, Mary, *The Collected Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft*, ed. by Janet Todd (London: Allen Lane, 2003)
- LDSR* Wollstonecraft, Mary and William Godwin, *Letters Written During A Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark and Memoirs of the Author of 'The Rights of Woman'*, ed. by Richard Holmes (London: Penguin, 1987)

Introduction

So we came to Rome again, where waited for us a splendidissimo regalo of letters; in one of which came You, with your huge characters and wide intervals, staring.¹

You cannot conceive how much I am astonished at the way in which it is obvious from the MSS this magnificent Canto was written from actual moments of instantaneous inspiration, & at the very places wch it actually describes – the scraps of variously coloured paper – the writing in Pencil – all most forcibly mark the Genius of the writer.²

This thesis is about textuality and travel. It is concerned with how motives for travel translate into motives for composition; how the autobiographical or creative self is textually transformed through the experience of unfamiliar places; and how the physical act of journeying affects textual production. Concentrating on texts written by a selection of key British eighteenth-century and Romantic authors during the period roughly spanning 1740-1820, this study will discuss the dynamics of textuality and travel in relation to the vital connection, identified in the epigraphs, between the experience of travel and its expression in certain textual forms. This connection will be explored in material ways by focusing on the composition, editing and publication of a selection of texts that are produced during, or emerge out of, different modes of European travel – ranging from the conventional Grand and Picturesque tours to exile and elopement. The aim here is not to offer a historical literary survey, or to read the texts as generic examples of travel writing but rather to understand travel as a textual phenomena by examining the *textual effects* of writing in, and out of, the context of journeying. Above all, this thesis is

¹ Letter from Thomas Gray to Richard West, 20th May 1740. *TGC*, I, pp. 157-158.

² Letter from John Murray to Augusta Leigh describing the first draft manuscript of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage III*, 13th July 1832. National Library of Scotland, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage III* MS.

about the material and psychological instability of writing whilst travelling rather than the stable published genre of ‘travel writing’.

Although there is currently no study that approaches travel from the perspective of textuality, there is a wealth of scholarly work on eighteenth-century and Romantic travel writing and the subject has been usefully investigated from a variety of interrelated perspectives including genre, identity formation, gender, aesthetics, modes of travel and colonialism.³ The available criticism does valuably contribute to ongoing debates about travel literature, particularly in terms of identifying historical and generic trends. However, the tendency to concentrate almost exclusively on the subject matter of accounts and to focus on only final (published) versions of individual works, whether well-known or obscure, has led to the neglect of some important textual matters.

³ For examples of work on genre see Charles Batten, *Pleasurable Instruction: Form and Convention in Eighteenth-Century Travel Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978); and Barbara Korte, *English Travel Writing: From Pilgrimages to Postcolonial Explorations* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000). For criticism on travel and identity formation see Eric Leed, *The Mind of the Traveller: From Gilgamesh to Global Tourism* (New York: Basic Books, 1991); Casey Blanton, *Travel Writing: The Self and the World* (London: Routledge, 2002); and Carl Thompson, *The Suffering Traveller and the Romantic Imagination* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2007). For work on gender and travel see Shirley Foster, *Across New Worlds: Nineteenth-Century Women Travellers and their Writings* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990); and Elizabeth Bohls, *Women Travel Writers and the Language of Aesthetics 1716-1818* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). For an example of work on aesthetics from a different perspective see Nigel Leask, *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing 1770-1840* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). For examples from the wide range of critical material on modes of travel see Chloe Chard, *Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour: Travel Writing and Imaginative Geography 1600-1830* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999); Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscapes, Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain, 1760-1800* (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1990); Anne Wallace, *Walking, Literature, and English Culture: The Origins and Uses of Peripatetic in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); and Robin Jarvis, *Romantic Writing and Pedestrian Travel* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997). Finally, for work on colonialism see Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean 1492-1797* (London: Routledge, 1992); and Tim Fulford and Peter Kitson (eds), *Romanticism and Colonialism: Writing and Empire 1780-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

To begin with, while most critics do acknowledge an affinity between certain types of writing and discourses of travel, issues of form have not been fully addressed. In her generic overview of travel writing, Barbara Korte notes that, over the course of the Eighteenth Century, travel accounts were ‘frequently published in the form of a diary, the journal or the letter’.⁴ Like the majority of critics, Korte does not go on to consider how these forms are being used by their authors or that their generic characteristics will inevitably influence the representation of the travel experience. Even Charles Batten, whose book *Pleasurable Instruction: Form and Convention in Eighteenth-Century Travel Literature* seems to promise a detailed investigation of the formal properties of travel texts, neatly avoids it by concentrating on narrative and descriptive conventions.⁵

This side-stepping not only of form but also of issues of textual status is arguably a consequence of the critical privileging of published versions of travel writings. In studies dealing with travel writing and print culture, focus on published texts is obviously necessary and has led to some enlightening discoveries. For example, by comparing ‘well-known travel writings’ with accounts that have been out of print since the Eighteenth Century, Katherine Turner uncovers the central role that travel writing played in ‘shaping Britain’s emerging sense of national identity – an identity [...] which proves to be more complex and less homogenous than some recent cultural and historical studies would suggest’.⁶ Similarly, in *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing*, Nigel Leask turns to neglected published texts ‘motivated by antiquarian and [...] ethnological

⁴ Korte, *English Travel Writing*, p. 53. All subsequent references to this text will be given parenthetically.

⁵ See footnote 3 for full reference.

⁶ Katherine Turner, *British Travel Writers in Europe 1750-1800: Authorship, Gender and National Identity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), p. 4, p.1. All subsequent references to this text will be given parenthetically.

curiosity', and shows that generalisations about the subjectivity of Romantic travel literature are misleading because of the taste for 'descriptive or "objective" adequacy' that also developed in the early Nineteenth Century.⁷

While it is important, then, to recognise the diversity of, and demand for, published travel narratives in the period, the critical emphasis on the published text has also resulted in misleading generalisations about the contrast between eighteenth-century and Romantic travel discourses. In *The Suffering Traveller and the Romantic Imagination*, for instance, Carl Thompson argues that 'Romantic texts stand subtly apart from many [...] other [travel] narratives, being distinguished from them principally, of course, by the fact that they are written as poetry not prose'.⁸ When factoring in writings not originally intended for publication it becomes apparent that this claim cannot stand. As well as composing poetry all of the major Romantic figures penned prose accounts of travel including Samuel Taylor Coleridge's notebook record of his 1802 Lake District tour, Lord Byron's 'Alpine Journal' and Percy Bysshe Shelley's detailed letters to Thomas Love Peacock.⁹ Most significantly for this thesis, published versions of travel narratives, whether poetry or prose, effectively disguise their often complex histories of textual production. It is only when these histories are fully examined that it becomes apparent that travel texts are regularly the products of authorially intertextual and cross-generic models of composition, and that they frequently move across private and public textual spaces. As this study will show, taking these textual features into account at the interpretative stage

⁷ Leask, *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing 1770-1840*, p. 4, p. 8.

⁸ Thompson, *The Suffering Traveller and the Romantic Imagination*, p. 44. All subsequent references to this text will be given parenthetically.

⁹ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. by Kathleen Coburn, 4 vols (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957), I, 1207-1228; 'Alpine Journal', *BLJ*, V, pp. 96-105; *LPBS*, I-II.

can alter our responses to the engagement with travel represented in the variant private and public texts.

To redress these neglected issues of form, textual status and textual production, four key interrelated questions will be considered over the course of this thesis. How is a writer's relationship with travel articulated at the compositional stage through the use of particular forms and generic spaces? To what extent does the private or public status of a text determine a writer's engagement with, and reader response to, travel? How does the physical act of travelling impact on the creative process? Finally, what effect does editing and publication, both authorial and non-authorial, have on the experience of travel represented in a text? In order to answer these questions this thesis will look at a range of texts produced during, or influenced by, travel – poetic epistles, journals, correspondence and poetry – and, where relevant, will examine private and public versions that span the composition, editing and publication stages of textual development.

Defining Textuality

As the issues of textuality and travel that this study addresses remain largely neglected in existing travel writing criticism, the methodological approach here will be informed by the work of three influential textual scholars: Donald Reiman, Jack Stillinger and Jerome McGann. Their contributions to Romanticism have yielded scholarly editions of the work of some major Romantic figures, and they have also engaged in theoretical debates about the function of textual criticism. These debates provide a vital context for this thesis because they enable a consideration of what is meant by textuality. It is surprisingly

difficult to find a critical definition of this concept because it is often used as a catch-all term to describe the complex condition of a literary work not just in its published form but also in its pre- and post-publication states. However, across the work of Reiman, Stillingner and McGann three different, but interconnected, models for addressing textuality emerge: the authorial model, the textual pluralism model and the social model.

Reiman's ideas about textuality primarily stem from his editing of Shelley and his involvement in the *Manuscripts of the Younger Romantics*, *Bodleian Shelley Manuscripts* and *Shelley and his Circle* series : multi-volume editions that have made facsimile versions of Shelley's manuscripts and those of other Romantic writers more widely accessible. In the introduction to *Romantic Texts and Contexts* (1987), an edited collection of Reiman's most influential essays, he describes himself as:

A scholar critic involved in analysing literature through the use of primary sources, who tries to take into account the textual biographical documents that reveal the author's intention, not just at some single point (when the first edition appeared, or when the author last revised the work), but throughout the course of its conception, birth and development.¹⁰

For Reiman, textuality is an evolving phenomenon registered through the changing, and often ambiguous, intentions of the author across all the different stages of textual development. Out of this definition arise two fundamental ideas. Firstly, Reiman views literature as an essentially 'human product, having relevance only to human beings' and he argues that 'without the author and his imaginative soul, the work of art cannot exist at all' (p. 8). Although Reiman does recognise the important role of the reader – 'without the reader [...] the poem is uncreated, becoming mere marks on paper or stone that await

¹⁰ Donald Reiman, *Romantic Texts and Contexts* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1987), p. 1. All subsequent references to this text will be given parenthetically.

reanimation by a sensitive human soul' (p. 8) – one of his main aims is to understand texts through the lens of authorial intention: 'The clarification – or, sometimes, the growing ambiguity – of the author's intention provides one of the contexts that I take into consideration while unveiling the meaning of the work of art' (p. 1). Second, in recognising that authorial intentions are not fixed, Reiman also proposes a move 'away from the attempt to produce "definitive" or "ideal" critical editions and, instead, to encourage the production of editions of discrete versions of works' (p. 179). Behind this belief that 'versioning' might 'prove to be the most useful fruit of textual criticism of our time' (p. 4) is the theoretical premise that, in order to reveal the full range of an author's changing intentions, texts should be considered as multiple rather than singular entities.

The intentionalist approach also informs Reiman's book *The Study of Modern Manuscripts* (1993) in which he advocates a critical classification of manuscripts based on whether they are '*public, confidential (or corporate), or private (or personal)*'.¹¹ Using 'the social intentions of the writer' as the determining criteria (p. 40), Reiman defines the categories as follows:

Public manuscripts record texts that their authors expect or hope will be made accessible to a multiplicity of readers whom the authors do not know and who, at least initially, might have little or no personal interest in the writers themselves [...] *Private*, or *personal*, manuscripts, on the other hand, are addressed to specific people, selected in advance, whom the writers know – or hope – will take personal interest in them [...] Of wider circulation than the strictly private document are *confidential* or *corporate* manuscripts, not intended for the eyes of a wide and diverse readership, but addressed to a specific group of individuals all of whom either are personally known to the writer or belong to some predefined group that the writer has reason to believe share communal values with him or her. (pp. 38-39)

¹¹ Donald Reiman, *The Study of Modern Manuscripts: Public, Private, Confidential* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 38. All subsequent references to this text will be given parenthetically.

For Reiman, an author's intended reader or readers at the time of writing dictates the status of the text. A '*public*' document is written for a wide audience of unknown readers; a '*confidential or corporate*' document for a group of identified readers; and a '*private or personal*' document for one addressee who can either be the writer himself or a known recipient. As this thesis examines both private and public versions of individual texts, Reiman's definitions are important because, as he notes, 'in reading and studying [...] private documents, [...] we risk committing fundamental scholarly fallacies if we fail to make distinctions between them and public documents with regard to the intentions of the author and their possible range of effects on readers' (p. 43). In other words, *all* texts are shaped by their authors to meet the requirements of a predetermined audience. Yet reader-awareness is arguably most acute in private documents because of the highly specific nature of the writer-as-reader or writer-to-reader dynamic. While private texts can be (and often are) read by those for whom they were not originally intended, factoring their author- and reader-specific elements into interpretation can radically alter our reading of those texts. This is equally the case with private documents that are now accessible in published forms and, which as Reiman suggests, are 'demonstrably treated as if they were public [...] whenever the writer, the recipient, or the subject matter gains such fame or notoriety as to arouse the interests of scholars' (p. 43). Just because these documents are published it does not mean that their private dynamics are any less significant and it is still crucial to take the original status of the text into account at the analytical stage.

Although Reiman's classification system usefully enables a distinction to be made between the status of different texts, he places too much emphasis on authorial intention at the time of writing. This emphasis not only contradicts his argument in *Romantic Texts*

and Contexts that it is necessary to examine an author's shifting intentions across the 'conception, birth and development' of a literary work, it also elides the crucial role that editors and publishing institutions play in the textual process. In *Modern Manuscripts*, Reiman does recognise that 'publication and other circumstances can clearly transform a private manuscript into a public one' (p. 42). However, he goes on to suggest that the change in status does not ultimately alter the private authorial identity of the text:

Authors who intend their work to be published write with that end in view. By the same logic, when a personal letter is published, it does not thereby become a public document, but simply a published personal text. (pp. 43-44)

Reiman's sounding note of caution is aimed at critics who treat posthumously published editions of private documents as public works. Yet he does not seem to allow for the fact that there might be instances where private textual identity is fundamentally altered by publication. For example, a writer might compose a private document and subsequently decide to publish that text within his or her lifetime. Conversely, a private text might undergo a substantial transformation, authorised or unauthorised, at the hands of an editor. In each of these cases – and there are examples of them in this thesis – the resulting version cannot simply be classified as 'a published personal text'. In the first example, the change in status and identity has been deliberately initiated by the author and, in the second, the source text has been materially changed during the process of editing. Reiman's model of textuality, then, is limited by the rigidity of his author-centric approach, but he does provide a rationale for handling the interpretation of texts on the basis of their status. When I use the terms 'private' and 'public' throughout this study, I will follow Reiman's definitions but I will do so with an awareness that both a shift in authorial intention and the interventions of editors can transform the identity of the text.

While Jack Stillinger shares Reiman's conviction in the importance of versioning, he has developed a pluralist model of textuality that is sensitive to the problems inherent in the intentionalist approach. In the introduction to *Reading The Eve of St Agnes: The Multiples of Complex Literary Transaction* (1999), Stillinger states that his aim has been to complicate the simple Author–Text–Reader dynamic by 'studying each of the three elements as a complex of multiples: multiple authorship, multiple versions of text, and multiple readership'.¹² Although this thesis does engage with the reader response aspect of textuality, mainly by drawing on review materials, it is Stillinger's work on multiple authorship and multiple versions of texts that is of most relevance here.

In *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius* (1991), Stillinger argues that, in many cases, 'the concept of *an* author – singular – as creator of a text [...] does not accord with the facts of literary production'¹³:

Multiple authorship, when all the different forms of it are taken together, is [...] an extremely common phenomenon; a work may be the collaborative product of the nominal author and a friend, spouse, a ghost, an agent, an editor, a translator, a publisher, a censor, a transcriber, a printer, or – what is more often the case – several of these acting together or in succession. (p. v)

Stillinger's definition of what constitutes collaboration is quite open and through a series of case studies on writers including John Keats, John Stuart Mill, William Wordsworth and Coleridge, he examines four main models of composite creativity: 'the collaboration of a young writer with friends and publishers who want to help him succeed'; 'the collaboration of a well-established writer with a powerful intellectual partner who

¹² Jack Stillinger, *Reading The Eve of St Agnes: The Multiples of Complex Literary Transaction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 7. All subsequent references to this text will be given parenthetically.

¹³ Jack Stillinger, *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. v. All subsequent references to this text will be given parenthetically.

happens also to be a spouse'; 'the author revising earlier versions of himself'; and finally, 'the author interacting collaboratively with sources and influences' (p. 23). Considering each of these examples of collaboration, Stillinger makes the broader theoretical point that 'there is a basic contradiction between the theorists' single-author standard for interpreting and editing and the way much of our literature has been, and continues to be, produced' (p. 202). Although authorial contributions to textual development remain important to him – 'the author-banishing theorists are deceiving themselves if they really believe that one can dispense with authors while still retaining an idea of the literary' (p. 16) – his work also shows how a return to the facts of process can result in more accurate interpretation. As this thesis does handle authorial versions of texts, Stillinger's emphasis on collaborative models of creativity usefully opens up thinking about the different shared writing strategies that might, in some cases, be necessitated by the act of travel.

Stillinger's work on collaborative authorship also provides him with a foundation for thinking about other multiples of textuality. In *Coleridge and Textual Instability: The Multiple Versions of the Major Poems* (1994), he defines a material theory of versions in the context of existing editorial theory. As Stillinger points out, 'the three commonest current ideas about editing' are all 'related to ideas about authorial intention'¹⁴:

The latest-text theory is based on the notion that the latest is best because it is the best representative of the author's intention; the earliest-text theory is based on the notion that the earliest text (rather than the latest) is where the author's "real" intention resides; and the newest theory, which I shall here call textual pluralism, is based on the idea that each version of a work embodies a separate authorial intention that is not necessarily the same as the authorial intention in any other version of the same work. (p. 119)

¹⁴ Jack Stillinger, *Coleridge and Textual Instability: The Multiple Versions of the Major Poems* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 119. All subsequent references to this text will be given parenthetically.

Stillinger recognises that a theory of textual pluralism is ‘a much more appropriate way’ to regard writings than an approach which ignores extended textual histories (p. 121), and he also allows for the fact that ‘writers are only the principal, not the sole, authors of even the most authoritative of their texts’ (p. 124). In other words, unlike Reiman, Stillinger acknowledges that different intentions across different versions of the same work may belong not just to the writer but also to other participants in the textual process. Drawing on the work of the textual critic Hans Zeller, Stillinger views distinct versions as *materially* embodied entities which differ ‘from the rest of the texts in at least one substantive variant’, arguing that ‘intention can only be inferred from the text itself, and “authorisation” lies in the textual documents rather than in any imagined intention behind them’ (p. 130). As this thesis is concerned with texts that often exist in multiple versions, I will follow Stillinger’s line and distinguish between versions on the basis of substantive linguistic and/or material differences. This enables changes to the private or public status of a text to be traced through actual discrepancies between versions. Isolating versions in this way is also useful because it not only reveals important information about how a text develops, it shows as well how the representation of the travel experience changes across versions: changes that, as this study will demonstrate, have implications for how we interpret the text.

As Stillinger acknowledges, his theory of versions is also influenced by McGann’s *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* (1983). The core ideas in this book emerge out of McGann’s editing of Byron’s poetry which, in *Fiery Dust* (1968), is examined predominantly from an authorial perspective: ‘The phenomenon of Byronic self-

expression is [...] the central focus of the book'.¹⁵ Through the practicalities of the editing process, McGann realised that the rationale for choosing a copy-text that 'most nearly represents the author's original (or final) intentions' was problematic when working with a socially aware writer like Byron.¹⁶ This led him to argue in *Critique* that 'literary works are fundamentally social rather than personal or psychological products' and that "'final authority" for literary works rests neither with the author nor with his affiliated institution; it resides in the actual structure of the agreements which these two cooperating authorities reach in specific cases' (p. 54). For McGann, because textuality is 'a social phenomenon it is inseparable from 'histories of [...] production, reproduction and reception' and, as a result, texts 'must be analysed in such a way as to distinguish author's intentions toward the work, or the degree of revision and correction which the various texts display, both authorial and non-authorial' (pp. 122-23). As Stillinger neatly puts it, McGann's theory is based on three key assumptions. Firstly, that 'each version has its separate complex authority (the multiple authority of the author in combination with other institutional components); second, that 'each has a legitimate place in the history of the work'; and finally, that 'each is inseparable from its physical form' (*Coleridge and Textual Instability*, p. 131). McGann expands on these assumptions in *The Textual Condition* (1991), where he argues that 'textuality cannot be understood except as a phenomenal event'¹⁷:

¹⁵ Jerome McGann, *Fiery Dust: Byron's Poetic Development* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. vii.

¹⁶ Jerome McGann, *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*, 2nd edn (Virginia: University Press of Virginia, 1992), p. 15. All subsequent references to this text will be given parenthetically.

¹⁷ Jerome McGann, *The Textual Condition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 4-5. All subsequent references to this text will be given parenthetically.

Every text enters the world under determinate sociohistorical conditions, and while these conditions may and should be variously defined and imagined, they establish the horizon within which the life histories of different texts can play themselves out. The law of change declares that these histories will exhibit a ceaseless process of textual development and mutation [...] to study texts and textualities, then, we have to study these complex (and open-ended) histories of textual change and variance. (p. 9)

According to McGann, *all* texts, ‘including those that may appear to be purely private’, are social texts (p. 21) because they ‘vary from themselves [...] as soon as they engage with the readers that they anticipate’ (pp. 9-10). What McGann is articulating, is a more fluid understanding of textuality as an ever-evolving process brought about by the different sociohistorical conditions a text is subject to over the course of its lifetime. This approach recognises text as the product of a pre-existing linguistic system and, in turn, views ‘textual development and mutation’ as the condition of textuality (p. 9). The intervention of readers, editors and publishing institutions – and the ‘mutations’ that the text undergoes in their hands – are not, then, to be considered as a corruption or violation of the source material but rather as a crucial part of the meaning cycle of a literary work. In acknowledging that every potential context for reading is already latent in a text and that it is not possible to identify a single authoritative version, McGann’s argument is close to Jacques Derrida’s concept of text.¹⁸ As such, he finds a way of recognising the importance of the nominal author in the process of textual development without presenting a simplified account of the nature of language and meaning. As this study examines both authorial and non-authorial versions of texts, McGann’s emphasis on the importance of post-compositional evolution usefully enables the changes made to texts

¹⁸Jacques Derrida, ‘Signature. Event, Context’, in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. by Alan Bass (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1982), pp. 307-330. In this essay, Derrida shows that a fundamental property of all writing is that it is ‘iterable’ because it is capable of generating meaning beyond its site of production: “‘written communication’ must [...] remain legible despite the absolute disappearance of every determined addressee in general for it to function as writing, that is, for it to be legible’ (p. 315).

during the editing and publication process to be recognised as important stages in the history of the work and not as a corruption of authorial source materials.

The different models of textuality outlined by Reiman, Stillinger and McGann all feed into the definition of textuality that informs this thesis. The travel texts considered here either exist in multiple private and public authorial versions; are private texts posthumously edited and published by a writer's contemporary; or are co-authored. It is thus important to be clear about the approach to textuality that I will be adopting. While Reiman's authorial classification of textual status is of value for distinguishing between private and public texts in the compositional context, this study does not view textuality as a solely authorial concept. Following Stillinger and McGann, textuality is seen instead as a plural and social phenomenon whereby textual identity and meaning is an ever-evolving material and social process. Within this definition there is not one authoritative text but multiple versions of a text that are of equal importance in the history of the work.

Although not all of the chapters in this thesis will engage explicitly with the work of textual critics, it is this plural and social concept of textuality that determines, and is crucial to, the methodological approach of this whole study. This understanding of textuality enables the texts under discussion here to be explored both in relation to their final published form and apart from it, with a full recognition of their changing status and textual development across all stages of private and public presentation. Moreover, returning to the facts of production allows the cross-generic character of many of these texts to be considered in more detail. While some chapters will isolate and deal with

multiple authorial versions of texts, others will consider the impact of editing and publication, both authorial and non-authorial, on textual identity and interpretation. In each case, the chosen versions for analysis are selected on the basis that they represent particular phases in the history of the work: phases that are relevant to the investigation of textuality and travel.

Contextualising Travel

Having outlined the theories of textuality which bear upon this study, I want to turn now to consider the external factors shaping the experience of travel in the Eighteenth and early Nineteenth centuries; factors that directly affect writings produced, or influenced by, acts of journeying. Of particular importance to this thesis is an understanding of how modes of travel and attitudes to travel changed over the period because this provides a vital context for evaluating textuality.

In *British Travel Writers in Europe 1750-1800* Katherine Turner takes issue with travel writing critics who ‘tend to overemphasise the Grand Tour component’ when ‘the non- (frequently, indeed, anti-) aristocratic flavour of much eighteenth-century travel writing can hardly be stressed too much’ (p. 17). While it is misleading to suggest that travel in the Eighteenth Century can be discussed solely in terms of the Grand Tour, this was still the most influential European itinerary of the time, growing in popularity until it was made difficult by the French Revolution and Napoleonic conflicts. Although other classes of traveller did journey into Europe, for much of the century, until around 1760 when

travel became more widely accessible, the typical Grand Tourist was an aristocratic or upper class male between the age of sixteen and twenty-five. The Tour was primarily intended as an educational experience, which prepared the traveller for the adult responsibilities that awaited him on his return home. As Jeremy Black notes in his historical study of the Grand Tour, 'the principal arguments advanced in favour of foreign travel were that it equipped the traveller socially and provided him with useful knowledge and attainments'.¹⁹ This emphasis on the social and educational advantages of the Tour meant that, while the travel itinerary did vary within certain confines, there were obligatory places that all travellers would be expected to visit. This was true regardless of whether the trip lasted three months or three years.

One of the most popular routes, which incorporated all of the important sites, began with the traveller crossing the Channel from Dover to Calais and proceeding from there to Paris. From France there was an often terrifying, but sublime, journey over the Alps into Italy where, as Lynne Withey observes, 'the "musts" for the Grand Tourist were Rome, Florence, Naples, and Venice, more or less in that order of priority'.²⁰ In Venice and Florence the main attraction was the vast array of Renaissance art held in private collections, while Rome provided an opportunity to study antiquities and visit the Vatican. For many tourists Naples was the most southerly point of the journey and from there they made their way back to England by travelling through Germany and Holland.

¹⁹ Jeremy Black, *The British Abroad: The Grand Tour in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1992), p. 289. All subsequent references to this text will be given parenthetically.

²⁰ Lynne Withey, *Grand Tours and Cooks Tours: A History of Leisure Travel 1750 to 1915* (London: Aurum Press, 1997), p. 23.

In the interests of adequate supervision, all travellers were accompanied on the Tour by an entourage. This varied depending on wealth, but at a minimum included two servants and a middle-aged, university-educated clergy man who assumed the role of tutor. The tutor's duty, which was conferred upon him by the parents, was to ensure that his charge remained focused on education and did not fall prey to the vices of drinking and gambling or, worse still, end up in a compromising situation with a foreign woman.²¹ It is worth noting, however, that because of the nature of the itinerary there were always large numbers of British young men gathered in the key cities on the Tour and, as the tutor was financially dependent on his pupil, there was little he could do to prevent his student from joining his peers in making the most of his freedom whilst away from home.

A tension emerges, then, between the educational motives for the Grand Tour and the reality of the sort of 'educational' experience that it provided. This tension was exacerbated, as Black notes, by the financial cost of the Tour: 'Those who defended tourism rarely stressed the pleasures of foreign travel. Such a stress would have appeared trivial, and to defend the heavy cost of tourism it was necessary to advance reasons more consequential than those of enjoyment' (pp. 288-89). Such a defence was necessary because the Eighteenth Century was a time of widespread European conflict, which meant that the amount of British money being spent on the continent became a subject of political debate, rather than simply a matter of personal finance. One consequence of this politicisation was an 'extensive *anti-tour* literature that focused on the dangers, rather than the benefits, of sending young aristocrats abroad' (Thompson, p. 40).

²¹ Maxine Feifer, *Going Places: The Ways of the Tourist from Imperial Rome to the Present Day* (London: Macmillan, 1985), pp. 98-100. All subsequent references to this text will be given parenthetically.

The historical and political forces shaping the Grand Tour also had a direct influence on the writing of other types of texts. As Turner observes, a large amount of letters and diaries of the Tour survive but 'it is important to register how few Grand Tourists [...] actually published accounts of their travels' (p. 16). According to the *Monthly Review* (1766) the reason for this lack of publication was that:

Our travellers are in general young men of fortune, and are led by their tutors; and both of them, from the youth of one and the narrow education of the other, are as incapable of observation as if they were conducted through France and Italy blindfold.²²

While there may be some truth in this criticism it is equally likely that the busy schedules of the Grand Tourists left them with little time to write anything other than notes in their private diaries and journals, or their letters home. Moreover, political anxieties about the Tour probably also discouraged travellers from publishing versions of their private texts. Korte observes that owing to 'the huge proportion of apodemic instruction for the Grand Tour and the "proper" way of recording it' the majority of 'accounts of this type of journey tend to reveal only little or nothing about the traveller's subjective experience' (p. 47). Yet while private diaries and journals of the Tour were often restricted to objective observation, familiar letters provided a space where the traveller could record a more subjective engagement with his travels for the benefit of an intimate addressee. Although the Tour itself might be structured around a set itinerary which, as Korte notes, 'did not take the English traveller to territories entirely foreign, but rather [...] to countries abroad and yet familiar' (p. 39), it is important to acknowledge that textual responses were not homogenous but depended on the generic form of the expression.

²² *Monthly Review*, XXXIV (1766), 420. Also quoted in Turner, p. 17.

As a consequence of military action against Spain and France (1739-1748) and the Seven Years' War (1756-1763), the itinerary of the Grand Tour became more dangerous and, in a move as much motivated by growing patriotic feeling as by necessity, travellers turned their attention to discovering the natural scenery of the British Isles. Improvements in the turnpike system made access to remote parts of the country, such as the Lake District, the Scottish Highlands and Wales, possible for the first time which ushered in the next important phase in eighteenth-century travel: Picturesque tourism. Picturesque travel was at its height from around 1770 until the publication of William Wordsworth's *Guide to the Lakes* in 1810; and along with this new mode of responding to the landscape came the development of new ways of textualising the travel experience.²³

Although many areas of the country were recognised for their Picturesque qualities it was the Lake District that attracted the most attention, primarily for the reasons outlined by Thomas West in his preface to *A Guide to the Lakes* (1778):

There is no person but may find a motive for visiting this extraordinary region; especially those who intend to make the continental tour should begin here; as it will give in miniature, an idea of what they are to meet there in traversing the Alps.²⁴

The Lake District, as a miniature Alps, offered an alternative to the scenes travellers could expect to experience on the 'continental tour'. This comparison between the Lakes and Europe is important for two reasons. Firstly, Picturesque tourism initially appealed to the same class of traveller who would undertake a Grand Tour, those who, as West puts it,

²³ William Wordsworth, *Guide to the Lakes*, ed. by Ernest de Sélincourt, 5th edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).

²⁴ Thomas West, *A Guide to the Lakes* (London: Richardson and Urquhart, 1778), p. 5. All subsequent references to this text will be given parenthetically.

were ‘persons of genius, taste, and observation’ (p. 1). Second, it determined how the tourist should look at, and respond to, the natural scenery: many should ‘visit the lakes of Cumberland, Westmoreland, and Lancashire, there to contemplate [...] what refined art labours to imitate; the pastoral and rural landscape, varied in all the stiles, the soft, the rude, the romantic, and sublime’ (pp. 1-2). There is a notable emphasis here on the aesthetic appreciation of scenery. West’s reference to ‘refined art’ evokes the neo-classical, landscape paintings of Claude Lorrain, Salvator Rosa and Nicholas Poussin which the Grand Tourist would have seen first hand in Europe, while the contrast between the various ‘stiles’ places emphasis on the sublime and Picturesque qualities of the landscape.

This focus on the aesthetic merits of the landscape had already been anticipated in the first of William Gilpin’s series of essays on Picturesque beauty, *Observations on the River Wye in the Summer of 1770* (1782):

The following little work proposes a new object of pursuit; that of not barely examining the face of the country; but of examining it by the rules of picturesque beauty: that of not merely describing; but of adapting the description of natural scenery to the principles of artificial landscape; and of opening the sources of those pleasures, which are derived from the comparison.²⁵

As if to grant validity to the Picturesque travel experience, Gilpin makes it clear that the aim is a structured engagement with the landscape. The tourist was not supposed to be ‘barely examining the face of the country’ but rather judging it by the pre-determined ‘rules of Picturesque beauty’, which were themselves indebted to the ‘principles of

²⁵ William Gilpin, ‘Observations on the River Wye in the Summer of 1770’, in *The Picturesque: Literary Sources and Documents*, ed. by Malcolm Andrews, 3. vols (East Sussex: Helm, 1994), I, pp. 241-278 (p. 243).

artificial landscape'. There is an almost scientific aspect to this otherwise aesthetic 'pursuit', and to ensure that the tourist was properly equipped he carried with him two important accessories: a Claude Glass and a Picturesque guide book. The Claude Glass was a small convex mirror, named after Claude Lorrain, which reduced the vastness of the landscape to the size of a picture. The tourist would find an appropriate spot, turn his back on the landscape and view it in the mirror. If the light or time of year was unsatisfactory, he could add a colour tint to the lens, quite literally imposing Gilpin's 'principles of artificial landscape' onto the scenery.²⁶ In order to find the appropriate spot for using his Claude Glass, the tourist needed that other vital travel accessory: the Lakeland guide book.

Unlike the relatively small number of published accounts of the Grand Tour, a significant number of Picturesque guides appeared in the latter part of the Eighteenth Century. Their primary aim was to direct the tourist to the best 'stations' for viewing the Picturesque and sublime prospects of the region. As the Picturesque traveller was not inclined to climb mountains, these stations were normally situated at a low level, often on the shores of major lakes such as Windermere and Derwentwater. The outcome of this prescriptive itinerary was that large numbers of tourists, all looking in the same way at the same things, gathered in a handful of "must see" places.

²⁶ Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque*, pp. 67-71. All subsequent references to this text will be given parenthetically.

The specificity of the Picturesque travel experience also resulted in many conformist textual accounts of the Lake District tour, characterised by stock descriptive vocabulary and use of form. As Malcolm Andrews notes in *The Search for the Picturesque*:

Descriptive staleness was inevitable, given the peculiar nature of Picturesque tourism, in which the object was not so much to find something new to describe and then experiment with a new vocabulary, as to find scenery which resembled familiar paintings of poetic descriptions. If you found the right scenery, then your tour journal would logically proclaim the discovery in the appropriate aesthetic vocabulary. (pp. 76-77)

Most Picturesque accounts took the form of journals and, as Andrews has shown, by the 1780s literary-minded tourists could buy specially tailored notebooks containing pages with columns for recording the date, the location and landscape description (pp. 73-6). Over the latter stages of the Eighteenth Century large numbers of these Picturesque journals were published, with many others being circulated in manuscript and, as a result, 'the need to distinguish one's own tour record from others became increasingly important' (Andrews, p. 76). Such distinguishing was often handled in the preface, another standard feature of the Picturesque text, in which the writer contextualised his account in relation to those of his predecessors and made claims for originality. It is important to recognise, then, that many of these early Lake District tourists had their travels and texts determined by the confines of the Picturesque experience.

By the end of the Eighteenth Century, the conformity of the Picturesque tour had already been lampooned in James Plumptre's *The Lakers* (1798) and was later to be satirised in William Combe and Thomas Rowlandson's *The Tour of Dr Syntax in Search of the*

Picturesque (1809).²⁷ The appearance of these travel satires is indicative of a broader change in attitudes toward established modes of tourism, which began to emerge during the Romantic period. There was no semantic difference at this time between the terms 'traveller' and 'tourist' and, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, 'tourist' did not even enter common usage until 1780; while the citation of Samuel Pegge's observation in 1800 that 'a Traveller is now-a-days called a Tour-ist' suggests that the words still carried similar meanings at the turn of the century.²⁸ In fact the *OED* does not record any derogatory use of 'tourist' until 1849 (p. 307). However, as Thompson has shown, an outcome of the 'tourist boom of the late eighteenth-century' was an 'upsurge of anti-touristic attitudes and discourses' (p. 40).²⁹ According to Thompson, although the Romantics were 'clearly very much inheritors of, and participants in, the tourist boom', in both their travel practices and their travel writings they sought to define themselves 'in contradistinction to other contemporary tourists' (p. 43, p. 46). As Thompson goes on to suggest, Romantic travellers were particularly keen to distinguish themselves from the Grand and Picturesque tourists by reacting against 'the excessively prescribed nature' of these modes of travel (p. 52).

The most obvious way in which this reaction is apparent is in textual evidence of anti-touristic attitudes. Keen to distinguish herself from spoilt and indulgent female tourists, Wollstonecraft notes in *Letters Written During A Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and*

²⁷ James Plumptre, *The Lakers 1798* (Oxford: Woodstock Books, 1990); William Combe, 'The Tour of Dr Syntax in Search of the Picturesque', in *Picturesque: Literary Sources and Documents*, III, pp. 83-100.

²⁸ *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edn. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 306. All subsequent references will be given in the abbreviated form *OED* in parenthesis.

²⁹ Thompson discusses Romantic anti-tourism in much more detail in his chapter entitled 'Tourists: Diversification and Disdain', pp. 31-58.

Denmark (1796) that ‘my host told me bluntly that I was woman of observation, for I asked him *men’s questions*’ (*LDSR*, p. 68). Byron is equally scathing of a female Grand Tourist that he encounters during his journey back from the Château de Chillon in 1816 – ‘met an English party in a carriage – a lady in it fast asleep! – fast asleep in the most anti-narcotic spot in the word – excellent’ (*BLJ*, V, p. 97) – while in the same year Shelley notes how his trip to the Mer de Glace was marred by the presence of other tourists: ‘We met I lament to say some English people here. I will not detail to you the melancholy exhibitions of tourism which [...] make this place another Keswick’ (*LPBS*, I, pp. 500-501). These explicit acts of differentiation, and there are many other examples from the period, demonstrate the extent to which Romantic writers self-consciously attempted to position themselves as autonomous travelling figures distinct from the tourist hordes.

In addition to these rhetorical objections to tourism there were also shifts in the nature of travelling itself. Journeys began to be conducted off the beaten track in relatively uncharted areas of Britain and Europe. In 1802 Coleridge explored the mountains and coastline of the western extremity of the Lake District (a part of the region avoided by Picturesque tourists); in 1795 Wollstonecraft travelled to Scandinavia; while Byron’s 1809-1811 tour took him through war-torn Spain and Portugal, and to Albania and Turkey. Romantic travellers also experimented with relatively new forms of journeying. In *Romantic Writing and Pedestrian Travel*, Robin Jarvis has traced the origins of peripatetic travel back to 1776 on the Continent and to 1782 in Britain.³⁰ Yet, as the freedoms and transgressions of pedestrianism chimed with the broader ideologies of

³⁰ Jarvis, *Romantic Writing and Pedestrian Travel*, pp. 6-10. All subsequent references to this text will be given parenthetically.

Romanticism, it quickly became consolidated as a proto-Romantic means of journeying. In 1790 Wordsworth walked through France and across the Alps into Italy; in 1799 Coleridge embarked on a week-long walking tour of the Hartz Mountains in Western Germany; and in 1814 Percy and Mary Shelley attempted to travel through France on foot. Finally, even when journeys were influenced by more conventional itineraries, motives for travel were much more complex. In 1814 the Shelleys eloped to France, and in 1816 Byron exiled himself to Europe never to return to England. This diversification of travel also resulted in equally varied textual representations of the experience.

Exploring Textuality and Travel

It is one of the core premises of this thesis that modes of travel, motives for travel and individual engagement with the travel experience play a vital role in shaping the textuality of writings that emerge out of periods of journeying. As Romantic travel is undertaken in response to, rather than independently of, the Grand and Picturesque tours, this study will begin with writings produced in the context of those more conventional modes of travel before discussing a selection of Romantic travel texts. In particular, the study will focus on the well-known writers Thomas Gray, Mary Wollstonecraft, Lord Byron, and Percy and Mary Shelley because, while there is some critical work on the travel writings of these authors, issues of textuality have been largely overlooked.³¹

³¹ For the only article on Thomas Gray's travel writing see William Ruddick, 'Thomas Gray's Travel Writing', in *Thomas Gray: Contemporary Essays*, ed. by W. B. Hutchings and William Ruddick (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1993), pp. 126-145. There are a number of essays on Mary Wollstonecraft's *Letters Written During A Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark* but none of them address the textuality of the published letters. See, for example, Mary Favret, *Romantic Correspondence: Women, Politics and the Fiction of Letters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

Moreover, their radically different motives for journeying and for writing – and the chronological range of their texts and travel experiences – offer contrasting perspectives on the relationship between textuality and travel. As this thesis aims to undertake a detailed analysis of that relationship, it will be structured around a series of case studies focusing on individual writers and their texts.

The first two chapters of this study will be devoted to Thomas Gray; an eighteenth-century author who experienced both the Grand and Picturesque tours and who was an avid traveller and travel writer until his death in 1771. Although the context of travel is of vital importance in both of these opening chapters, Gray's writings will not be judged simply as standard examples of Grand Tour or Picturesque narratives, they will be examined as texts in their own right. Taking this approach not only enables an understanding of how Gray's responses to travel develop over the course of his career, it also reveals that even conventional travels can produce unconventional textualities. Indeed both chapters will end with a practical consideration of how those complex textualities can be best represented by modern editors of Gray's work.

1993); and Deborah Weiss, 'Suffering, Sentiment, and Civilisation: Pain and Politics in Mary Wollstonecraft's *Short Residence*', *Studies in Romanticism*, 45 (2006), 200-221. While there is a significant amount of critical work on Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage I-III*, since the publication of McGann's *Fiery Dust* in 1968 there has been no additional work on the materiality and composition of the poem. However, Byron's relationship with travel has been explored recently in Stephen Cheeke, *Byron and Place: History, Translation, Nostalgia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); and Thompson, *The Suffering Traveller*. Finally, the Shelleys' *History of a Six Weeks' Tour* has received some critical attention, although this tends to be on the individual contributions of Mary and Shelley rather than the volume as a whole. For examples, see Robert Brinkley, 'Documenting Revision: Shelley's Lake Geneva Diary and the Dialogue with Byron', *Keats-Shelley Journal* 39 (1990), 66-82.; and Jeanne Moskal, "'To speak in Sanchean phrase': Cervantes and the Politics of Mary Shelley's *History of a Six Weeks' Tour*", in *Mary Shelley in her Times*, ed. by Betty Bennett and Stuart Curran (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), pp. 18-37. The current critical contexts for the writings discussed in this thesis will be provided in more detail in the individual chapters.

Chapter One deals with issues of form and cross-generic writing and examines the relationship between letter writing, poetry and place in Gray's correspondence with Richard West (1735-1742), concentrating on letters written during Gray's Grand Tour of 1739-1741. By engaging with the familiar letter form and acknowledging the correspondence as part of an established epistolary exchange, the chapter will show how the personal dynamics operating in that exchange shaped Gray's representation of the travel experience, not only in the letters but also in the poetic epistles that he wrote to West. Moreover, it will be demonstrated that Gray's epistolary relationship with West during this period of travel was fundamental to his development as a poet, influencing both the Latin verses that he produced during the Tour and also prompting the composition of his first English poem 'Ode on the Spring'.

Chapter Two continues with the epistolary theme but addresses the issues of form and private and public textual status raised by Gray's *Journal* of his tour in the Lake District (1769). Versions of the *Journal* exist in notebooks, correspondence and various published works; and this chapter considers how the private versions of the *Journal* and the engagement with travel that they communicate are altered by non-authorial editing and publication. By clarifying the compositional sources for the text, the chapter first asks how the interpretation of Gray's content is affected by each of the different authorial versions before discussing the published texts in relation to their Picturesque literary context. As the chapter makes clear, Gray's *Journal* does not start life as a standard Picturesque text but rather becomes one through a process of posthumous editing and publication.

As a first generation Romantic writer, Mary Wollstonecraft is the earliest Romantic traveller to be represented in this thesis. Journeying unchaperoned through Sweden, Norway and Denmark with her small daughter and maid in tow, Wollstonecraft cuts a radical figure. Not only were journeys to Scandinavian countries relatively rare in the late Eighteenth Century, her trip is made all the more remarkable by the fact that she challenges the gendered stereotypes associated with the female traveller by journeying on commercial business. The textuality of the writings that she produces out of the tour – private and public letters addressed to the same correspondent – thus mark a useful point of departure from Gray and provide a starting point for examining the later work of Byron and the Shelleys. It is these writings that are the subject of Chapter Three, which considers the Scandinavian travels as a context for Wollstonecraft's textual attempt to transform herself, by rewriting the 'register of sorrow' (*WCL*, p. 332) dominating her private letters to Gilbert Imlay, into a more positive narrative in *Letters Written During A Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark* (1796). As a coda to this discussion, William Godwin's publication of *Memoirs of the Author of The Rights of Woman* and the letters to Imlay in 1798 is regarded as an act of non-authorial textual self-transformation that fundamentally alters the interpretation of *Letters Written During A Short Residence*.

While the first three chapters of this thesis all deal with addressee-specific writings and focus on varying examples of private and public textualities, the later chapters will examine direct material connections between travel and the creative process. Chapter Four takes as its central concern the relationship between composition, travel and self-exile in Lord Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage I-III* (1812-1816). Although Byron's

1816 journey into exile is modelled on the Grand Tour, his disassociation from his national space and intention to remain abroad sets his travels apart from those of Gray and Wollstonecraft. Like Wollstonecraft, Byron also attempts to textually redefine himself but, in his case, it is his *creative* self that he scrutinises through the composition of Canto III. As Byron's first experimentation with exile can be traced back to *Childe Harold I-II*, the chapter will begin with the representation of exile in those earlier cantos. The focus will then shift to the manuscript materials of Canto III, starting with the materiality of the first draft before considering the transition from first draft to fair copy. The aim is to identify what these different compositional stages reveal about the way that Byron's changing sense of his poetic identity progresses during his travels in exile.

The final chapter shifts the focus from travel as an individual textual experience to examine the relationship between *shared* writing and joint travel in Percy and Mary Shelley's *History of a Six Weeks' Tour* (1817). The Shelleys are directly connected with Wollstonecraft and Byron, and their travel writing draws on the experiences recorded in *Letters Written During A Short Residence* and *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage III*. The chapter examines three different models of shared writing during travel: Mary and Shelley's collaborative authorship; Shelley and Byron's creative literary engagement with Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Heloise*; and Shelley's interaction with place, prose and poetry in the writing of 'Mont Blanc'. Through the discussion of each of these models, it is argued that the composition of the myriad of source texts that contribute to *History*, and their transition into the published work, reveals how the Shelleys travelled

and wrote together during the period which produced *Frankenstein* and some of Shelley's major poetry.

As well as inviting a useful comparison between travel writing from home, abroad and in exile, all of these writings have been chosen because they draw attention to their own complex textualities either by transgressing generic and public-private boundaries, by self-consciously interrogating the creative process during travel, or by doing both of these things. Moreover, as this thesis will show, examining these complex textualities can transform critical perceptions of those writers and their texts.

Chapter One

Epistles, Poetry and Place: Thomas Gray's Letters from the Grand Tour

‘For travel I must, or cease to exist’¹

This chapter takes as its central concern the relationship between travel, correspondence and poetry in a selection of writings by Thomas Gray. Gray is best known as the author of ‘Elegy Written in a Country Church Yard’ (1751) but, as the epigraph suggests, he was also a keen traveller who composed lengthy textual records of his travel experiences. The various forms of writing that he produced during periods of journeying can be divided into two main chronological categories: the journals, notes, letters and poems composed on the Grand Tour (1739-1741), and the journals and letters he wrote throughout his later Picturesque excursions in the British Isles (1753-1770). Considering that Gray’s tours encompass two of the Eighteenth Century’s most iconic modes of travel, his writings have received a surprising lack of critical attention. In books on the Grand and Picturesque tours, Gray’s prose accounts are often cited as examples of conventional travel discourse; yet, as William Ruddick has shown, his response to landscape ‘was to affect both poets and prose writers until at least the time of the second-generation Romantics’.² Ruddick’s is the only dedicated scholarly article on Gray’s travel writing and, as well as recognising the lasting impact his writing was to have, it also usefully paves the way for thinking about his travel texts from a different perspective. In particular, it makes tentative connections between Gray’s experiences on the Grand Tour

¹ Letter from Thomas Gray to Thomas Wharton 24th May, 1771. *TGC*, III, p. 1189.

² Ruddick, ‘Thomas Gray’s Travel Writing’, p. 126. All subsequent reference to this essay will be given parenthetically.

and his poetry, and also offers the first critical account of Gray's Lake District *Journal* (1769).

The first two chapters of this thesis will effectively pick up where Ruddick left off. Chapter Two will consider the composition, editing and publication of the *Journal* as an exemplary culmination of Gray's travel writing career; while this chapter will explore the significant role that the Grand Tour played in Gray's early poetic development. Starting with a brief introduction to the different textual forms Gray uses during his Continental tour of 1739-1741, the first section will suggest that even at this early stage Gray is a self-aware traveller who prizes an individual response to the stimulus of new places: a response that is largely dependent on the intended recipient of his writings. The chapter will then turn to consider Gray's letters to Richard West, paying particular attention to the epistolary techniques that emerge out of the experience of travel. Having examined the correspondence, the focus will then shift to an exploration of the influence that Gray's epistolary relationship with West has on the poetry that he writes, not only whilst on the Tour but also on his return to England. It will be suggested that the epistolary dynamic in the letters and poems to West, consolidated during travel, continues to have a significant impact on Gray's poetic process for the duration of his most fertile creative period.

Travel and Textual Form

Gray embarked on his first period of travel in June 1739, aged 23, after his school-friend Horace Walpole – who was the son of the Prime Minister Robert Walpole – unexpectedly requested his company on the Grand Tour. The pair followed a traditional itinerary sailing

from Dover to Calais, visiting Paris, Versailles and the less popular towns of Rheims, Dijon and Lyons. After a short stay in Geneva, they crossed the Alps into Italy spending time in all of the major cities including Florence, Rome and Naples. Walpole was wealthier and better connected than Gray and this difference in social and financial status conferred upon Gray the much less secure position of travel companion. As a result of this imbalance, the activities on the Tour were very much determined by the whims and preferences of Walpole who preferred pleasurable rather than educational pursuits. Gray liked to spend his time studying Renaissance art, antiquities and landscape, whereas Walpole was at his happiest at the high society gatherings that Gray loathed. Eventually this difference proved too difficult to overcome, a quarrel ensued at Reggio and Gray returned home alone in September 1741 having spent only two years on the Tour.

In terms of motives for travel Gray was an accidental rather than an intentional Grand Tourist who was enlivened by the educational benefits of travelling. Being without a travel companion who shared his interests, Gray used writing as a means of mediating and understanding his experience of the places that he visited, whilst also sending accounts of his textual responses to the person he would rather have been travelling with. Like the majority of eighteenth-century Grand Tourists, Gray kept an account of the Tour both in a brief journal covering his time in France and in detailed notes spanning the duration of the excursion. These records are primarily factual and, in contrast to the 1769 *Journal* of the tour in the Lake District written for Thomas Wharton, they do not show any evidence of being composed for an external addressee. In both these texts, the style is descriptive, abbreviated and impersonal – ‘Chief city of Champagne, 3rd in France for

bigness, water'd by the little River Vele, famous for Crawfish'³ – and the information largely consists of lists of buildings and artefacts that Gray has seen: 'A Madonna, with a figure by her like a Pallas, unfinish'd, his worst Drawing – Correggio'.⁴ As Barbara Korte observes, in these types of texts 'the persona of the traveller/writer clearly fades into the background, in favour of the "objective" material gathered systematically and carefully noted in the traveller's diary'.⁵ Gray's journal and notes are a quotidian and quasi-academic account of the Tour in which there is no place for individual reflection.

In addition to these more conventional traveller's records, Gray also wrote a large number of private letters some of which reveal a rather more self-aware writer-traveller. As W. P. Jones has shown, Gray was an avid reader of travel discourses and, as such, it is likely that he would have been familiar with the standard published accounts of the Grand Tour.⁶ So, for example, in the only letter that he sends to Wharton during his European sojourn (Wharton was to become Gray's main correspondent during his later travels), Gray playfully transforms the space of the epistle into a proposal for a mock travelogue entitled 'The Travels of T: G: Gent'. Over the course of a series of short outlines for the fifteen-chapter imaginary work, Gray draws on his own journey to comment on and lampoon the various aspects of the Grand Tour:

CHAP: 1:

The Author arrives at Dover; his conversation with the Mayor of that Corporation; sets out in a Pacquet-Boat, grows very sick; the Author spews, a very minute account of all the circumstances

³ Thomas Gray, 'Journal in France, 1739', in *The Works of Thomas Gray in Prose and Verse*, ed. by Edmund Gosse, 4 vols (London: Macmillan, 1884), I, pp. 236-246 (p. 237).

⁴ Thomas Gray, 'Gray's Notes of Travel: France, Italy, Scotland', in *Gray and his Friends*, ed. by Duncan C. Tovey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1890), pp. 201-265 (p. 218).

⁵ Korte, *English Travel Writing*, p. 48.

⁶ W. P. Jones, *Thomas Gray, Scholar* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1965), pp. 79-80.

thereof: his arrival at Calais; how the inhabitants of that country speak French, & are said to be all Papishes; the Author's reflexions thereupon. (*TGC*, I, p. 138)

Gray's repeated references to the 'Author' draws attention to the mockingly subjective nature of the travelogue. The exaggerated emphasis on individuality, demonstrated by the capitalisation of 'Author', competes with the account itself which is deliberately made up of the commonplace experiences shared by most travellers: the arrival at Dover, taking the Packet-Boat and seasickness. Gray's description of the journey through the Grande Chartreuse similarly plays upon the typical representation of the mountain crossing: 'he is set upon a Mule's back, & begins to climb up the Mountain. Rocks & Torrents beneath; Pine-trees & Snows above; horrors and terrours on all sides. the Author dies of the Fright' (*TGC*, I, p. 140). Despite this appropriately sublime experience, 'the Author' recovers enough to travel to Geneva in Chapter 10, but that recovery is short-lived as he is 'devoured by a Wolf' crossing the Alps in Chapter 11 (*TGC*, I, p. 140).

While on one level Gray's mock travelogue gently ridicules the actual and textual experiences of the Tour; on another it reveals deeper anxieties about his travels. Instead of praising the various pleasurable pursuits, as many writer-tourists did, Gray's comments are comically scathing. In France the Opera prompts him to include the 'anatomy of a French Ear, shewing the formation of it to be entirely different from that of an English one'; at the Grand Ballet 'there is no seeing the dance for Petticoats'; he 'despises [Versailles] infinitely' (*TGC*, I, p. 139); and has a similar reaction to the aristocracy at Modena: 'how the Duke, & Duchess lye over their own Stables, & go every night to a vile Italian Comedy. despises them, & it; & proceeds to Bologna' (*TGC*, I, p. 141). Although these criticisms are disguised as those of the character 'T: G: Gent', they echo Gray's

own increasingly negative attitude to the social outings favoured by Walpole and provide a comic outlet for the very real frustrations that he seems to be feeling.

The self-consciousness of the letter to Wharton shows that Gray is not an unthinking Grand Tourist but one who, through the act of writing, is able to negotiate the characteristic aspects of this kind of travel experience. The authoritative tone of the narrative persona that permeates much of the travelogue, is employed mostly in overstating the obvious – ‘How they feed him with Soupe, & what Soupe is. how he meets with a Capuchin; & what a Capuchin is’ (*TGC*, I, p. 138) – suggesting that Gray is aware of the limitations of a prescriptive itinerary which selects and sanitises the tourist’s experience of place. The chapter outline again draws attention to that uniformity by covering all of the standard sights and events: the purchase of tailored clothes at Paris, the crossing of the Alps and the perusal of antiquities. By demonstrating a level of knowingness about the artificiality of the Tour, Gray effectively differentiates himself from the other tourists; partly to cast himself as a more self-aware traveller but also to appeal to his chosen correspondent. Wharton was also an avid reader of travel literature and would, no doubt, have appreciated Gray’s parody of the form. It is important to recognise, then, that although the Grand Tour may be considered as a conformist type of travel, in this instance Gray’s textual response challenges that conventionality: he is not seeking to imitate other records of the Tour but to develop an independent response.

Crucially, the nature of that independent response is largely determined by the identity of Gray’s correspondent in a way that links back to Donald Reiman’s account of authorial awareness of audience. As Ruddick argues:

Gray needed to experience the double stimulus of new places combined with the sense of having a congenial friend as a correspondent, whose participation in the visual and emotional discoveries which travelling brought could be so strongly desired as to be imaginatively grafted onto the original experience, before he chose (or perhaps was able) to write at length about his journeyings. (p. 126)

As Ruddick rightly suggests, with the exception of the more immediate composition of the journal and notes, the process of Gray's writing of his travels follows a particular creative trajectory: he experiences place, imaginatively responds as if he is sharing that experience with a close friend, and then pens his account.

The familiar letter form thus provides a private textual space which encourages the kind of dynamic upon which the writing of Gray's travels depends. By *familiar* letter I mean those items of correspondence that are written with the intention that they will only be read by one intimate addressee. As Janet Gurkin Altman observes, the reciprocal relationship between the '*I*' and the '*You*' of the letter writing utterance is a unique feature of *all* epistolary discourse: a discourse that is always occasioned by the absence of the addressee, whose 'role in shaping epistolary narrative cannot be over-estimated' because 'reader consciousness explicitly informs the act of writing itself'.⁷ In other words, a letter writer brings to mind a particular reader at the time of writing and the identity of that reader determines not only *what* is written but *how* it is written. Moreover, as Altman notes, a letter depends on an obligatory system of exchange which 'evokes simultaneously the acts of writing and reading' (p. 186) because the letter writer aims to 'draw [the] '*You*' into becoming the '*I*' of a new statement' (p. 122). Gray's letters from

⁷ Janet Gurkin Altman, *Epistolarity: Approaches to a Form* (Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1982), p. 117, p. 186. All subsequent references to this text will be given parenthetically.

the Tour thus have the status of a ‘private’ text in Reiman’s terms because, in the compositional context, they are intended only for the ‘eyes of another person’.⁸ In terms of Gray’s textual articulation of his travels, then, his experience of place is always mediated by the knowledge of *who* he is writing for and the choice of the letter form suggests that he requires a response as part of that writing process.

Although Gray writes to a number of different friends and relations during the Grand Tour, it is his letters to Richard West which stand apart from the rest of his epistles. West was a school friend from Eton and remained a regular correspondent until his premature death in June 1742. The pair had developed a habit of sending each other letter-poems, usually in Latin, and usually in imitation of the Classical poets. As Ruddick notes, West was the ideal correspondent for Gray throughout his early travels because ‘it was their mutual knowledge of the Latin poetry of Horace and Virgil that provided the associations and images to help him [Gray] clarify and express his sense of wonder at the psychological and aesthetic shocks which had stirred him’ (p. 129). More than this, I want to argue that the epistolary relationship with West, which was consolidated during Gray’s time abroad, proved vital to Gray’s poetic development. As the discussion that follows will show, the self-conscious techniques that Gray employs in his Grand Tour letters to West and the reciprocal dialogue of that correspondence influences his poetic output.

⁸ Reiman, *The Study of Modern Manuscripts*, p. 38.

Imaginative Epistolary Spaces and the Illusion of Presence

The letters that Gray sends to West while he is away have unique characteristics, which are directly brought about by the fact that Gray is travelling. In particular, he strives to create epistolary spaces in which he is able to maintain an illusion that West is present with him on the Tour:

Arouse ye from your megrims and your melancholies, and (for exercise is good for you) throw away your night-cap, call for your jack-boots, and set out with me, last Saturday evening, for Versailles – and so at eight o'clock, passing through a road speckled with vines, and villas, and hares, and partridges, we arrive at the great avenue, flanked on either hand with a double row of trees about half a mile long, and with the palace itself to terminate the view; facing which, on each side of you is placed a semi-circle of very handsome buildings, which form the stables. These we will not enter into, because you know we are no jockies [*sic*]. (*TGC*, I, p. 107)

The reference to ‘melancholies’ echoes earlier correspondence in which West and Gray acknowledge that the prospect of each other’s company is the only cure for their melancholia (*TGC*, I, p. 61, p. 66). The request to ‘set out with me’, the use of ‘we’, the inclusion of addressee-specific information and the detailed description of Versailles that follows are all part of Gray’s strategy for alleviating West’s low spirits by inviting him into a textual space where he can be his companion on an imaginary journey. Bruce Redford describes this process as the means by which a letter writer projects ‘an identity that “stands in for, or memorialises, or replaces, or makes something else” of the time-bound *I*’.⁹ Gray creates a textual version of himself, which enables him to imaginatively transcend the ‘time-bound *I*’ of his reality, while simultaneously offering West the possibility of being released from his reality by blurring spatial and temporal boundaries

⁹ Bruce Redford, *The Converse of the Pen: Acts of Intimacy in the Eighteenth Century Familiar Letter* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), pp. 9-10. All subsequent references to this text will be given parenthetically.

in the letter. Gray and West find themselves in a literary recreation of Versailles or, to put it in Redford's terms, in 'a microcosm that likewise "replaces or makes something else" of the outside world' (p. 10). In this microcosm, past reality – 'last Saturday evening' – is mediated and relived at the moment of writing in order to become the present of the letter narrative: a present that anticipates a future when West will enter into that narrative through the act of reading.

In her theory of epistolary presence and absence, Altman suggests that 'the letter-writer is always engaged in the impossible task of making his reader present' (pp. 135-6) because 'writer and reader share neither time nor space' (p. 135) and 'the present of the letter-writer is *never* the present of his addressee' (p. 129). There is an assumption here that the correspondent wants his reader to be *physically* present but, as the letter from Versailles shows, it is equally the case that a writer may also employ a number of textual strategies to make his intended recipient *imaginatively* present. In this way, a letter writer and reader are able to "share" time and space, albeit textual and imaginative space, and the present of the writer – captured in the letter at the moment of writing – can retain the charge of that original moment (the charge of the writer's present) even though it is read in the future. This means that there is a doubling of the present. The present of the moment of writing becomes the past, but that present is captured in the space of the letter and is then conflated with the recipient's present at the moment of reading – even though that moment occurs in the future. The letter, then, has the potential to overcome the temporal and spatial separation implied both by the writer's travels and the addressee's absence, creating an imaginative shared space that both can enter into.

This presencing technique is one that Gray regularly repeats in his letters to West throughout the Grand Tour as in this epistle from Rome in 1740:

I am now at home, and going to the window to tell you it is the most beautiful of Italian nights, which, in truth, are but just begun (so backward has the spring been here, and every where else they say.) There is a moon! there are stars for you! Do not you hear the fountain? Do not you smell the orange flowers? That building yonder is the Convent of S. Isidore; and that eminence, with the cypress trees and pines upon it, the top of M. Quirinal. (*TGC*, I, p. 161)

This part of the letter shifts between absence and imagined presence. The sense of movement in the opening sentence – ‘going to the window’ – creates a textual temporality that does not and cannot exist beyond the discourse of the epistle. It is not possible, even at the time of utterance, that Gray is actually writing the letter as he is walking toward the window. As such, the event that he is narrating (as if it is taking place simultaneously with the act of writing) must necessarily already be in past. It is even further in the past by the time that West receives the letter but as the event is captured in the language of the present (‘I am *now* at home’); past (the writing of the letter) and future (the reading of the letter) become conflated, enabling Gray and West to again share an imaginative temporal present.

What this temporal present serves to do in the first part of the letter is to reinforce Gray and West’s geographic separation. Gray is looking out on Italy and describing the night to West precisely because he is absent. However, Gray then brings West into the imaginative space of the letter, prompted, significantly, by the thought of spring. As William Hutchings notes in his essay on the Latin poems, West’s ‘Quadruple Alliance’ name, when he was at Eton with Gray, was Favonius, which translates as ‘the west wind’

– the traditional bearer of spring.¹⁰ For Gray and West, spring is a loaded signifier that carries memories of their shared past and common experiences at Eton and acts as a potent symbol for their ongoing and intimate friendship.¹¹ At the mention of spring, Gray moves from imagining himself alone at the window to bringing West into the narrative frame of the letter: ‘There is a moon! there are stars for you!’ The reference to moon and stars further becomes a means of uniting Gray and West in a shared space. West may not be reading the letter at night but when night comes he will be able to look at the moon and stars and know that Gray might be looking at them as well. Gray also creates the impression that West is present in his room in Italy by urging him, in a tone that imitates speech, to ‘smell’ the flowers and ‘hear’ the fountain. Choosing abstract properties provides West with the interpretative potential to imagine how these sounds and smells would play on his own senses. Gray then goes one step further by moving from the abstract to the concrete: ‘That building yonder is the Convent of S. Isidore’. Encouraging West to “look” at the building as if he is standing by Gray at the window consolidates his presence in the shared world of the letter text; an effect that is created by the use of ‘yonder’, which again imitates the immediacy of dialogue. This effect is then furthered by the lack of detailed description of the Convent, which would not be necessary if West actually was looking at the scene with Gray.

The letters to West from France and Italy are noticeably different from the mock travelogue Gray sends to Wharton, but they are no less unconventional. Rather than

¹⁰ William Hutchings, ‘Conversations with a Shadow: Thomas Gray’s Latin Poems to Richard West’, *Studies in Philology*, 92 (1995), 118-139 (124). All subsequent references to this essay will be given parenthetically. The ‘Quadruple Alliance’ was a group formed by Gray (Orosmales), West (Favonius or Zephyrus), Walpole (Celadon) and Thomas Ashton (Almanzor) when they were studying at Eton.

¹¹ In Chapter Two, I show how the Lake District mountain Skiddaw is a loaded signifier for Gray and his later correspondent Thomas Wharton, pp. 72-73.

simply providing a factual account of his experiences, as we have seen Gray manipulates the epistolary form by casting West as the companion he lacks in an attempt to overcome the geographic separation imposed by travel. In fact Gray also employs an even more unusual technique to make West present – he situates him as a physical figure in the landscape:

In our little journey up the Grande Chartreuse, I do not remember to have gone ten paces without an exclamation, that there was no restraining: Not a precipice, not a torrent, not a cliff, but is pregnant with religion and poetry. There are certain scenes that would awe an atheist into belief, without the help of other argument. One need not have a very fantastic imagination to see spirits there at noon-day: You have Death perpetually before your eyes, only so far removed, as to compose the mind without frightening it [...] You may believe Abelard and Heloïse were not forgot upon this occasion: If I do not mistake, I saw you too every now and then at a distance among the trees [...] You seemed to call me from the other side of the precipice, but the noise of the river below was so great, that I really could not distinguish what you said; it seemed to have a cadence like verse. (*TGC*, I, p. 128)

This now famous description of the Alpine landscape is strikingly poetic and distinct from the more detailed topographical sketches that Gray includes in his other letters from the Tour.¹² As Ruddick notes, Gray's landscape prose presents 'one of the classic definitions of the Sublime, almost twenty-years before Burke's *Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*' (p. 129). In keeping with this more psychological model of response, the vista of the scenery is noticeably absent; it is rather Gray's emotional reaction to the landscape that is captured. His imaginative engagement with the mountains is privileged over the physicality of the place and the Alps becomes an abstract rather than a concrete phenomenon, rooted in the mind rather than in its geographic location. The imagination becomes a vehicle for transcending geographic separation, but this transcendence necessarily depends on the existence of a shared

¹² See for comparison the letter written to his father from Dijon on 11th September, 1739 (*TGC*, I, pp. 116-117), and the letter written to his mother from Lyons on 13th October, 1739 (*TGC*, I, pp. 121-123).

imaginative/emotional world. This world is consolidated further by Gray through the use of 'you' – 'You have Death perpetually before your eyes' – which blurs Altman's '*I*' and '*You*' of the letter writing utterance, a linguistic sleight of hand whereby Gray's reaction to the landscape becomes also that of West. Gray conflates their imaginative responses to the scene in an attempt to bring their minds together within the space of the letter. Yet West is separated from Gray by the Alpine tundra – he is located on the 'other side of the precipice' and the 'noise of the river' drowns out his speech – which suggests that Gray's desire for his presence is frustrated by the actuality of absence. West is present in the landscape but because of that landscape he remains perpetually out of Gray's reach. There is a sense of longing present here, which undoubtedly relates to the other sense of longing that is discernable in this section: a longing to hear that which needs to be spoken but cannot be explicitly voiced other than within the parameters of Gray's imagination. In this letter what is *not* directly "heard" or "spoken" becomes loaded with meaning and because Gray goes to great lengths to express his feelings indirectly each word becomes a powerful signifier. The unspoken/unwritten intimacy between Gray and West is thus displaced into the letter, which becomes a loaded object that can be possessed in a way that the individual cannot. The physicality of a letter becomes a substitute for the physicality of the person. Indeed Gray explicitly emphasises the value of the letter as a displaced self in a later epistle: 'So we came to Rome again, where waited for us a splendidissimo regalo of letters; in one of which came You, with your huge characters and wide intervals, staring' (p. 157). Here, the epistolary and bodily West are merged. **The handwriting and physical presence of words on the page are personified and become transformed into the human figure of West 'staring', as if the letter itself – the envelope, paper and ink – is a material substitute for his actual presence.**

Despite Gray's best efforts, in his responses West repeatedly demonstrates a reluctance to freely enter into the imaginary space Gray creates:

If wishes could turn into realities, I would fling down my law books, and sup with you to-night. But, alas, here am I doomed to fix, while you are fluttering from city to city, and enjoying all the pleasures which a gay climate can afford [...] I cannot help indulging a few natural desires; as for example, to take a walk with you on the banks of the Rhône, and to be climbing up mount Fourviere [...] However, so long as I am not deprived of your correspondence, so long shall I always find some pleasure in being at home. (*TGC*, I, p. 120)

For West, the act of writing and reading Gray's letters is a reminder of his absence rather than a means by which it can be overcome; and, in a later epistle, the imaginary scenario constructed by Gray in the letter about the Grande Chartreuse is also explicitly rejected by West: 'there is *no* talking tête-à-tête cross the Alps' (*TGC*, I, p. 165). West is refusing to comply with Gray's request to reveal the words drowned out by the river – 'In your next you will be so good to let me know what it was' (*TGC*, I, p. 128) – and is entering into dialogue with Gray's letter not in an attempt to approximate, what Altman describes as, the 'conversation of the "here" and "now"' (pp. 135-6) but to demonstrate that it is an impossibility. West's letter does this by engaging with Gray's Alpine landscape and then exposing it as a flight of imaginative fancy. This breaks the textual illusion of presence created by Gray so that the Alps reasserts itself as a physical location and, in a reversal of Gray's epistle, is transformed from an imaginative space back into a geographical place. For West, the landscape does not need to function as a metaphor for separation because it literally *is* the reason for separation. The Alps is a barrier that prevents Gray and West from talking head-to-head and the letter itself, as a product of that barrier, cannot maintain the illusion of dialogue. We might speculate that West is also rejecting the homoerotic overtones of Gray's letter, inasmuch as the connection with Abelard and

Heloïse seems to indicate that the unspoken words Gray longs to hear are words of love. This rejection does not necessarily mean that West does not have reciprocal feelings for Gray, but rather that he is not willing to reveal them in a letter.

It is perhaps West's reluctance to engage with the traveller's imaginary world that prompts Gray to begin including short fragments of Latin landscape poetry in the letters. The first of these is a four line verse inspired by Gray's trip to the Grande Chartreuse:

Horridos tractus, Boreaeque linquens
 Regna Taurini fera, molliorem
 Advehor brumam, Genuaeque amantes
 Litora soles (*TGC*, I, p. 129)

[Leaving those regions that tremble with cold and the savage realms ruled by Boreas of the Taurini, I am journeying to a milder winter and the sunny days that caress the shores of Genoa. (*TGCP*, p. 142)]

Although there is no attempt to include West in the journey that is described in the poem, Gray is nonetheless creating a shared space by expressing his travels in a form and language that West will understand. Within its epistolary framework, the fragment is positioned as an epigram to the English prose that follows, suggesting that it is functioning in place of the 'To/Dear' that is normally situated at the beginning of a letter. The poem, then, can be read as Gray's attempt to evoke the 'I' and 'You' dynamic of correspondence, most probably with the purpose of drawing the 'You' into writing a response. In this instance, the fragment does have the desired effect and in his next letter West sends Gray an elegiac verse (*TGC*, I, p. 151) to which Gray then responds with his own short elegy (*TGC*, I, p. 137). While these verse epistles are largely imitative, they are

important because they pave the way for Gray to write a longer Latin poem, which makes use of the presencing techniques that he experiments with in his travel letters.

Epistolary Poetics

By looking at that Latin poem it becomes apparent just how important Gray's travels were to the development of his poetic writing. The cross-generic textuality of this verse epistle is directly influenced by the letters that he writes to West from the Tour: letters that are driven by the fact that travel has geographically separated him from his correspondent. As Hutchings notes, Gray sends Latin verses to West 'as if recording an annual rite' in the spring of 1740 and 1741 (p. 126). The poem sent in a letter from Rome in May 1740, entitled 'Ad C: Favonium Zephyrinum' in Gray's *Commonplace Book*, marks the beginning of a series of poetic events that culminate in the composition of Gray's first English verse.¹³ Like 'Horridos tractus', the poem is untitled and positioned at the beginning of the letter:

Dic, non inertem fallere quâ diem
Amat sub umbrâ, seu sinit aureum
Dormire plectrum, seu retentat
Pierio Zephyrinus antro,
Furore dulci plenus (*TGC*, I, p. 158)

[Tell me, beneath what shade does Zephyrinus love to while away the busy day? Perhaps he permits the golden lyre to sleep; perhaps, full of sweet rage, he wakes it again to song in the Pierian grotto. (*TGCP*, p. 145)]

West is identified here by his other 'Quadruple Alliance' name, Zephyrus, which was used interchangeably with Favonius. It is Zephyrinus/West who has the power to awaken

¹³ Pembroke College Cambridge, *Thomas Gray Commonplace Book* MS, 3 vols, I, p. 128. All subsequent reference to this MS will be given parenthetically.

the poet's golden lyre and fill the Pierian grotto with song. This suggests that the lyre is awoken by rejuvenating zephyrs in the form of the spirit of West, which in turn implies that in this imaginative space he is both poet and muse: poet in the sense that he has the capacity to make the lyre sing; and muse in the respect that he is the inspiration for these lines in Gray's letter-poem. This association with West and the muse requires further consideration because, as the poem is epistolary, the addressee-consciousness which informs the act of writing must also operate here as a significant element of the form. This essentially means that at the time of writing Gray invokes the figure of West – his intended addressee – to stimulate his creativity rather than the traditional poetic muse. This process fits with the way Gray has become accustomed to textualise his travel experiences inasmuch as he requires the imaginative presence of a like-minded companion in order to put pen to paper.

Significantly, this poem also echoes images found in Gray's correspondence with West. In a letter sent to West immediately before the one containing 'Ad C: Favonium Zephyrinum', Gray describes the river Anio, which 'breaks itself all to shatters, and is converted into a shower of rain, where the sun forms many a bow, red, green blue and yellow' (*TGC*, I, p. 156). This description of the landscape uses poetic language but Gray stops short of pursuing this in the letter desiring to 'get out of our metaphors without any further trouble' (*TGC*, I, p. 156). The poetry that does not quite find its expression there, does so in the letter-poem but only when the landscape is infused with the spirit of West:

Dilecta Fauno, et capripedum choris
 Pineta, testor vos, Anio minax
 Quaecunque per clivos volutus
 Praecipiti tremefecit amne,

Illius altum Tibur, et AEsulae
 Audisse sylvas nomen amabiles,
 Illius et gratas Latinis
 Naiasin ingeminasse rupes. (*TGC*, I, pp. 158-159)

[O Pine forests beloved by Faunus and the goat-footed chorus, I call you to witness, which of you soever the brawling Anio, rolling down the cliffs, causes to tremble with his headlong stream, that lofty Tibur has heard the name of Favonius, as have also the enchanting groves of Aesula, and that the cliffs dear to the Latin Naiads have re-echoed it (*TGCP*, p. 145)]

Here the Anio is transformed from the idealised image of a cascading rainbow of water into the 'Anio minax' (threatening Anio); while the re-echoing of the name Favonius can be read as an invocation for West to speak, again creating the powerful sense of longing that was identified earlier in Gray's letter (*TGC*, I, p. 128). In this instance, however, West's omniscient presence in the landscape is consolidated in the poem when Gray creates an internalised dialogue by representing West responding to the calling of his name:

Mirum! canenti conticuit nemus,
 Sacrique fontes, et retinent adhuc
 (Sic Musa jussit) saxa molles
 Docta modos, veteresque lauri. (*TGC*, I, p. 159)

[Then a miracle! To hear him as he sang, the grove became silent, and the sacred springs; and to this very day (for so the Muse commanded), the rocks, taught to sing, and the ancient laurels, keep repeating the soft strains (*TGCP*, p. 145)]

This section of verse is very close in sensibility to the letter where Gray positions West as a figure in the landscape (*TGC*, I, p. 128). There is a similar stress on the unspoken, but here the longing identified earlier is dissipated by sounds which are heard and repeated indefinitely: the 'molles/ [...] modus' ('soft strains') of the lyre. That Gray seems to be writing, in part, to voice West within the poem suggests that he is attempting to overcome West's reluctance to enter into the imaginative spaces he has constructed over the course

of their epistolary relationship and also, perhaps, to enable him to “hear” the reciprocal expression of love that he is seeking and that West resists in the prose. The textuality of Gray’s poetry thus seems to be part of the ongoing narrative of the travel letters, adopting and developing the techniques and ideas expressed in the letter prose. As we shall see in Chapter Five of this thesis, Gray’s poetic process during the Grand Tour shares similarities with Percy Shelley’s composition of ‘Mont Blanc’ in Chamonix because for both authors cross-generically moving between letter writing, prose description and verse is a vital creative stimulus for the poetic act.

Once Gray has returned home from the Tour, West does enter into a poetic dialogue with the spring verse, sending him an ‘Ode’ in a letter at the beginning of May 1742. Unlike Gray’s offering, West’s poem is positioned at the end of the letter and is written in English rather than Latin. It does, however, follow the addressee-specific style, identifying Gray as its intended recipient in the opening line: ‘Dear Gray, that always in my heart/ Possessest by far the better part’. Most importantly, West also invites Gray to enter into dialogue with his verse – ‘O join with mine thy tuneful lay,/ And invoke the tardy May’ – requesting reciprocity for the poem just as he would for a letter. By employing the tactics of epistolary prose, then, West is attempting to draw Gray into becoming the author of a new poem: ‘Create, where’er thou turn’st thy eye’ (*TGC*, I, p. 201).

Gray’s response to West’s request is significant because it marks the composition of his first English language poem: ‘Ode on the Spring’ (initially titled ‘Noon-Tide, An Ode’), which was sent to West in June 1742 in a letter that is no longer extant:

Lo! Where the rosy-bosom'd Hours,
 Fair Venus' train appear,
 Disclose the long-expecting flowers,
 And wake the purple year!¹⁴

That the driving force behind this creative awakening is West is made explicit in the reference to the 'Cool Zephyrs' (9) 'whisp'ring pleasure as they fly' (8), which in the previous poem prompted the speaker to construct a poetic idyll. At the mention of Zephyrus the very same idyll found in the earlier verse reasserts itself in 'Ode on the Spring'.¹⁵ The speaker of the poem imagines himself in the 'broader browner shade' (12) of an oak tree accompanied by the muse: 'With me the Muse shall sit, and think/ (At ease reclin'd in rustic state)' (16-7).

The connections between the Latin and English letter-poems, suggest that they are dependent on the shared world between writer and addressee for their meaning. The image that connects them all is the figure of West in the guise of the life-giving wind that brings the spring – and with it Gray's poetic creativity. The imaginative space of the letter-poems is infused with West's presence to such an extent that the aim of writing the poems is, for Gray, the same as writing the travel letters: not only does he want to engender a response from West he also wants to make him present despite his absence. Gray achieves this by evoking West at the time of writing as the ideal recipient of his verse – in much the same way as he is the ideal recipient of Gray's travel discourse. The crucial point to note here is the way in which the dynamic created by writing whilst

¹⁴ Thomas Gray, 'Ode on the Spring' in *TGCP*, pp. 3-4 (lines 1-4). All subsequent line references to this poem will be given parenthetically.

¹⁵ The poet-figure in the shade of the tree echoes the image of Zephyrus 'sub umbrâ' ('under shade') in 'Ad C: Favonium Zephyrinum' (*TGC*, I, p. 158).

travelling carries through into other forms. Indeed it is possible that without West and without the stimulus of travel the poems may never have come into existence. Certainly, without the encouragement of West's spring 'Ode' Gray might not have made the transition from Latin to English verse.

'Ode on the Spring' is important, not only because it marks Gray's transition from Latin to English verse, but also because Gray's first substantial English poem was *never read* by its intended recipient: the letter was returned unopened as West had died on 1st June 1742, just two days before Gray sent him the poem. Written to be included in correspondence, 'Ode on the Spring' was composed when Gray believed West was alive and, entering as it does into dialogue with West's 'Ode', the text privileges that living relationship between writer and addressee. When the letter is returned unopened, the textual status of the poem changes because the person for whom it was intended, on whose reciprocity it was dependent for its authorial meaning, did not read the text. This is not to suggest that the poem loses *all* of its possible meanings – it is a text and is, therefore, still iterable – but rather that, for Gray, the epistolary meaning has changed.

Gray himself recognises this change in status in a note that he adds alongside the copy of the poem in his Commonplace Book after West's death: 'sent to Fav not knowing he was then dead' (I, p. 278). This inscription reveals the importance of the poem as an act of living communication. That Gray finds it necessary to append this detail to his copy, suggests that he wants to differentiate the poem from the other poetic epistles in the Book, which were read by West when he was alive. As I suggested in the Introduction, Reiman correctly identifies that documents addressed to a single addressee should be classified as

private. Yet he does not acknowledge the possibility that within this category there might be different kinds of private text. The textual status of 'Ode on the Spring' changes *within* the private context because it comes-into-being for a particular correspondent but is then distinguished from Gray's other private poetic epistles because it was not read by West. To put it another way, in this example, it is the social context (i.e. the death of West) which changes the textual status of the poem and not just the intended audience.

Significantly, 'Ode on the Spring' is the *only one* of the letter-poems written to West that was published by Gray in his lifetime: the rest were printed posthumously at the discretion of his executor, William Mason. In the Introduction, in the light of Reiman's assertion that a private text 'does not [...] become a public document but simply a published personal text', I suggested that it is important to acknowledge that a writer's decision to publish a text that was initially composed as a private document does significantly alter the identity of the text.¹⁶ In the example of 'Ode on the Spring', publication fundamentally changes the status of the text because the textual interaction shifts from a private discourse between writer and addressee to an interaction between the author and a broader community of readers. It may be the case that because the poem was never read by its intended recipient, it lost its intimacy and its value as a private document, which may explain why Gray made it available to a wider audience of readers by agreeing to publication. In fact, 'Ode on the Spring', which appeared in a small anthology of poems in 1748, was Gray's first foray into print and marked the beginning of his career as a professional author. Even in death, then, West was continuing to influence Gray's poetic development.

¹⁶ Reiman, *The Study of Modern Manuscripts*, p. 44. See Introduction, p. 9.

The broader impact of West's death on Gray's poetry can be demonstrated finally by considering Gray's metaphysical Latin poem *De Principiis Cogitandi*. The first book of the poem, 'Liber Primus. Ad Favonium', was sent to West with a letter from Florence in April 1741 and is part of the annual spring poetry tradition; while the second book was composed by Gray shortly after West's death. 'Liber Primus. Ad Favonium' stands out among the Latin poems that Gray sent to West from the Tour because it was intended to be a *collaborative* work. In the letter accompanying the poem Gray asked West to participate in its composition: 'I send you the beginning not of an Epic Poem, but of a Metaphysic one [...] Pray help me to the description of a mixt mode, and a little Episode about Space' (*TGC*, I, p. 183). Gray's desire for composite creativity can be read as yet another means by which he seeks to unite himself and West in a textual space, suggesting that the desire to share his travel experience has translated into a desire to share the writing process. This desire is also a feature of the Shelleys' working relationship which, as Chapter Five will show, is characterised by a series of collaborative strategies for writing about their travels.

The second book of *De Principiis Cogitandi* which, as Gray notes in his Commonplace Book was 'begun at Stoke, June, 1742' (p. 286) immediately after West's death, reveals the extent to which Gray felt his poetic creativity was affected by the loss of his friend:

Hactenus haud segnis Naturæ arcana retexi [...]
Cum Tu opere in medio, spes tanti et causa laboris,
Linquis, et aeternam fati te condis in umbram! ¹⁷

¹⁷ Thomas Gray, 'De Principiis Cogitandi: Liber Secundus', in *TGCP*, pp. 168-170 (1-5). All subsequent line references to this poem will be given parenthetically.

[So far had I advanced in my zeal to uncover the secrets of Nature [...] when thou, the hope and inspiration of so great a task, didst leave in the midst of the labour and conceal thyself in the eternal shadow of death! (*TGCP*, p. 169)]

Despite the fact that West is dead when this part of the poem is composed, the speaker still evokes him as the intended recipient of the verse *as if he were alive*. The use of 'Tu' (you) creates the impression of direct speech, suggesting not only that Gray is still trying to maintain a living relationship with West by evoking him as his intended recipient, but also that the poem is written in an attempt to make West present by textually revealing/uncovering the self that has been concealed in death. Significantly, the second book of *De Principiis Cogitandi* was its last, demonstrating that Gray felt he could not continue the work without the response of its intended recipient: he could not, after all, maintain the illusion of their living relationship.¹⁸

Although the character of Gray's travel writing and his poetic relationship with West have been discussed independently by Ruddick and Hutchings, connections have not so far been made between the textuality of Gray's travel writing and his creative development. Yet what I hope that the above discussion has shown, is that during the Grand Tour several forces unite which encourage Gray to experiment with different epistolary techniques across his prose and his poetry. To begin with, his prolonged absence from West and his general dissatisfaction with his actual travelling companion lead him to create imaginary landscapes and spaces in his letters for the benefit of his

¹⁸ *De Principiis Cogitandi* does not mark the end of Gray's poetic mourning for West. He goes on to compose the elegiac 'Sonnet on the Death of Mr Richard West' in August 1742, but the outcome of this attempt is the same as that in the second book of *De Principiis Cogitandi*. In the last lines of the sonnet, which also remained unpublished in Gray's lifetime, Gray acknowledges the futility of his enterprise as the living relationship that he is trying to recover fails again: 'I fruitless mourn to him, that cannot hear, / And weep the more, because I weep in vain'. Thomas Gray, 'Sonnet on the Death of Mr Richard West', *TGCP*, p. 92, lines 13-15.

chosen correspondent. These landscapes have an actual, physical equivalent in the places that Gray visits but they express a strongly subjective engagement, which has a lasting impact on Gray's perception of travel. As Chapter Two will go on to show, when Gray composes his *Journal* in the Lake District toward the end of his life his sublime response to the Alps still remains a powerful imaginative referent.

In addition, the process that Gray develops for composition during travel, which depends on writing based on absence, the desire to share the experience in a private textual form and the dynamic of reciprocity, is repeated in the poetic epistles that he pens during the Tour; even resulting in a desire for collaborative authorship. Finally, all of these elements of the travel writing become a core part of Gray's larger creative process and it is the intensification of his epistolary relationship with West, while he is travelling, which encourages Gray to write his first landscape poetry and paves the way for him to make the transition from Latin to English verse. As I have been suggesting, it is the relationship with West that continues to dominate Gray's poetic writing after he has returned from the Tour and which, in the immediate aftermath of West's death, he tries to restore by continuing to compose addressee-specific poetry.

Editing Gray's Letter-Poems

Recognising that some of the poetry Gray composed during his most fertile creative period is dependent on the correspondence with West for much of its meaning and context has major implications for how we should approach, not just the scholarly analysis of his output, but also the editing of his work. In particular, it raises important

questions about how the publication of Gray's poetry should be handled. What responsibility do editors have to respect Gray's original intentions? Is it acceptable for his letter-poems be published and read independently of their epistolary context? Should they still be published as stand-alone texts in the knowledge that their meaning is tied in with the letters? In H. W. Starr and J. R. Hendrickson's scholarly edition of the *Complete Poems*, the texts have been organised under the headings of 'Poems Published During Gray's Lifetime' and 'Posthumous Poems' (*TGCP*, p. v). Rather than following a chronological sequence, the first group of poems are printed in accordance with 'Gray's instructions for the edition of 1768' (*TGCP*, p. ix); while the second set 'are arranged in groups according to their subject or nature' (*TGCP*, p. x). The letter-poems are published independently of their epistolary context but 'the reference number for the Toynbee and Whibley *Correspondence* is added as a convenience for the reader' (*TGCP*, p. xi).

Considering that Starr and Hendrickson use the 1768 authorial edition as copy-text for the first part of their edition, it is surprising that they do not continue to use authorial intention as a guideline for the posthumous works. Poems that are originally included within the body of a letter, such as 'Horridos tractus' and 'Ad C: Favonium Zephyrinum', are stripped from their epistolary context (the latter is not even accompanied by the promised reference to the *Correspondence*); and those poems that are sent with letters, such as the first book of *De Principiis Cogitandi*, carry no information about their association with those letters. Moreover, the chronology of the writing process, which is such a central part of the epistolary exchange, is disrupted by the somewhat arbitrary groupings of the poems.

What seems to be happening in the *Complete Poems* is a generic and hierarchical separation of the poetry from the prose; as if the two are separate entities and as if the prose is less significant than the verse. To some extent this is true, Gray himself distinguishes hierarchically between the poems and letters because he makes copies of the poems in his Commonplace Book whereas, with the exception of one epistle written to West in Latin (p. 52), he does not keep copies of the letters. This means that the letter-poems *do* have a different status to the epistolary prose because while the latter is given away freely, the former is, in part, retained by Gray. This indicates that his poems are of greater personal value than the text of the letters.

Copying the poems in the Commonplace Book provides Gray with a permanent record of his creative relationship with West and, although he is effectively repossessing the poems, his labelling of them in the Book makes it clear that they were written for West. As noted earlier, the spring Latin poem is entitled 'Ad C: Favonium Zephyrinum' and 'Ode on the Spring' contains a note about West. The poems Gray writes during his travels are also accompanied by inscriptions locating composition in the original travel context: 'Ad C: Favonium Zephyrinum' is accompanied by a note reading 'Wrote at Rome, the latter end of the Spring, 1740, after a journey to Frescati and the Cascades of Tivoli' (p. 128); while Gray writes that *De Principiis Cogitandi: Liber Primus* was 'begun in Florence, 1740' (p. 129). Interestingly, the order of the poetic entries in the Commonplace Book seeks to restore the epistolary dialogic of the poems. With a few minor exceptions, Gray's copies of his verses are chronologically interspersed with transcriptions of the poems sent by West. Rather than challenging the compositional context of the poems, then, the Commonplace Book reinforces the importance of their epistolary origins.

Accepting that Gray seems to recognise the importance of the epistolary quality of his poetry beyond the compositional context, it is arguably necessary to re-evaluate the way that his poems have been published. A similar re-evaluation has been undertaken by critics of Emily Dickinson, a writer who provides a useful point of comparison because she also merges epistolary and poetic spaces. Ellen Louise Hart, for example, posits 'breaking with the traditional approach of separating works by genre to present Dickinson's writing in correspondences'¹⁹; while Paula Bennett argues that her poetry cannot 'be removed from the letter without jeopardising our ability to read it' because 'the poem's location within the prose context is crucially important'.²⁰

Although Dickinson's generic exploitation is more complex and deeply entrenched than Gray's, the same principles apply because, as I have shown, re-situating his poetry within its original epistolary framework not only alters the interpretation of the verse; it also reveals crucial details about how he wrote during the first stages of his poetic career. What I want to suggest is that there is space for a new edition of Gray's early poetry, which respects the epistolary origins of his verse by restoring the chronology of composition, publishing the poems within the framework of the letter or alongside the letter with which they were sent, and maintaining the creative dialogue by including the letter-poems from West. This edition would provide another critical context for reading Gray's work which is not intended to replace but rather to offer a different perspective than that presented by Starr and Hendrickson's edition.

¹⁹ Ellen Louise Hart, 'The Elizabeth Whitney Putnam Manuscripts and New Strategies for Editing Emily Dickinson's Letters', *The Emily Dickinson Journal*, 5 (1995), 44-74 (66).

²⁰ Paula Bennett, "'By a Mouth That Cannot Speak': Spectral Presence in Emily Dickinson's Letters', *The Emily Dickinson Journal*, 1 (1992), 76-99 (86).

To conclude, this chapter has explored the textual complexities of Gray's private writings from the Grand Tour in order to make broader observations about the impact of those travels on his poetic *oeuvre*. The discussion that has taken place here anticipates the second chapter on his Lake District *Journal*, which also deals with issues of addressee-specific composition, editing and publication but from another perspective. Travel writing criticism does not often explore changing textual responses to travel over the course of an author's lifetime and it is useful to do so with Gray, not only because he experiences both Grand and Picturesque modes of travel, but also because the death of West necessitates a change in correspondent. While, on the one hand, the next chapter will seek to connect Gray's Grand Tour letters with his later writings by tracing the evolution of his travel discourse, on the other it seeks to ask a very different set of questions about travel and textuality. By moving beyond the compositional context explored in some detail here, it considers how the identity of an essentially private travel text can be fundamentally transformed by posthumous editing and publication, securing its author a seminal place in the literary history of one of the most written about regions in the British Isles.

Chapter Two

Private and Public Textualities: Thomas Gray's Journal of his Tour in the Lake District and the Picturesque Tradition

In this chapter I want to turn from Gray's writings about his first period of travelling and his crossing of generic forms between letters and poems, to consider the last major travel text that he wrote before his death in 1771. Gray's *Journal* of his tour in the Lake District (1769) marks the end of a literary life shaped by different experiences of travel. In the intervening years since the Grand Tour, Gray had journeyed extensively though the British Isles visiting places including Durham (1753), Suffolk and Norfolk (1761), the Scottish Highlands (1765), and the Peak District (1767).¹ As was the case during his earlier Continental tour, Gray's records of travel were written for a correspondent who shared his interests and, after the premature death of Richard West, it was Thomas Wharton who stepped into the role of like-minded travelling companion.

Gray first met Wharton at Cambridge in 1734 and they formed a friendship which was to last for the duration of Gray's life. Wharton was the recipient of the Grand Tour mock-travelogue (discussed in Chapter One) and also of a large number of later letters written during Gray's excursions around Britain. Whereas the travel correspondence and poetry to West relied heavily on Classical and Latin references to describe the natural scenery, Wharton's interest in topography and pictorialism led Gray to develop a more accurately descriptive prose style which combined highly detailed observation with Picturesque and sublime responses to the landscape. While Gray corresponded with Wharton during most

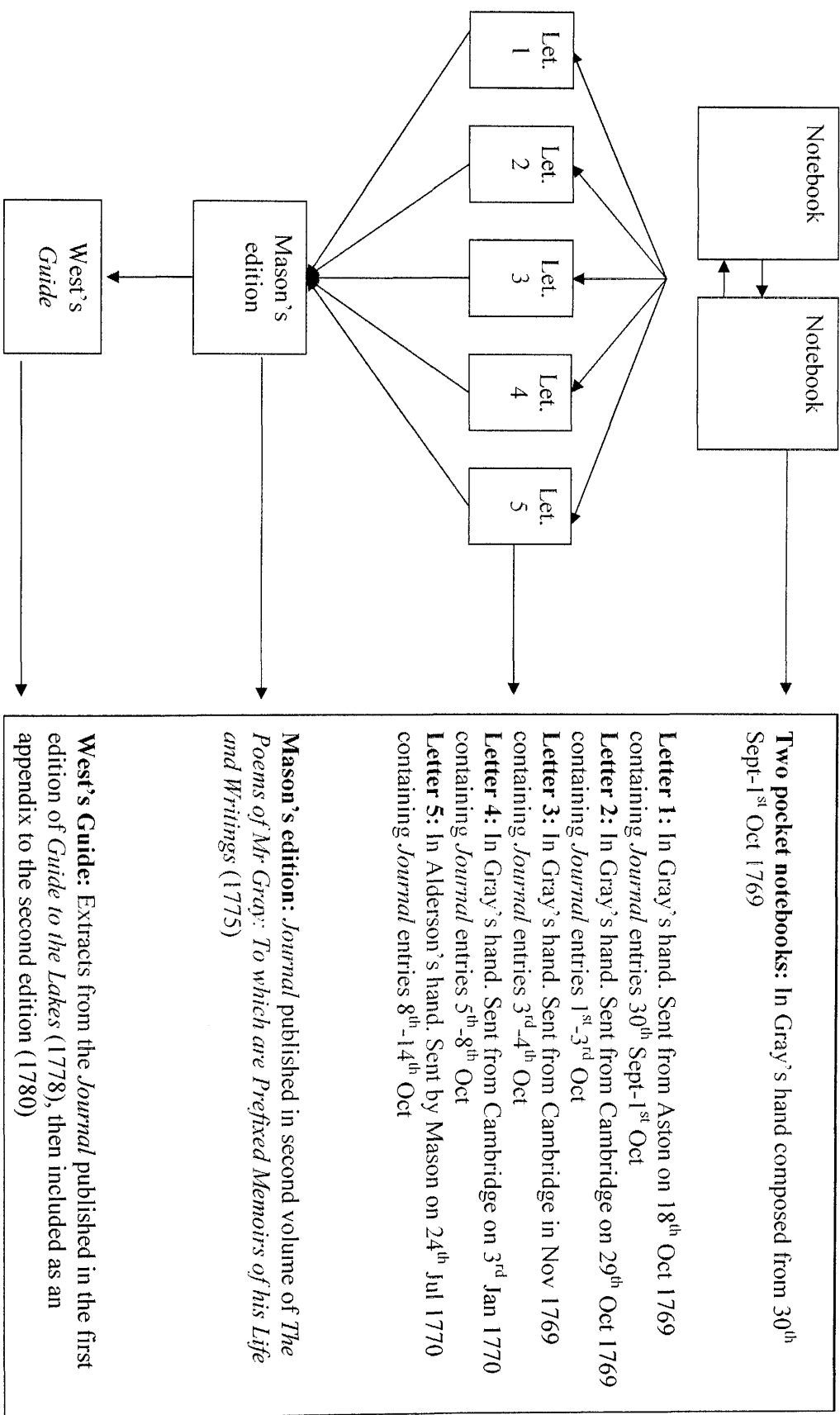
¹ Ruddick, 'Thomas Gray's Travel Writing', p. 132. As I stated in Chapter One, Ruddick's is the only dedicated scholarly essay on Gray's travel writing and, as such, I will again be drawing on his work throughout this chapter. All subsequent references to this essay will be given parenthetically.

of his summer tours, the *Lakeland Journal* ‘was to become his best known and most influential piece of writing in the travel mode’ (Ruddick, p. 136). Despite its humble beginnings in notebooks and familiar letters addressed to Wharton, the *Journal* is still quoted in Lake District guidebooks today and its unique descriptive style has established Gray as one of the earliest literary authorities on the region.²

Although the *Journal* began life in 1769 as an essentially private record of travel, through posthumous editing and publication it was transformed into one of the eighteenth-century’s most popular guides to the Lakes – the various stages of textual development are presented in Fig. 2.1 over the page. Significantly, the 1775 publication of the *Journal* coincided with the boom in Picturesque writing on the region. As such, the transition from private to public text facilitates the discussion of two key issues relating to textuality and travel, which have been largely overlooked in the small amount of existing critical work on the text. Firstly, the *Journal*’s private and public status, and its multiple generic manifestations (notebooks, letters, guides), raise the question of how the changing status and genre of the text influences writerly engagement with, and reader response to, travel. How does privileging either the private or public versions of the text affect the way we interpret the experience of travel that is being represented? Second, because the evolution of the *Journal* occurs at a vital moment in the literary history of the Lake District, mapping the text’s generic translations (from notebooks to letters to guides) enables an examination of Picturesque writing and editing ‘in process’. This not only exposes the

² For an example of a contemporary guide book that makes reference to Gray’s *Journal* see Jules Brown, *The Rough Guide to the Lake District*, 4th edn (London: Rough Guides, 2007). Brown mentions Gray’s visit to Borrowdale and adopts Gray’s famous quote the ‘jaws of Borrowdale’ in his description of the valley (pp. 154–156).

Figure 2.1: Textual Evolution of Gray's Journal



characteristics, conventions and contradictions that dominate this genre of travel writing but also makes possible a more in-depth analysis of the role of the Picturesque writer and editor, and of the intertextual relationship between some of the key Lakeland Picturesque guides that appeared in the late Eighteenth Century.

The Early Lakeland Picturesque

As the Picturesque movement provides such a vital context for understanding the complex textuality of the *Journal*, I want to begin by briefly situating Gray's authorial text in relation to this mode of travel writing. The origins of Lakeland Picturesque writing can be traced back to John Brown's *Description of the Lake and Vale of Keswick* (1753) which, as Malcolm Andrews notes, is 'one of the first to attempt to evaluate, in any systematic way, the Picturesque potential of spectacular natural scenery'.³ It is worth considering a key passage from Brown's engagement with Derwentwater, not only because it reveals the early core stimuli behind early Picturesque writing and tourism, but also because Gray is known to have read the essay before he embarked on his tour and composed the *Journal* (Ruddick, p. 139):

The full perfection of Keswick consists of three circumstances, *Beauty*, *Horror* and *Immensity* united [...] But to give you a complete idea of these three perfections, as they are joined in Keswick, would require the united powers of *Claude*, *Salvator* and *Poussin*. The first should throw his delicate sunshine over the cultivated vales, the scattered cots, the groves, the lake, and wooded islands. The second should dash out the horror of the rugged cliffs, the steepes, the hanging woods, and foaming waterfalls; while the grand pencil of *Poussin* should crown the whole with the majesty of the impending mountains.⁴

³ Andrews, *The Picturesque: Literary Sources and Documents*, I, p. 74.

⁴ John Brown, 'Description of the Lake and Vale of Keswick (c. 1753)' in *The Picturesque: Literary Sources and Documents*, I, pp. 74-6 (p. 75).

While Brown's prose may be ground-breaking inasmuch as it is one of the earliest to articulate the Picturesque quality of the Lake District, its vocabulary is explicitly drawn from the world of neo-classical art. These symbolic codes operate as visual intertexts for the *Description*, transforming the landscape into a textual space onto which Brown imaginatively grafts his neo-classical aesthetics. The *Description* is not an original representation of the landscape, nor is it trying to be, but is rather a recasting of the British scenery within the bounds of idealised foreign models.⁵ The 'Beauty, Horror and Immensity' that Brown draws attention to also indicates that his repackaging of the landscape, like that in West's *Guide* discussed in the Introduction, is designed to appeal to the tourist who would otherwise have been travelling in Europe – the 'three circumstances' effectively function as substitutes for the sublime and pictorially beautiful scenes that were to be found on the Grand Tour. Brown's representation of Keswick, then, is characterised by an imaginative layering, in which the physical scenery of the vale becomes subordinate to both the landscape paintings of Lorrain, Rosa and Poussin and to the aesthetic reactions that the Continental scenery depicted in those paintings was expected to provoke.

The referential nature of Brown's *Description* is typical of Picturesque writing. As I suggested in the Introduction, the aim of the early Picturesque tourist was to locate landscapes in Britain that were of equal value to the scenery found in Europe and to respond to those landscapes using the appropriate aesthetic vocabulary drawn from neo-classical paintings, and from the classical poetry of Horace and Virgil. The budding

⁵ Malcolm Andrews makes this point about the Picturesque movement as a whole: 'The tourist travelling through the Lakes or North Wales will loudly acclaim the *native* beauties of British landscape by invoking idealized foreign models'. Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque*, p. 3.

Picturesque writer was not concerned with penning an original account of landscape but rather with visiting a prospect that he had *read about* and then drawing on the correct vocabulary to record his reaction to the scene. Knowledge of high forms of art was thus a pre-requisite of the Picturesque, which in its early stages attracted a specialised audience: the ‘gentleman of taste’ who was well versed in classical and neo-classical aesthetics.

Gray clearly fits this profile of the Picturesque traveller – William Gilpin tellingly comments that ‘no man was a greater admirer of nature, than Mr Gray; nor admired it with better *taste*’⁶ – and it is likely that he visited the Lake District with a pre-determined idea about how he should respond to the landscape; both because of his earlier experience of the scenes on the Grand Tour and because he had read Brown’s *Description*. As a reader of Brown’s prose, Gray had already experienced a textual engagement with the Lakeland mountains before he saw them which shaped his actual response to, and subsequent literary representation of, the scenery. As Ruddick notes, ‘it is not difficult to see how memories of Brown’s prose, working upon a sensibility eager to re-experience a vividly remembered Alpine sublimity [...] launched Gray into the often-derided description of Borrowdale’ (p. 139). The ‘often-derided description’ referred to here is ‘the jaws of Borodale [*sic*]’ (*TGC*, III, p. 1079) and what Ruddick is essentially suggesting is that the *Description* functions as an implicit intertext when Gray is composing the *Journal*. Even at this early stage in the development of the Picturesque, writers on the Lake District are already positioning themselves as readers and rewriters of

⁶ William Gilpin, *Observations on the River Wye, and several parts of South Wales, &c. relative chiefly to picturesque beauty; made in the summer of the year 1770* (London: R. Blamire, 1789), p. vi.

earlier works, developing a form of landscape prose that is characterised by intertextuality and referentiality.

It would, however, be misleading to suggest that Gray's engagement with the landscape, at the compositional stage, was purely restricted to the influence of his Picturesque predecessors because as Ruddick rightly observes:

He was conditioned in relation to what he should seek out, and (to some extent) in his expectations concerning how he should respond by his predecessors in the area. But he should also be credited with having often taken an independent line in seeking out sublime and beautiful stimuli, and in the quickness with which he responded to unexpected opportunities or strokes of luck. (p. 140)

Gray's ability to take an independent line and to react to factors that can suddenly change the landscape is arguably the product of his desire to represent the region as vividly as possible for Wharton through the form of the familiar letter. This is apparent, for example, in his representation of the physical textures and noises he experiences, and in his remarkable eye for detail: 'the Darwent [*sic*] clear as glass, & shewing under its bridge every trout, that passes' (*TGC*, III, p. 1088). These individual touches create a highly intimate text that records a personalised experience of place, which is at odds with the distanced and formulaic responses of later Picturesque writings. This difference is an important one because it shows that at the time of the *Journal's* composition, Gray's awareness of the Picturesque is not entirely determining his textual engagement with the landscape. He is still capable, as Norman Nicholson notes, of 'put[ting] the glass down and look[ing] about him, often with a clarity of vision for which he has not often been

credited'.⁷ This individual aspect of the *Journal*, and the rejection of Picturesque rules that it implies, is arguably a factor in the text's appeal. While it is regularly attributed to the fact that Gray's response to the scenery is primarily that of a poet – in *Guide to the Lakes*, William Wordsworth famously praises 'Gray, the Poet' for his 'distinctness and unaffected simplicity'⁸ – it is also partly a product of the form in which he writes. Yet, as I will go on to show later in this chapter, a tension emerges at the editing stage between the intimacy and 'distinctiveness' of Gray's authorial content and the stylistic conformity that is at the heart of later Picturesque writing and the Picturesque experience of place.

Reading the Journal's Authorial Contexts

I want to turn first, however, to discuss the compositional context and the authorial versions of the text. Gray's primary stimulus for writing the *Journal* was the absence of his intended travel companion, Wharton, who was taken ill with asthma and forced to abandon the tour of the Lake District that they intended to take together. A previous trip in 1767 had already been aborted at Keswick for the same reason, but on 30th September, 1769, Gray elected to continue the journey alone, keeping a detailed record of his 14-day tour of the region for the benefit of his absent friend. Gray initially composed the *Journal* in two pocket notebooks which he carried with him throughout the tour (see fig. 2.1). The content of the notebooks was then transcribed word-for-word (with the exception of minor copying errors) into a series of letters, which Gray sent to Wharton. The first letter, containing *Journal* entries from 30th September-1st October, was sent by Gray from Aston

⁷ Norman Nicholson, *The Lakelanders: The Adventures of the First Tourists* (Cumbria: Cicerone Press, 1995), p. 48. All subsequent references to this text will be given parenthetically.

⁸ Wordsworth, *Guide to the Lakes*, p. 69.

on 18th October 1769. Three subsequent letters, covering entries from the 1st-3rd, 3rd-4th and 5th-8th of October, were then sent from Cambridge in October and November 1769, and January 1770 respectively. For reasons unknown, the final instalment of the text, which consists of entries from the 8th-14th of October, does not appear to have been sent by Gray. Instead, it was transcribed from Gray's notebooks by William Mason's curate, Christopher Alderson (again with only minor copying errors), and sent, by Mason, to Wharton on 24th July 1770.

The different sources for the *Journal* are equivalent to one act of immediate composition and two subsequent acts of creative production – the former being represented by Gray's notebook text, and the latter by Gray's four letters and Alderson's single transcribed version. As Alderson's copy of the *Journal* is largely faithful to Gray's original manuscript,⁹ we are effectively presented with three authorial versions of the text: one in Gray's handwriting in the notebooks, another in Gray's hand in the first four letters, and one transcribed into a letter by Alderson. The only difference between the notebook and epistolary versions is that the letters in Gray's hand also contain postscripts underneath the *Journal* text addressed to Wharton, but the content of the *Journal* itself remains unchanged. Although the content of the notebook and epistolary versions of the *Journal* is consistent, the presentation of it in different genres does encourage different interpretations of that content. To put it another way, the meaning of the text changes

⁹ *TGC*, III, pp. 1074-1075n. Toynbee and Whibley describe Alderson's transcript as having 'slight variations from the text of the note-books, some of which were probably mere errors in copying' (p. 1075n). The letters are held in the British Museum but I have been unable to locate the notebooks, which were originally in the possession of John Murray before part of his collection was transferred to the National Library of Scotland.

across the two versions not because of linguistic variation but because its generic contexts invite us to interpret the words on the page in different ways.

The generic variations of the *Journal* raise the issue of whether the textual space of the notebooks demonstrates an intention to retain the text as a private record of the tour, or whether the notebooks are just a 'draft' compositional context for the correspondence. As such, it is necessary to consider the relative status of the journal-as-letter and the letter-as-journal and to think about how the notebook version anticipates the epistolary version. What difference does it make to our interpretation of the content if we understand the text as either private notebook or private epistolary discourse? Establishing the various readings of the authorial versions of the *Journal* is essential to understanding how the act of editing and publication alters the engagement with travel represented in the text, providing a benchmark against which the later changes to the *Journal* can be evaluated.

I want to consider the epistolary version of the *Journal* first, primarily because Ruddick takes the position that the correspondence is the most authoritative version of the text.¹⁰ As I mentioned in Chapter One, Ruddick rightly makes the connection between Gray's experience of travel and his need to have 'a congenial friend as correspondent'. He consolidates this view with reference to the *Journal* commenting that Wharton 'was destined to play the part of the wished-for but absent companion with whom [...] Gray would imagine himself sharing his discoveries and impressions' (pp. 126, 135-6). Almost thirty years after the Grand Tour, Gray's travel writing is still informed by the

¹⁰ I mentioned in the Introduction that most travel writing criticism is only concerned with published versions of travel accounts (pp. 2-5). Ruddick's essay is the exception to the rule because he is more concerned with Gray's authorial version of the *Journal*.

consciousness of an intimate intended addressee at the time of writing and his accounts are still being constructed as discourses of imagined presence. Indeed it is readily apparent that Wharton is the intended recipient for the *Journal*, not only because it is sent to him in letters but also because it is evidenced in the text's explicit and shared references, shifting mode of address and descriptive forms.

References to Wharton appear in the 3rd October entry of the *Journal*, in which Gray moves from the mention of Skiddaw in the 'back-ground at distance' to an expression of longing for his friend: 'Oh Doctor! I never wish'd more for you' (*TGC*, III, p. 1080). This impassioned statement and the very act of wishing for Wharton's physical presence, makes clear that his imagined presence is one of the core creative stimuli behind the text. If Wharton had been able to continue the tour there would, of course, have been no reason for Gray to write to him detailing the journey. It is also not coincidental that the description of Skiddaw prompts Gray to desire Wharton's company. Prior to embarking on the tour, the mountain had become an emblem for the Lakeland experience that the two men planned to share and, in a letter to Mason written just after their first trip had been abandoned, Gray notes that 'the Dr dreams of nothing but Skiddaw' (*TGC*, III, p. 977). The mountain makes another appearance in a letter Gray writes to Norton Nicholls just months before the second visit to the region was to take place: 'look with your telescope at the top of Skiddaw, & you will see me' (*TGC*, III, p. 1061). This comment seems more of a joke than an indication that Gray actually intended to climb Skiddaw, but its symbolic importance is readily apparent, not least because it merits more than half a dozen mentions in the *Journal*: 'passed by the side of *Skiddaw* & its cub call'd *Latter-rig*' (*TGC*, III, p. 1079); 'take notice this was the best or perhaps the only day for going up

Skiddaw' (*TGC*, III, p. 1089); 'as to going up the crag one might as well go up *Skiddaw*' (*TGC*, III, p. 1099). The frequency with which the mountain appears in the text suggests that it has a significance for writer and reader beyond its denotative meaning. At the very least, *Skiddaw* is an imaginative point of reference for Wharton and a means by which Gray can personalise his addressee's experience of the region.¹¹

This personalisation is also apparent in the mode of address which, as in the letters to West, shifts between first-person narration and dialogic utterance. Shifts of this nature occur in three main instances: when Gray is directly addressing Wharton in an aside, as in the 30th September entry in which he recalls 'that cluster of mountains, wch the Doctor well remembers' (*TGC*, III, p. 1076); when Gray is indirectly addressing Wharton, as in the 7th October entry, 'no day has pass'd, in wch I could not walk out with ease, & you know, I am no lover of dirt' (*TGC*, III, p. 1096); and when Gray is drawing on descriptive forms, such as pictorialism, in which he knows Wharton has an interest:

I got to the *Parsonage* a little before Sunset, & saw in my glass a picture, that if I could transmit to you, & fix it in all the softness of its living colours, would fairly sell for a thousand pounds. this is the sweetest scene I can yet discover in point of pastoral beauty. the rest are in a sublimer style. (*TGC*, III, p. 1090)

In this passage there is a movement from the 'I' of the writer to the 'You' of reader, which effectively evokes the 'I' and the 'You' of the letter writing utterance, again demonstrating that Gray is anticipating his intended recipient at the time of composition. The reference to the 'glass' in this description is to the Claude Glass. As I mentioned in the Introduction this is an optical device containing a convex mirror that was favoured by

¹¹ In Chapter Five we will see Shelley using similar techniques in his letters to personalise his experiences of Switzerland for Peacock, pp. 256-257.

enthusiasts of the Picturesque, and which had the effect of reducing the vastness of the landscape to a perfect picture. Earlier in the same entry, when viewing the valley of Keswick from Carl Close Reeds, Gray similarly enters into a dialogue with the absent Wharton, requesting him to ‘think, how the glass played its part in such a spot’ (*TGC*, III, p. 1080). What is interesting about this request, and the passage quoted above, is that in both instances Gray is repeating epistolary techniques that he developed in the letters he wrote to West during the Grand Tour, employing the language of the present in a way that requires his reader to make an imaginative leap of faith. In the first example, Wharton is invited to enter into the textual space of the *Journal* and to imagine from Gray’s detailed description of the landscape that he is actually viewing Derwentwater through ‘the glass’; while in the second, he has to imagine what the scene looks like because there is no description. Gray cannot ‘transmit’ the ‘picture’ or ‘fix it in all the softness of its living colours’ and, as such, Wharton is at liberty to conjure up a vision of this particular landscape that satisfies his own aesthetic tastes. Textual strategies of this kind invite imaginative participation and make present what is absent as the reader is required by the response structures of the text to become an active collaborator in the meaning process and to fill the aesthetic or descriptive gaps left by the writer. Again, this type of collaboration is similar to that Gray tried to achieve with West; the main differences being that it is restricted to prose and does not require or expect/anticipate compositional participation by Wharton.

In contrast, there are other pictorial sections in the *Journal* that are highly detailed and which suggest that Gray is keen to satisfy his reader’s appetite for the Picturesque. The text contains a number of striking passages which capture the effect of the weather on the

scenery: 'at the feet of Saddleback, whose furrow'd sides were gilt by the noon-day Sun, while its brow appear'd of a sad purple from the shadow of the clouds as they sailed slowly by it' (*TGC*, III, p. 1078). Here, the impression is that of a textured landscape, the sides of the mountain are 'furrow'd' and, on this occasion, Gray can articulate the living colours of the scene, capturing them in the contrast that the weather creates between the sides and the top of Saddleback. This description of the scenery, along with others like it in the text, illustrates the intensely visual character of some of Gray's writing, which must be attributed in part to the fact that the *Journal* is effectively a 'textual eye' through which Wharton can view the region. Gray's prose also takes on a physical and auditory dimension: the meadow on the approach to Dunmallert is 'spungy' (*TGC*, III, p. 1077) and during his evening visit to Derwentwater he hears 'the murmur of many waterfalls not audible in the day-time' (*TGC*, III, p. 1089). Such descriptive detail suggests that the imagined presence of Wharton enhances Gray's own experience of travel, making him more acutely aware of the landscape through which he is journeying and recording.

As these textual examples demonstrate, the *Journal* does exhibit many qualities associated with Gray's earlier epistolary travel prose, ranging from the reader-consciousness that informs the act of writing, to strategies for making an absent addressee imaginatively present. Linguistic features like these indicate that the relationship between writer and reader is still central to Gray's writing process and, furthermore, that the notebook content anticipates the epistolary context in which the *Journal* is later positioned. It is the importance of the Gray-Wharton dynamic that leads Ruddick to argue that the text 'has always been inaccurately but conveniently referred to as [Gray's] *Journal* of the visit' (p. 133). Ruddick does not expand on this comment further, but his

objection is arguably made on generic grounds: the *Journal* cannot be a “journal” in the strictest sense of the term because, sent as it is in letters, the text is not a singularly private record of Gray’s tour of the Lake District. Yet against this it is necessary to understand that travel journals in the Eighteenth Century *were* often written for other recipients and that Gray *himself* identifies the text as a *Journal* in the letters to Wharton: ‘Dear Dr, Have you lost the former part of my journal?’ (*TGC*, III, p. 1081).

To what extent, then, is the *Journal* a journal? The first point to make is that the *Journal* does differ from the rest of Gray’s familiar epistolary discourse written whilst he was travelling because on no other occasion did he either compose the content for an epistle in a notebook and then transcribe it into letters, or retain a copy of a letter in his notebooks. In fact his records of travel, as Ruddick observes, ‘tend to take the form of notes, and to be chiefly factual’ (p. 127). That Gray did keep the notebooks containing the *Journal* signals that the text has a particular personal value and is not merely a draft for the letters. While the content of the notebooks does clearly anticipate the correspondence, Gray’s desire to retain the original manuscript of the *Journal* suggests that his engagement with place is functioning in dual ways. He is both chronicling the journey for himself and writing with an explicit awareness of addressee-consciousness in a mode of address that imitates epistolary discourse. These two authorial contexts for the *Journal*, then, should encourage a reading of the text which takes into account both the writer-as-reader and writer-to-reader dynamics of Gray’s textual experience of the Lake District. Although the latter dynamic is more explicitly recognisable in the content, this does not mean that the epistolary context should be privileged at the analytical stage. Indeed considering the

compositional context of the notebooks, as well as the letters, reveals the deeply personal aspects of the *Journal*.

The most effective illustration of the personal nature of the *Journal* can be found in Gray's sublime descriptions of the mountains, which are influenced by his earlier experience of the Alpine peaks during the Grand Tour of 1739-1741:

Soon after we came under *Gowder-crag*, [...] the rocks atop, deep-cloven perpendicularly by the rains, hanging loose & nodding forwards, seem just starting from their base in shivers; the whole way down & the road on both sides is strew'd with piles of the fragments strangely thrown across each other, and of a dreadful bulk. the place reminds one of those passes in the Alps, where the Guides tell you to move on with speed, & say nothing, lest the agitation of the air should loosen the snows above, & bring down a mass, that would overwhelm a caravan. I took their counsel here and hasten'd on in silence. (*TGC*, III, p. 1080)

In this entry for 3rd October, the language choice – ‘deep cloven’, ‘shivers’, ‘dreadful bulk’ – is noticeably that of the sublime and Gray explicitly makes the connection between his aesthetic response to Gowder Crag and his visit to the Alps: ‘the place reminds one of those passes in the Alps’. The identification with the awe and terror of the Alpine sublime leads Gray to conflate his past and present journeyings, transforming the Lakeland rocks into an impending avalanche and prompting him to take the ‘counsel’ of the guides who had accompanied him through the passes of the Grand Chartreuse. In writing his personal travel history into the landscape in this way, Gray is effectively articulating two very different journeys: his outward physical movement through the Lake District and an inward nostalgic return to the travel experiences of his past. The imaginative link between the “now” of the Lakes and the “then” of the Alps is so strong that the substance of this passage can actually be traced back to a letter about the mountains of the Chartreuse that Gray sent to his mother in 1739:

a monstrous precipice. almost perpendicular, at the bottom of which rolls a torrent, that sometimes tumbling along the fragments of stone that have fallen from on high [...] concurs to form one of the most solemn, the most romantic, and the most astonishing scenes I ever beheld: Add to this the strange views made by the craggs [*sic*] and cliffs [...] the cascades that in many places throw themselves from the very summit down into the vale. (*TGC*, I, pp. 122-3)

On viewing Gowder Crag, the perpendicular precipice of this description becomes ‘the rocks atop, deep-cloven perpendicularly by the rains’; whilst the ‘fragments of stone that have fallen from on high’ are, in the *Lakeland Journal*, transformed into ‘piles of the fragments strangely thrown across each other’. The image of the cascades throwing themselves from the summit, finds expression again in Gray’s portrayal of the rocks of Gowder Crag, which hang loose and nod forward ‘starting from their base in shivers’. The description of Gowder Crag is, for Gray, the textual equivalent of reliving the astonishment and terror that he had felt on his earlier travels, which goes some way toward explaining why his representation of the mountains in this passage is effectively a re-articulation of the Alpine sublime captured in the earlier letter to his mother.

Throughout the *Journal* the representation of the mountains takes the same descriptive form as that of Gowder Crag: the fells surrounding Ullswater ‘rise very rude & awful with their broken tops on either hand’ (*TGC*, III, p. 1077); the ‘bare and rocky brow’ of Walla Crag is ‘cut perpendicularly down’ and ‘awefully overlooks the way’ (*TGC*, III, p. 1079); ‘the crags, named *Lodor-banks* [...] impend terribly over your way’ (*TGC*, III, p. 1080); and, most famously, ‘the jaws of *Borodale*’ are characterised by ‘that turbulent Chaos of mountain behind mountain roll’d in confusion’ (*TGC*, III, p. 1079). The language choice and emotional responses to the landscape in these examples (of which there are many more in the *Journal*) are notable for their similarity and also for the fact

that Gray's concern is not to give an accurate topographical description but rather to communicate an aesthetic response. The mountains of the region become infused with an Alpine *genius loci* as Gray again draws on his past experience of sublimity and imaginatively grafts it onto the Lakeland fells. What is represented in descriptions of this kind is not the physical place 'the Lake District' but a textual spatialisation of it in which the Lakes and the Alps are merged to create a composite imaginative experience of the sublime. The *Journal* not only charts Gray's *actual* tour of Lakeland, then, but also his imaginative re-visiting of the Alps, recording a deeply personal journey, from present to past, on which only Gray can embark.

Although Gray's decision to initially compose the *Journal* in notebooks may have been partly determined by the practicalities of travel (notebooks are easily transportable), recognising the personal elements of the text shows that Gray's own generic identification of it as a 'journal' is significant. While he may have needed the stimulus of a like-minded correspondent with whom he could share his travel experiences, at the same time his retaining of the notebooks indicates a compulsion to record his responses to the landscape for himself. It seems to be the case that in order for Gray to fully experience travel he must also write about it because, for him, the act of travelling is imaginative as well as actual. His engagement with place is always dependent on textual articulation, whether it be for himself, for an intimate addressee or both.

In recognising these personal aspects of the *Journal*, I am not seeking to downplay the importance of the epistolary context, but rather to demonstrate that taking both the notebook and correspondence into account facilitates markedly different readings of the

engagement with travel represented in the text. On the one hand it is explicitly tailored to meet the expectations of Wharton as addressee, whilst on the other it implicitly revives Gray's memories of past travel and his earlier travelling self. If the notebook or epistolary context is privileged alone it is possible to overlook an entire dimension of Gray's travel experience because responding to the text as *either* a writer-as-reader journal *or* writer-to-reader correspondence limits our understanding of textual meaning. Full engagement with the textuality of the *Journal* is only really possible if we accept that, in the compositional context, there is not one "ideal" text but rather two, equally valid, versions – notebooks and letters – that are worthy of critical attention.

Editing and Publishing the Journal

Having considered the authorial contexts for the *Journal*, I want to turn now to think about the private to public evolution of the text. By the time William Mason came to posthumously edit the *Journal* in 1775 for *The Poems of Mr Gray: To which are Prefixed Memoirs of his Life and Writings*, the growing number of Picturesque tourists visiting the Lake District had led to an increasing demand for Picturesque guide books. By 1775, Picturesque literature on the region had already been published by John Dalton (1755), John Brown (1767), Arthur Young (1771) and Thomas Pennant (1772); while William Gilpin's *Observations [...] on the Mountains and Lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland* (which was written in 1772 but not published until 1786), had been circulated in manuscript to a group of Picturesque enthusiasts that included Mason.¹²

¹² Mason acknowledges that he has read Gilpin in manuscript in one of the footnotes that he adds to his edition of Gray's *Journal*. This note is quoted at length on p. 90 of this chapter. Thomas Gray, *The Poems*

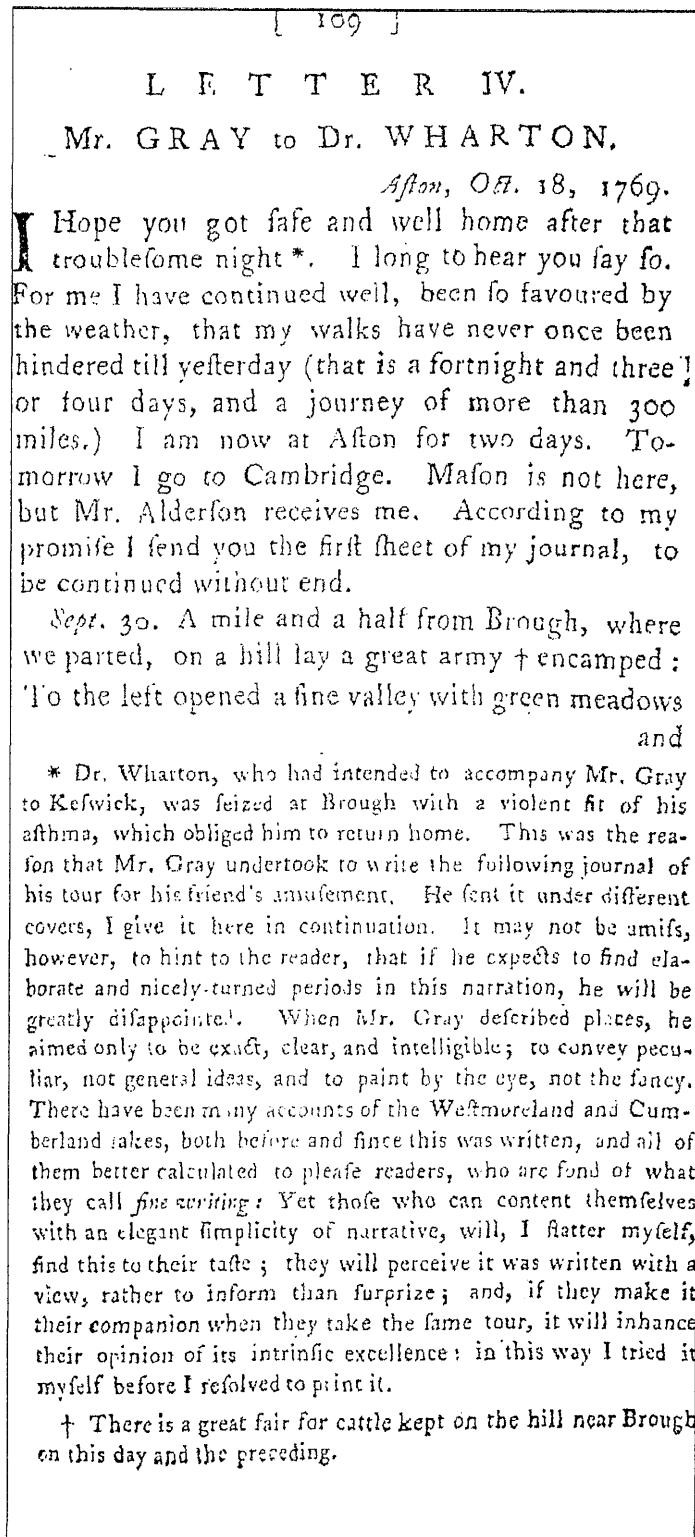
The significance of Mason's editorial role should not be underestimated. He made some crucial changes to the *Journal*; printed it as a continuous text, omitted and inserted passages, and added some lengthy explanatory footnotes. It was these amendments that paved the way for the *Journal* to be included as an intertext to the first edition of Thomas West's *Guide to the Lakes* (1778) and as an appendix to the second edition (1780). The inclusion of the *Journal* in West's *Guide* was responsible for the huge popularity of the text because it opened it up to a much larger readership. It is for this reason that Mason's edition represents a crucial stage in the textual history of the *Journal* and why his handling of it requires more attention than it has received from critics.

In the discussion of Mason's edition that follows, I want to suggest that the Picturesque literary context is vital for understanding his editorial decisions. In particular, I will argue that Gilpin's Lake District *Observations* should be singled out as an important intertextual model for Mason's edition of Gray's *Journal* because it influenced those changes he made to the text which had the effect of transforming it from a private engagement with place into a guide for the Picturesque tourist. What I want to focus on here, then, are the alterations to the *Journal* which downplay the intimate writer-as-reader and writer-to-reader dynamic of the text in order to emphasise its Picturesque qualities.

In a lengthy introductory footnote, which dominates the first page of the 1775 edition (see fig. 2.2), Mason acknowledges the epistolary context of the *Journal*. He explains that it is

of Mr Gray: To which are Prefixed Memoirs of his Life and Writings, ed. by William Mason, 2 vols (Dublin: 1775), II, p. 133n.

Figure 2.2: First Page of Mason's Edition of Gray's *Journal*



Wharton's illness that prompts Gray to write the *Journal* 'for his friend's amusement' and that the text was 'sent under different covers' whereas 'I give it here in continuation' (II, p. 109n). This note appears to be a means of providing the authorial history of the text so that readers can respond accordingly. Yet, in a self-contradictory act, across the text as whole Mason undercuts the importance of the Gray-Wharton dynamic by removing some of the explicit references to Wharton. In the 3rd October entry, for example, he replaces Gray's 'Oh Doctor, I never wish'd more for you; & pray think, how the glass played its part in such a spot' (*TGC*, III, p. 1080) with 'Here the glass played its part divinely' (II, p. 114). This linguistic modification marks a shift from an addressee-specific description to a more generic one, omitting Gray's overt awareness of Wharton from the text and rendering the general reader unaware that the content of the *Journal* is bound up with the aesthetic preferences of its intended recipient.

The removal of mentions of Wharton could be seen as a deliberate eliding of the individual reader in order to make the text more accessible to a broader readership and, therefore, as a necessary act in the process of transforming the *Journal* from a private document to a public text. There is, however, a significant factor that prevents us from viewing Mason's changes as an essential recontextualisation of the *Journal*. His editing of the text is inconsistent and while he omits some mentions of Wharton he indiscriminately leaves others in, such as the aside 'wch the Doctor well remembers' (II, p. 110). The reason for this anomaly is perhaps reflective of Mason's desire to render the Picturesque elements of the *Journal* more universal – after all it is the Claude Glass that is the subject of the amended line. Nonetheless, the inconsistency does reveal a tension between the private engagement with place that is central to the text's coming-into-being

and Mason's broader editorial project. The addressee-specific quality of the text is so integral to its content that it cannot be entirely removed (hence Mason's acknowledgement of the epistolary context in the footnote) but the intimacy of this representation is at odds with the supposedly detached and objective style which characterises Picturesque writing.

For similar reasons, the personal features of the *Journal* also pose an editorial problem for Mason: one that he tackles in the introductory footnote by directing the public reader to particular modes of Gray's description:

When Mr Gray described places, he aimed only to be exact, clear and intelligible; to convey peculiar, not general ideas, and to paint by the eye, not the fancy [...] Those who can content themselves with an elegant simplicity of narrative, will, I flatter myself, find this to their taste; they will perceive it as written with a view, rather to inform than surprise. (II, p. 109n)

It is the Picturesque elements of Gray's writing that Mason is drawing attention to here. The mention of painting 'by the eye' is a reference to the Picturesque desire to view the scenery as a work of art, while the mention of 'taste' reminds the reader of their aesthetic duty to the landscape. Mason's emphasis on the Picturesque ultimately results in a misleading account of the *Journal*; an account which opened the text up to undeserved criticisms. As Ruddick notes, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century detractors of the *Journal* 'fastened on to particular aspects of the narrative', such as 'Gray's somewhat heightened account of his reactions on a walk into Borrowdale' and ridiculed 'his inadequacies (and above all his gullibility) as a factual witness' (p. 136). It is precisely Gray's reliability as a factual witness that Mason promotes in the footnote and it is not surprising that readers who were expecting 'exact, clear and intelligible' landscapes 'painted by the eye, not the

fancy' were derisory about Gray's passages on the sublime. These passages *are* fanciful, communicating as they do an imaginative or intertextual, not actual, interaction with the landscape.

The claim of accuracy in the footnote particularly infuriates James Clarke who correctly observes that the reader of the *Journal*:

May find that periods are more attended to than sense, and pomp of description than truth; that at sometimes he [Gray] has omitted the most remarkable objects, and at other times described things and places that never excited, unless his own fancy.¹³

Clarke has often been cited as one of the *Journal*'s main detractors because his guide, *A Survey of the Lakes of Cumberland, Westmorland and Lancashire* (1787), includes some dubious anecdotes about Gray's timidity as a traveller.¹⁴ Yet it is arguably not Gray's prose that Clarke is objecting to but rather Mason's misleading interventions which, in seeking to promote the detailed Picturesque prose that is a feature of some parts of the *Journal*, leads him to overlook the imaginative dimension of the text and to misrepresent its descriptive forms to the expectant reader.

In addition to downplaying the private dynamics of the *Journal*, in the introductory footnote Mason also seeks to position the text alongside other writings on the region in an endeavour to place it within the context of existing Picturesque literature:

¹³ James Clarke, *A Survey of the Lakes of Cumberland, Westmorland and Lancashire* (London: J Robson and J Faulder, 1787), p. 96.

¹⁴ See, for example, Clarke's tale about Gray drawing the blinds of his chaise as he passed by Skiddaw because he was afraid of the precipices. Clarke, *A Survey of the Lakes*, p. 54.

There have been many accounts of the *Westmorland* and *Cumberland* lakes, both before and since this was written, and all of them better calculated to please readers, who are fond of what they call *fine writing*. (II, p. 109n)

By referring, in quite a confrontational manner, to previous accounts of the region – the mention of ‘what they call fine writing’ is quite clearly meant to be derogatory – Mason is critiquing the tradition of Picturesque prose in an attempt to assert the uniqueness of the *Journal*. This is a strategy that he borrows from Gilpin who uses it in *Observations* to tackle one of the central problems of Picturesque writing – how to appear original when the genre is characterised by referentiality (to previous painters and writers) and conformity (to classical and neo-classical ideals):

The late Dr. Brown, who was a man of taste, and had seen every part of this country, singled out the scenery of this lake [Derwentwater] for it's [*sic*] particular beauty. And unquestionably it is, in many places, very sweetly romantic: particularly along it's eastern and southern shores: but to give it *pre-eminence* may be paying it perhaps as much too high a compliment.¹⁵

By engaging with and then challenging the work of Brown – whose depiction of Keswick had effectively determined all subsequent responses to the vale since it was published in 1767 – Gilpin is not only able to assert his opinion in a way that makes him appear more authoritative than his predecessor, but also to increase the credibility of his own account through an allusive and necessary nod to the Picturesque tradition. Brown ‘was a man of taste’ and by referring to him Gilpin is able to confirm that he *also* has the necessary taste to respond in an appropriate way to the landscape. This reassures the reader that Gilpin has visited the correct Picturesque prospect (made famous by Brown), that he has observed the qualities of the landscape that he ought to see, and that he is qualified to

¹⁵ William Gilpin, *Observations, Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty, made in the year 1772, on Several Parts of England; Particularly the Mountains, and Lakes of Cumberland, and Westmorland* (London: R. Blamire, 1786), p. 183. All subsequent references to this text will be given parenthetically.

offer a new opinion on the relative value of the scene. More than this, by *textually* revisiting a site that has already been described, Gilpin's intertextual reference to Brown becomes integral to *how* he (and therefore his reader) looks at the scenery. His aim is not to react visually but rather to respond through the text of another writer. When the reader comes to this particular passage in Gilpin he is engaging with the landscape of Derwentwater through Gilpin, through Brown and through the neo-classical painters referenced by Brown. The importance of this intertextual response to place suggests that the central premise of the Lakeland Picturesque is not primarily a visual experience of landscape but rather a *written* experience. As Jonathan Bate notes, the tourist did not find a Picturesque prospect by looking at the landscape but rather by looking 'down at a text'.¹⁶ Visual engagement with Picturesque scenery, then, is *always* dependent on textual articulation.

Unlike Gilpin, Mason does not directly mention any one writer in his footnote. Yet his rather scathing acknowledgement of the writing that pre-dates and follows Gray is similar to Gilpin's handling of Brown: it aims to increase the credibility of Gray's response to the landscape by differentiating it from existing accounts whilst also connecting it to them. Another motivation for Mason's critique appears to be a desire to demonstrate his knowledge and establish himself as an authority on the Picturesque. It seems to be for this reason that Mason tells the reader that he 'tried' the *Journal* before electing to publish it:

If they [readers] make it [the *Journal*] their companion when they take the same tour, it will enhance their opinion of its intrinsic excellence; in this way I tried it myself before I resolved to print it. (II, p. 109n)

¹⁶ Jonathan Bate, *The Song of the Earth* (London: Picador, 2000), p. 133.

This final sentence of the introductory footnote explicitly indicates that Mason is repositioning the *Journal* as a guide. The text is to be carried by the reader ‘when they take the same tour’ so that in true Picturesque style they can interpret the landscape, not only through Gray’s text but also through Mason’s recontextualisation of the engagement with place that it represents. The reader’s taste is confirmed by the very fact that they are reading the text because Mason has already established the value of the *Journal* by deciding to publish it after taking his tour. The paratextual space of the footnotes thus becomes a means through which Mason can transform himself from editor to *author*. He is able to add his own voice to the debate on the Picturesque by entering into dialogue with Gray’s experience of place and by commenting on its qualities.

Mason further demonstrates his knowledge and authority by adding a series of footnotes elsewhere in the *Journal*, which either justify or critique Gray’s response to the scenery. What is significant about these additions is that they can all be traced back to Gilpin’s *Observations*. In a note accompanying the 4th October entry Mason writes:

When I sailed on Derwent-water, I did not receive so much pleasure from the superb amphitheatre of mountains around me, as when, like Mr *Gray*, I traversed its margin; and therefore think he did not lose much by not taking boat. (II, p. 118n)

Mason arguably has two motivations for including this comment. Firstly, as Ruddick observes, ‘to make a circuit of Derwentwater and Ullswater by boat were virtually obligatory features of a Lakeland tour’ (p. 136), so the addendum was probably included both in an attempt to ward off any criticism that might be directed at Gray for not taking to the water and to illustrate to the reader that Mason has been thorough in his investigation of the scene. Second, although it may have been *de rigeur* to take the boat,

Gilpin's advice on how to look at the scene in *Observations* is that the 'rocky shores' are 'the happiest stations for obtaining the most picturesque views of the lake' (p. 186). While Mason creates the impression that he supports Gray's choice of viewing station based on his own experience of the scenery, it is equally likely that his judgement has been influenced by Gilpin's acknowledgement that the shores of the lake offer the 'most picturesque' views.

The intertextual presence of *Observations* is similarly apparent in footnotes where Mason is directing the reader to points of interest that he perceives Gray has missed. In a comment added to the 5th October entry Mason writes: 'It is somewhat extraordinary that Mr Gray omitted to mention the islands on *Derwent-water*, one of which, I think they call Vicar's island, makes a principle object in the scene' (II, p. 119n). Vicar's Island is identified by Gilpin as being 'of consequence' to the scene (p. 180), a factor which probably influences Mason's assessment of it in Picturesque terms. Likewise, when Mason goes into detail about a scene Gray overlooked because he decided not to stay at Ambleside, the landscape is viewed through a window which literally frames the prospect transforming it into a perfectly Picturesque setting: 'his greatest loss was not seeing a small water-fall, visible only through the window of a ruined summer house in Sir *Michael's* orchard' (II, p. 123n). Again, it is Gilpin who first identifies this viewing point:

The first object of our attention, on leaving Ambleside, was Rydal-hall, the seat of Sir Michael le Fleming [...] It [the waterfall] is seen from a summer-house; before which it's [*sic*] rocky cheeks circling on each side form a little area; appearing through the window like a picture in a frame' (pp. 161-2)

The similarities between Mason's footnotes and Gilpin's comments are too close to be coincidental and they suggest a desire, on Mason's part, to model his edition of the *Journal* on Gilpin's prose. In fact, in a later note accompanying the 14th October entry, Mason informs the reader that he has read Gilpin in manuscript:

I cannot, however, help adding that I have seen one piece of verbal description, which completely satisfies me [...] It is composed by the Rev. Mr *Gilpin*, of *Cheam* in *Surrey*; and contains, among other places, an account of the very scenes, which, in this tour, our author visited. This gentleman possessing the conjoined talents of a writer and designer, has employed them in this manuscript to every purpose of picturesque beauty [...]. But I have said it is in manuscript, and, I am afraid, likely to continue so; for would his modesty permit him to print it, the great expence [sic] of plates would make its publication almost impracticable. (II, p. 133n)

The impression created here is that Gilpin's descriptions of the scenes are far superior to the prose accounts in the *Journal*. As in the introductory footnote, Mason is acting to assert his authority as a commentator on the Picturesque (on this occasion at the expense of Gray) by informing his reader that he has engaged, not only with accounts of the Lakes that have already been published, but also with one that *may never be published*: one that many of the readers of his edition may never have the privilege to access. This explicit mention of Gilpin intimates that Mason has used another account of the region in order to verify his own taste, and that he is reading the landscape represented in the *Journal* primarily through Gilpin. It also explains why Gray's prose is re-contextualised by footnotes that have their origins in *Observations*.

Considering the multiple changes that Mason made to the *Journal* it becomes apparent that they are heavily influenced by the contemporary literary context and, in particular, by Gilpin's contribution to the Lakeland Picturesque. This in turn suggests that the evolution of the *Journal* can only be fully understood if it is examined in this broader context

because Mason's editorial interventions are determined by forces external to the text. This approach works both ways because charting the impact of Mason's amendments not only shows how the private elements of the *Journal* become subordinate to its more universal Picturesque qualities, it also offers an insight into the conventions of Picturesque textuality. It may even be the case that the Picturesque, more than any other form of travel writing, necessitates an intertextual approach because this is so central to the type of engagement with place that it promotes. In Mason's edition of the *Journal* we see, for example, that engagement with the work of predecessors and a desire to claim originality and authority in the face of referentiality and intertextuality are all fundamental to the changes he makes to the text. Perhaps more importantly, Mason's use of paratextual spaces as a means of entering into dialogue with existing accounts of the landscape, explicitly situates Picturesque guides in an overlapping readerly and writerly space. Prefaces and footnotes provide an opportunity for a Picturesque author or editor to acknowledge that he is a reader and rewriter of earlier texts. An intertextual "super-structure" of this kind makes it extremely difficult to distinguish between the boundaries of individual texts which, at a broader level, suggests that Picturesque guides should not be discussed independently of one another.

The importance of Mason's edition of the *Journal* and the textual complexity of Picturesque guides can be illustrated finally with a brief discussion of West's *Guide to the Lakes* which, as well as incorporating the *Journal*, also seems to be modelled on the published version of Gray's text. Mason's legacy is evident right from the beginning of West's text when he outlines his rationale for the *Guide* in the preface:

The design of the following sheets, is to encourage the taste of viewing the lakes, by furnishing the traveller with a Guide; and for that purpose, the writer has here collected and laid before him, all the select stations and points of view, noticed by those authors who have last made the tour of the lakes, verified by his own repeated observations. He has also added remarks on the principal objects as they appear viewed from different stations.¹⁷

The influence of Mason's introductory footnote to the *Journal* is apparent in West's own use of paratextual space. Just as Mason tells the reader that he had undertaken Gray's tour of the Lakes before editing the *Journal*, West similarly promotes the accuracy of his account by stating that the writings of his predecessors have been 'verified' with his 'own repeated observations'. Creating the impression of authority is crucial to the *Guide* which aims to incorporate all of the significant, existing writings into one book so that the tourist in search of the Picturesque need only carry one text with him when he tours the region rather than the works of multiple authors.

Appearing almost three decades after Brown's descriptive essay on the Picturesque, the *Guide* epitomises the intertextual nature of this kind of writing; largely because West is able to include a wealth of material which would simply not have been available to his predecessors. Throughout the text, West draws on the work of nearly all the key Lakeland Picturesque writers – Brown, Gray, Young, Pennant and Mason – often quoting directly from their accounts in order to endorse or challenge their responses to the landscape. To give just one example, he instructs the reader to take Young's view of Windermere because 'no station can better answer the purpose' (p. 74) but then warns against giving preference to the lake: 'this [Young's account] ought not to prejudice the minds of those who have the tour to make' (p. 75). Although there is no direct mention of Gilpin in the

¹⁷ West, *A Guide to the Lakes*, pp. 2-3. All subsequent references to this text will be given parenthetically.

Guide, the influence of his essay can be felt in the nature of West's critical engagement with Young and the other writers he references. There is no specific quotation from Gilpin, so it is unlikely that West had read *Observations* at the time of composition, which indicates that he is unknowingly referencing the work of Gilpin through Mason's edition of the *Journal*. The *Guide*, then, not only incorporates Picturesque texts that West has read and is *self-consciously* rewriting, but also those he has not read and is *sub-consciously* rewriting.

West's self-conscious and sub-conscious engagement with previous Picturesque writings is particularly important when considering his handling of *Journal*. What is most striking is that, at times, West appears to be much more enamoured with Mason's commentary than with Gray's prose. His critique of Gray's description of Derwentwater is almost identical to that which Mason borrows from Gilpin, with the exception that West has substituted 'object' for 'feature': 'Mr Gray has omitted the island [Vicar's Island] in his description, which is a principal feature in this sweet scene' (p. 84). West also praises Mason's account of the waterfall viewed from Sir Michael's orchard: 'The first who brought this sweet scene to light, is the elegant and learned editor of Mr Gray's letters' (p. 80). He even goes as far as to quote Mason's account of the scenery in his own words (pp. 80-81). There is an obvious irony here in that West is asserting his knowledge by praising and quoting Mason when it was Gilpin who 'first brought this sweet scene to light'. West's misquotation effectively illustrates the complex intertextual relationships between Picturesque writings because it shows that even the authors themselves were not able to identify the boundaries between texts.

West's rather sycophantic engagement with Mason shows that Gray's editor has succeeded, not only in establishing himself as an authority on the Picturesque, but also in repositioning the *Journal* as a guide. West praises Gray's writing when it conforms to the standards of Picturesque taste (as in the description from the parsonage at sunset) but takes issue with his prose when it fails to do so:

The late Mr. *Gray* was a great judge of landscapes, yet whoever makes choice of his station at the three mile stone from *Lancaster*, on the *Hornby* road, will fail in taking one of the finest rural views in *England*. The station he points out is a quarter of a mile too low, and somewhat to the left. (p. 7)

West is judging the *Journal* here on its merit as a guide for a tourist readership. Gray's station is inadequate because it is 'a quarter of a mile too low' to furnish the most Picturesque view of the scenery. This comment indicates that by this stage in the textual history of the *Journal*, it is no longer relevant that Gray wrote his account for himself and a close friend rather than tourists, or that he undertook his tour at a time when the Picturesque movement was in its infancy. His work has been published and is open to be judged and re-written however its reader or readers deem fit.

West's *Guide to the Lakes* proved to be hugely popular. A second edition appeared in 1780 and was followed by eight more editions over the next forty years. The publication of Mason's edition of the *Journal*, as an appendix to the second edition of the *Guide*, ensured that it was this non-authorial version of the text that secured a long-lasting public identity and readership for the *Journal*. Thus, factoring both the authorial and non-authorial versions of the texts into the critical equation, not only ensures that Gray's private engagement with place is not over-shadowed by the published texts, it also allows

Mason's edition to be considered as a crucial part of the evolution of the *Journal*. While modern editorial practices might not endorse Mason's handling of the text, to ignore it is to overlook an important period in the reproduction and reception history of the work.

Editing the Journal: A Modern Critical Edition

Having discussed the interpretative implications that a multiple text like the *Journal* raises, I want to turn finally to the more practical issue of how modern editors might approach the handling of the text for a critical edition. This discussion is timely because no critical edition of the *Journal* currently exists and, as such, vital elements of the text's evolution are currently not available in a single edition to readers. According to the textual critic Peter Shillingsburg, a good critical edition 'cannot be blind to the important evidence of context found in variant authorial versions and publication'.¹⁸ Following this definition, any critical edition of the *Journal* should enable readers to chart the history of the text from its composition in notebooks to its transcription in correspondence, and finally to its publication in Mason's *Memoirs* and West's *Guide*. The most significant issue that this relatively complex history raises is how to communicate it in a coherent and accessible way to readers.

To begin with, there is the problem of which version should be used as the copy-text: should it be the notebook text or the correspondence, and if the decision is taken to use the latter, how should the final section that Gray did not actually send to Wharton be

¹⁸ Peter Shillingsburg, *Scholarly Editing in the Computer Age: Theory and Practice* (Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1986), p. 108.

treated? This choice is made more difficult because, while the only complete holograph is contained in the notebooks, Gray clearly also intended to send the whole text in correspondence, but in the event only sent half, which effectively means that the final section of the *Journal* is not technically part of Gray's epistolary discourse at all. In the interests of consistency, opting for the notebooks as the copy-text would seem to be the most practical solution because this would supply a complete authorial text. The first half of the text, which was sent in correspondence, could be annotated to demonstrate how it was divided into instalments in the letters; to include the postscripts Gray added to the epistolary text; and also to indicate any non-accidental changes that he made to the notebook copy. The final part of the text could similarly be annotated in those places where the minor copying errors in Alderson's transcript vary from Gray's notebook text. The main purpose of including the Mason and West editions of the *Journal* is to allow readers to examine how the text is altered by the circumstances of its publication. To this end, Mason's version, including the annotated addition of West's footnotes, should be incorporated on facing pages, with the authorial version on the verso and the non-authorial version on the recto, so that the texts are easily comparable.

A critical edition following the structure I have outlined would provide readers with the material that they require to respond to the private and published texts, and to develop an understanding of the textual history of Gray's *Journal*. That no modern editor has produced an edition of this kind (the most recent edition by William Roberts positions the *Journal* as a guide and avoids any serious engagement with its textual history¹⁹) and that

¹⁹ William Roberts (ed). *Thomas Gray's Journal of his Visit to the Lake District in October 1769* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2001).

no literary critic has factored the composition and publication history of the text into their analysis, is a sign that the different experiences of travel represented in the various manifestations of the *Journal* have still not received the attention that they deserve.

To sum up, the changing identity of the *Journal* has enabled the exploration of some core issues of the relationship between textuality and travel. In the case of Gray's text it is clear that the generic identity and private or public status of the *Journal* is key to how we interpret the experience of travel that it represents. The private versions offer a writer-as-reader and writer-to-reader account of place and allow us to consider how Gray's travel writing has evolved over the course of his lifetime; while the public versions present us with a guidebook that follows the conventions of Picturesque writing and enables us to investigate the processes behind that mode of writing. In the case of the former, the notebook and epistolary versions of the *Journal* register the influence of the Grand Tour, particularly in terms of the techniques that Gray uses in the letters to Wharton and in his more personal responses to natural scenery. Such similarities suggest that his creative process for writing about travel remains largely unchanged from the beginning to the end of his literary career. What does change, however, is the form that his expression takes. While he writes letters during most of his journeys, the epistolary poetry that played such an integral role in Gray's mediation of the Grand Tour remains confined to the correspondence with West and is replaced instead with highly descriptive prose writings in notebooks and epistles. In terms of the latter, Mason's edition of the *Journal*, and its subsequent inclusion in West's *Guide*, foregrounds the complex intertextuality that is characteristic of Picturesque travel writing and reveals significant stylistic and generic connections between some of the key Picturesque texts.

Although in terms of his modes of travel Gray is perhaps the most conventional traveller to be discussed in this study, his writings are actually highly unconventional both in their authorial and post-authorial identities. They cross generic and public-private boundaries and represent a uniquely individualised engagement with place that is not restricted by the way that writers were expected to respond to the Grand and Picturesque tours. In fact Mason's editing of the *Journal* reveals just how unsatisfactory the authorial versions were as a standard Picturesque text. Significantly for this thesis, the textuality of Gray's travel writing anticipates the more self-conscious generic playfulness, textual personalisation and public-private transgression which characterises Romantic travel discourse. Indeed, although the next chapter is about a female Romantic writer, it is possible to see the redrawing of private and public boundaries operating again at an authorial and non-authorial level in the work of Mary Wollstonecraft.

Chapter Three

Textual Self-Transformation: Mary Wollstonecraft's Letters to Imlay and Letters Written During A Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark

[Wollstonecraft] claims the traveller's privilege of speaking frequently of herself, but she uses it in a manner which always interests her readers: who may sometimes regret the circumstances which excite the writer's emotions, but will seldom see reason to censure her feelings, and will never be inclined to withhold their sympathy.¹

This chapter will leave the well-trodden tracks of the Grand and Picturesque tours and head to the eighteenth-century *terra incognita* of Scandinavia; continuing to examine the relationship between private and public discourse but this time through the texts of an author with radically different motives for travelling and for writing. My focus here will be on Mary Wollstonecraft's private letters to Gilbert Imlay (1793-1795) and the public work *Letters Written During A Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark* (1796). Whilst other chapters in this thesis explore the materiality of texts written during travel my interest here is in Wollstonecraft's manipulation of identity across two sets of letters – one private, one public – and will examine the author's attempts to translate her textual self across these different epistolary spaces. Although it is the Scandinavian travels that provide the context for this transformation, my concern here is not primarily with the actual experience of travel (as it is in later chapters) or with the travel content of the letters, but rather with the way in which Wollstonecraft attempts to transform a private textual self, through the experience of travel, into a more positive public textual self. The emphasis, then, is on the textual effects of Wollstonecraft's epistolary self-writing as evidenced in her private letters to Imlay and *Letters Written During A Short Residence*.

¹ 'Rev. of *Letters Written During A Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark*', *Monthly Review, New Series*, XX (1796), 251-57 (252).

Wollstonecraft's private letters to Imlay have been largely overlooked as an independent object for study, while existing critical work on *Letters Written During A Short Residence* has tended either to read the published collection (which is implicitly addressed to Imlay) as an extension of Wollstonecraft's private correspondence with him, or as an independent account in which Wollstonecraft intentionally creates a new and distinctive authorial persona for transgressive and political purposes.² The first of these approaches usefully identifies the personal ambitions of the public text but does not take any steps to consider or verify the important compositional relationship between the two sets of letters. In contrast, the second suggests that a performance of self is being enacted in *Letters Written During A Short Residence*, but downplays the autobiographical elements of the text which, as the epigraph suggests, are fundamental to Wollstonecraft's representation of her experiences for herself and her readers.

With a view to adding another perspective to the critical debate, this chapter will focus on Wollstonecraft's 'traveller's privilege of speaking frequently of herself'. However, rather than offering a straightforwardly biographical or post-structuralist reading of either set of correspondence it will engage with the circumstances of textual production, with the actual connections between the private and public letters and with the performance of self

² For an example of those critics who read *Letters Written During a Short Residence* as an extension of the private letters see Mary Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer: Ideology as Style in the Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley and Jane Austen* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984); Eleanor Ty, "'The History of My Own Heart': Inscribing Self, Inscribing Desire in Wollstonecraft's *Letters from Norway*", in *Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Shelley: Writing Lives*, ed. by Helen Buss, D. L. Macdonald and Anne McWhir (Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2001), pp. 69-84; and Sara Mills, 'Written on the Landscape: Mary Wollstonecraft's *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark*', in *Romantic Geographies: Discourses of Travel 1775-1844*, ed. by Amanda Gilroy (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 19-34. For an example of those critics who read the text as an independent account see Favret, *Romantic Correspondence*; and Weiss, 'Suffering, Sentiment, and Civilisation: Pain and Politics in Mary Wollstonecraft's *Short Residence*'.

that is a recognisable feature of all autobiographical texts. Beginning with Wollstonecraft's motives for travel and the compositional history of the two sets of letters, this chapter will show that her reasons for journeying directly influence the letters that she produces, while the compositional circumstances explicitly reveal a more complex and authorially self-conscious relationship between the private and public correspondence than has previously been acknowledged by critics. After this, the textual manifestations of Wollstonecraft's handling of those private and public spaces will be considered through a focus on the performative 'I' of both sets of letters in order to demonstrate that she deliberately manipulates her private and public personae in an attempt to control, or regain control of, her textual self-presentation. The final section of this chapter will then assess the impact of that crossing of private and public boundaries on the reader, by examining the reception history of *Letters Written During A Short Residence* with particular reference to the unnamed 'You' of the text.

Motives for Travel and Compositional Circumstances

As a middle class independent woman Wollstonecraft did not have the means to go abroad for pleasure and her motivations for doing so were always practical. She travelled to Lisbon in 1785 to help her friend, Fanny Blood, with the birth of her first child; she journeyed to Ireland the following year to take up employment as a governess; and departed for France in 1792 in order to seek introductions, capitalise on the translation of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* and try and find employment for her sister, Eliza.³

³ Wollstonecraft outlines the motives for her Paris trip in a letter to her sister, Everina, dated 20th June, 1792. *WCL*, pp. 199-201 (p. 200).

Her reasons for undertaking the tour of Scandinavia are, however, more complex and the contradictory forces that shaped her motives for travel are reflected in the private and public letters she wrote and revised during, and in the aftermath of, that journey.

Wollstonecraft departed for Scandinavia from Hull in June 1795 with her maid and young daughter Fanny Imlay.⁴ Having arrived in Gothenburg, she then travelled through the Swedish countryside, making stops at Kvistram, Strömstad and Halden before taking a boat from Stromstrad to Larvik in Norway. Wollstonecraft spent the majority of the tour travelling in Norway where, after a delay of three weeks in the town of Tønsberg, she journeyed down the coastline through Larvik, Helgeroa and Pørtor finally arriving in Risør. Retracing her steps back north from Risør, Wollstonecraft returned to Tønsberg before going on to the capital Christiania (Oslo). She then travelled back through Sweden and into Denmark calling at Elsinore and Copenhagen. From there she journeyed through Korsør, Schleswig and Itzehoe to Hamburg to catch the boat back to England, eventually arriving in Dover at the beginning of October 1795.

Much of Wollstonecraft's commentary on the tour is divided between detailed anthropological observations about the dress, manners and moral character of the people; assessments of Scandinavian political systems; and emotional responses to the landscape (a combination of interests which, as I show in Chapter Five, also influences Mary and Percy Shelley's travelogue *History of a Six Weeks' Tour*). Wollstonecraft's broader attitude to the experience of travel is summed up in her comment that 'travellers who

⁴ Wollstonecraft's journey through Scandinavia is represented in fig. 3.1 on p. 126 of this chapter. The base map is taken from *LDSR*, pp. 60-61. I have added Wollstonecraft's route and the corresponding letter numbers in *Letters Written During A Short Residence* to this map.

require that every nation should resemble their own country had better stay at home' (*LDSR*, p. 93), and, for the most part, her writing reflects this egalitarian position: 'I do not pretend to sketch a national character; but merely to note the present state of morals and manners, as I trace the progress of the world's improvement' (*LDSR*, p. 172). Commenting on the Swedish people, for example, Wollstonecraft notes that 'the Swedes pique themselves on their politeness; but far from being the polish of a cultivated mind, it consists merely of tiresome forms and ceremonies'; a criticism that is then offset by her 'reckoning the peasantry the politest people of Sweden, who only aiming at pleasing you, never think of being admired for their behaviour' (*LDSR*, pp. 73-4). Similarly, Wollstonecraft praises the political system in Norway despite her concerns about the Danish feudal system under which it was then ruled: 'Though the king of Denmark be an absolute monarch, yet the Norwegians appear to enjoy all the blessings of freedom [...] the people have no viceroy to lord it over them, and fatten his dependents with the fruit of their labour' (*LDSR*, p. 101). Her most effusive responses are, however, reserved for the landscapes that she encounters:

With what ineffable pleasure have I not gazed – and gazed again, losing my breath through my eyes – my very soul diffused in the scene – and seeming to become all senses, glided in the scarcely-agitated waves, melted in the freshening breeze, or, taking its flight with fairy wing to the misty mountains which bounded the prospect, fancy tript [*sic*] over new lawns, more beautiful even than the lovely slopes on the winding shore before me. (*LDSR*, p. 110)

Although these examples support Wollstonecraft's statement in the 'Advertisement' that her plan 'was simply to endeavour to give a just view of the present state of the countries I have passed through, as far as I could obtain information during so short a residence' (*LDSR*, p. 62), they only tell half the story of *Letters Written During A Short Residence*. It

is other aspects of the text that reveal much more fully her conflicting motives for the journey.

Eric Leed observes in *The Mind of the Traveller* that ‘travel has long been a means of changing selves’ because it is ‘the paradigmatic “experience”, the model of a direct and genuine experience which transforms the person having it’.⁵ An intrinsic feature of the act of travelling, then, is that its immediate and experiential nature always brings about some level of change to the self. As an extension of this, it can also be a deliberate means of trying to effect self-transformation because, as Leed notes, ‘with departure, a dysfunctional relationship between self and context may be left behind’ (p. 46). Prior to her departure in June 1795, Wollstonecraft had grown increasingly desperate over Imlay’s desertion of her and their daughter and had attempted to kill herself by taking an overdose of laudanum. The desire to break with a ‘dysfunctional relationship’ is, then, one of the key motives for Wollstonecraft’s Scandinavian tour. Although the trip was not her idea, it did offer her a means to escape from England during that period of deep personal crisis. She clearly saw it as a possible way to restore her delicate physical and psychological health and makes frequent mentions of this in the private and public letters. For example, in a private epistle to Imlay from Tönsberg Wollstonecraft writes:

Employment and exercise have been of great service to me; and I have entirely recovered the strength and activity I lost during the time of my nursing. I have seldom been in better health; and my mind though trembling to the touch of anguish, is calmer – yet still the same – I have, it is true, enjoyed some tranquillity, and more happiness here, than for a long – long time past. – (I say happiness, for I can give no other appellation to the exquisite delight this wild country and fine summer have afforded me.) (*WCL*, p. 316)

⁵ Leed, *The Mind of the Traveller*, p. 263, p. 5. All subsequent references to this text will be given parenthetically.

As Shirley Foster suggests, in her work on Romantic and Victorian women travellers, health was one of the main reasons for travelling abroad and ‘in physical terms the most striking evidence of spiritual revival and widened horizons is the manner in which frailty or invalidism at home were replaced by extraordinary endurance and strength abroad’.⁶ Wollstonecraft seems to be staging just such a physical revival in this letter as her weakness after nursing is replaced with ‘strength and activity’ brought about by the exercise, scenery and good weather that her travels have afforded. However, while she admits to being happier, there is still a sense that she has not quite recovered from her personal sufferings: paradoxically, her mind is ‘calmer – yet still the same’. This fine balance between physical and mental recovery also finds expression in a similar passage in ‘Letter Eight’ of the public work:

I need scarcely inform you, after telling you of my walks, that my constitution has been renovated here; and that I have recovered my activity, even whilst retaining a little *embonpoint*. My imprudence last winter, and some untoward accidents just at the time I was weaning my child, had reduced me to a state of weakness which I never before experienced. (*WCL*, p. 111)

The mental anguish so explicitly described in the private letter to Imlay is absent from the public work, but the reference to ‘imprudence’ and ‘untoward accidents’ again connects Wollstonecraft’s recovery with some unfortunate personal circumstances that are kept from the general reader. While passages like these, in both the private and public letters, do present travel as a potentially liberating break from the damaging self and context Wollstonecraft is attempting to leave behind, her repeated references to that self and context suggest that she cannot entirely escape her previous sufferings.

⁶ Shirley Foster, *Across New Worlds: Nineteenth-Century Women Travellers and their Writings* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990), p.9, p. 13.

This tension between past and present selves, registered in the extracts from the private and public letters, is arguably a result of Wollstonecraft's contradictory reasons for the Scandinavian tour. Although she was travelling in an attempt to recover from Imlay's abandonment, the trip was organised *by him* and also required her to undertake some business on his behalf:

Know all men by these presents, that I, Gilbert Imlay, citizen of the United States of America, at present residing in London, do appoint Mary Imlay, my best friend and wife, to take the sole management of my affairs and business, which I had placed in the hands of Mr Elias Backman, negotiant, Gottenburg, or those of Messers Myburg and Co. Copenhagen ... For which this letter shall be a sufficient power, enabling her to receive all the money that may be recovered from Peter Ellyson, whatever the issue of the trial now carrying on, instituted by Mr Elias Backman, as my agent, for the violation of trust which I had reposed in his integrity.⁷

In this letter of instruction, Imlay appoints Wollstonecraft – who is not legally his wife – to take over the management of his affairs in Scandinavia and charges her with attempting to recover money from Peter Ellyson (Ellefsen). An investigation by Per Nyström has revealed that Imlay hired Ellefsen to captain a ship that would illegally transport cargo from the Baltic to England. Ellefsen turned out to be untrustworthy and the ship and its cargo disappeared. The money that Wollstonecraft was sent to recover over the course of her journey amounted to £3500: the cost of the bars of silver and plate that had been on the ship.⁸ Although it is never acknowledged in her letters, Wollstonecraft's unusual destination and her travel itinerary was largely determined by the business she had been sent to undertake.

⁷ Quoted in Richard Holmes, 'Introduction', *LDSR*, pp. 9-35 (p. 22). All subsequent references to the introduction will be given parenthetically.

⁸ Per Nyström, 'Mary Wollstonecraft's Scandinavian Journey', *Acts of the Royal Society of Arts and Sciences of Gothenburg, Humaniora*, 17, 1980. The shipping affair was extremely complicated and is explained in much more detail by Holmes in 'Introduction', *LDSR*, pp. 21-26.

This commercial aspect of the tour sits uneasily with its restorative potential because Wollstonecraft's very participation in the journey is a constant reminder of the business practices she blames for Imlay's desertion. There are countless mentions of the evils of commerce in the private and public letters, but its impact on her attempted recovery is perhaps best summed up in 'Letter Twenty-Four' of *Letters Written During A Short Residence* in a passage on Hamburg:

Nothing can be stronger than the contrast which this flat country and strand afford, compared with the mountains, and rocky coast, I have lately dwelt so much among. In fancy I return to a favourite spot, where I seem to have retired from man and wretchedness; but the din of trade drags me back to all the cares I left behind, when lost in sublime emotions. Rocks aspiring towards the heavens, and, as it were, shutting out sorrow, surrounded me, whilst peace appeared to steal along the lake to calm my bosom, modulating the wind that agitated the neighbouring poplars. Now I hear only an account of the tricks of trade, or listen to the distressful tale of some victim of ambition. (*LDSR*, p. 195)

It is the 'din of trade' that disrupts the mental tranquillity Wollstonecraft finds in the landscape and it drags her back to the abandoned self that she is trying to escape. Place functions here as a metaphor for Wollstonecraft's conflicting motives for travel. The imagined return to the sublime rural scenery enables her to lose her self for a time, with the rocks providing a physical barrier from the 'sorrow' she has experienced. In contrast, the urban and commercial space of the city is a constant and troubling reminder of the reasons why her relationship with Imlay failed, and by registering the 'distressful' tales of others she implicitly casts herself as the victim of Imlay's financial ambitions.

As the above examples demonstrate, the content of the private and public letters is shaped by the tensions inherent in Wollstonecraft's reasons for journeying. Although travel does provide a context in which she can attempt to break with her distressing personal

circumstances, that attempt does not seem to always be fully realised because she keeps referring back to her abandonment – although she physically escapes, textually she keeps returning to the past. What I want to suggest is that Wollstonecraft's intention is not to reinvent herself anew over the course of her travels but rather to take the narrative of her abandoned self in the private letters and transform it into something more positive in the public work. This act of textual transformation is deeply subversive because it transgresses private and public boundaries in ways that risk over-exposing the private self. However, the radical nature of her textual behaviour only becomes fully apparent when her motives for travel begin to connect with her motives for writing, and when the actual circumstances of textual production are factored into the interpretative equation.

In terms of textual production, Wollstonecraft's private correspondence with Imlay began in Paris in the spring of 1793 and ended in London in December 1795. Imlay's side of the correspondence is no longer extant, but seventy-seven of the letters that Wollstonecraft wrote to him have survived in the form edited and published by William Godwin in 1798.⁹ Included in this collection are fourteen *private* letters that Wollstonecraft wrote to Imlay during her 1795 summer tour of Scandinavia, which exist in addition to the twenty-five epistles published as *Letters Written During A Short Residence* in January 1796. The existence of two sets of correspondence, both addressed to Imlay, has led some critics to argue that *Letters Written During a Short Residence* initially formed part of the fourteen private letters that Wollstonecraft sent to Imlay during her Scandinavian tour. Sara Mills, for example, notes that 'the text [*Letters Written During A Short Residence*] is composed

⁹ Mary Wollstonecraft, *Posthumous Works of the Author of A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, ed. by William Godwin, 4 vols (London: Joseph Johnson, 1798).

of personal letters (revised for publication)'.¹⁰ Although Wollstonecraft did send private letters to Imlay from some of the locations she writes about in the published work, the available evidence seems to rule out the possibility that the latter was composed and contained in the same epistolary space as the former.¹¹ Wollstonecraft also explicitly acknowledges her different intentions toward these two sets of correspondence, which are in line with Donald Reiman's categories of private and public manuscripts discussed in the Introduction.¹² In a private letter to Imlay she writes 'this prattle [...] is only for your eye' (*WCL*, p. 244), whereas in the 'Advertisement' to *Letters Written During A Short Residence* she states that the letters are 'designed for publication' (*LDSR*, p. 62). As I will show over the course of this chapter, Wollstonecraft's private letters to Imlay and the public work are vitally connected because both play out a deliberate interrelated act of self-presentation, which only becomes apparent if the *whole body* of the private correspondence to him, and not just the fourteen letters from Scandinavia, is considered alongside the public text.

Wollstonecraft only began preparing *Letters Written During A Short Residence* for publication in London (after she had arrived back from Scandinavia), sometime between October and December 1795 after a second unsuccessful suicide attempt. Given her mental state at this time and the amount of descriptive detail in the public work, it is likely that, in addition to the fourteen short letters sent to Imlay from Scandinavia, during

¹⁰ Sara Mills, 'Written on the Landscape: Mary Wollstonecraft's *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark*', p. 26.

¹¹ It is not possible to know what changes Godwin made to the fourteen letters from Scandinavia because he destroyed the originals after publication. Yet for the most part he presents himself as a reliable editor indicating the length and location of any passages that he excised from the letters to Imlay. While there is no way of determining the accuracy of Godwin's excisions, the omitted sections fall far short of constituting the amount of text contained in *Letters Written During a Short Residence*.

¹² See Introduction, pp. 7-8.

her tour Wollstonecraft had also kept a record of her travels in some kind of pre-publication text. This manuscript is missing, or no longer extant, but it could have taken the form either of a journal addressed to Imlay, notes on the tour, or even longer letters written to Imlay that she did not send.¹³ Whatever the generic identity of this interim text, it is likely that it underwent retrospective revision in the autumn of 1795 to make it suitable for publication.

Significantly, by this stage Wollstonecraft had requested and received the bulk of her private letters *back* from Imlay, acknowledging receipt of the correspondence in a letter dated 27th November 1795: 'The letter, without an address, which you put up with the letters you returned did not meet my eyes till just now. I had thrown the letters aside; I did not wish to look over a register of sorrow' (*WCL*, p. 332). Wollstonecraft's use of the past perfect in this epistle rather than just the simple past – 'I *had* thrown the letters aside; I *did* not wish to look over a register of sorrow' – suggests that her feelings toward the returned correspondence have changed by the time she writes to Imlay and that she may have decided to re-read the private letters. As I will go on to show, comparing these love letters with the public work suggests that Wollstonecraft did re-read *all* of her private letters to Imlay while she was preparing *Letters Written During A Short Residence* for the press, and that she incorporated some of the features of the private correspondence into the

¹³ In his notes to *Letters Written During A Short Residence*, Richard Holmes proposes that the public work 'was probably composed as a journal' that Wollstonecraft carried throughout her journey and later intended to show to Imlay (*LDSR*, p. 279n). This view is also supported by Wollstonecraft's biographer, Ralph Wardle: 'It is highly improbable [...] that Mary would have put Imlay to the expense of postage for the twenty-five bulky letters which make up her volume. The *Letters* seems, rather, to have been a journal kept throughout her journey and intended first for Imlay's eyes'. Ralph Wardle, *Mary Wollstonecraft: A Critical Biography* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1951), p. 353n. I am in agreement that an interim text of *Letters Written During A Short Residence* did exist but it is important to acknowledge that there are a number of possibilities as to the form of that text.

public work. This authorially intertextual way of working – another version of which we will see in Chapter Five – is most effectively realised in the public text in those instances where Wollstonecraft uses her experience of travel to deliberately, but implicitly, translate the destruction of self enacted over the course of her private correspondence with Imlay.

Private Performance and Persona in Letters to Imlay

I want to begin, then, with an analysis of Wollstonecraft's performance of self in the private letters to Imlay. This analysis provides a vital context for the discussion of *Letters Written During a Short Residence* because it identifies the characteristics of the presentation of self that Wollstonecraft will manipulate in the public autobiographical work in an effort to textually liberate herself from Imlay's desertion. In keeping with my argument that Wollstonecraft re-read the whole body of her private correspondence with Imlay before preparing the public work – and that these two sets of letters are, therefore, in dialogue with each other – I will be discussing epistles that were not necessarily written during her tour of the far north, but which demonstrate performances of the self that are expressed again or re-written in the public travel text. It is also important to note that I am not suggesting that the 'I' of the private or public letters is a pure expression of Wollstonecraft's self because, as countless critics of autobiography have shown, the very process of writing the self necessarily leads to the creation of a persona who is always one-step removed from the real historical author.¹⁴ Rather, I will consider the 'I' of *both*

¹⁴ In relation to eighteenth-century and Romantic autobiography see, for example, Patricia Meyer Spacks, *Imagining a Self: Autobiography and Novel in Eighteenth-Century England* (Boston: Harvard University

sets of Wollstonecraft's letters as enacting different, but interrelated, performances of self that are influenced by the private or public status of the text.

Wollstonecraft's private letters to Imlay make for fascinating reading, not only because they chart the beginning, decline and end of a love affair, but because they do so, as Janet Todd observes, in vividly intimate terms that contravene the detached, conversational familiar letter style that was commonplace in the Augustan period.¹⁵ This disregard for previous letter writing practices is, perhaps, typical of Wollstonecraft's unconventional nature but, for Todd, it also indicates that she 'had little concern for the particular effect of writing on her correspondent': Wollstonecraft 'was concerned with expressing her emotions as she felt them, not entertaining or worrying about their effect' (p. 9). The assumption that Todd makes here is twofold. Firstly, she implies that Wollstonecraft's private letter writing style is not primarily motivated by the external recipient but, rather, by self-discovery – even going as far as to argue that the letters 'seem more like a diary than correspondence, a communion with the self' (p. 9). Second, Todd's emphasis on the expression of emotions as they are felt suggests that there is a spontaneity and authenticity about Wollstonecraft's private epistolary discourse that is antithetical to the

Press, 1976), pp. 1-19; Shari Benstock, 'Authorising the Autobiographical', in *The Private Self: Theory and Practice of Women's Autobiographical Writings*, ed. by Shari Benstock (North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), pp. 10-33; Vincent Newey and Philip Shaw, 'Introduction', in *Mortal Pages, Literary Lives: Studies in Nineteenth-Century Autobiography*, ed. by Vincent Newey and Philip Shaw (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1996), pp. 1-12.

¹⁵ Janet Todd, 'Mary Wollstonecraft's Letters', in *The Cambridge Companion to Mary Wollstonecraft*, ed. by Claudia Johnson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 7-23 (p. 9). All subsequent references to this essay will be given parenthetically.

more controlled performance of self enacted in the ‘private’ letters of Horace Walpole and – in a very different way – Lord Byron.¹⁶

While there is undoubtedly a raw emotional quality to nearly all of Wollstonecraft’s private correspondence, it is most striking in the declarations of love, accusations, recriminations and apologies that dominate her letters to Imlay. I want to suggest, against Todd, that these private letters *do* enact a deliberate performance of emotion directed toward the addressee – albeit of a different kind to that of Walpole and Byron – and one that, in its seeming self-absorption and self-revelation, is enacted with a view to having a very particular effect on Imlay, the intended addressee. Todd touches upon the nature of this performance when she comments that Wollstonecraft writes as though she is ‘aware of her place among celebrated and passionate female letter writers such Ovid’s fictional Heroides or the medieval nun Heloise’ (p. 20). Although Todd does not take this observation further, Wollstonecraft’s letters to Imlay do appear to fall under the category of, what Linda Kauffman terms, ‘discourses of desire’.¹⁷ Wollstonecraft casts herself as the sentimental heroine of fictional epistolary discourse, using the letter form in an attempt to overcome the separation that the very act of writing a letter necessarily implies (i. e. there would be no need to write if Imlay was present).

¹⁶ Todd makes the comparison between Wollstonecraft’s style and that of Horace Walpole and Lord Byron in her essay, p. 8. Writers like Byron and Walpole, who often write private letters with an eye toward posterity – knowing that their social status might lead to the publication of their private documents at some point in the future unless they are destroyed – also call into question the rigidity of Reiman’s classification system. In particular, they raise the question of whether a private letter, which is composed not with the intention to publish but with the knowledge that it *might* be published, can still be designated as a private text.

¹⁷ Linda Kauffman, *Discourses of Desire: Gender, Genre and Epistolary Fictions* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1986). All subsequent references to this text will be given parenthetically. Kauffman’s study is focused on fictional epistles but, as I will go on to demonstrate, the features of this discourse that she identifies have clear parallels with Wollstonecraft’s letters to Imlay.

In an essay on *Letters Written During A Short Residence*, Deborah Weiss blames Godwin for the sentimentalising of Wollstonecraft's identity – he famously describes her as 'a female Werter' in his discussion of the public letters in the *Memoirs*.¹⁸ According to Weiss, it is Godwin's 'efforts to use sentimentalism to establish Wollstonecraft's femininity' that lead him to 'dramatically misrepresent the intellectual aspects of [...] *Short Residence*'.¹⁹ What we see in the private letters, however, is Wollstonecraft self-consciously drawing on the images and tropes of sentimentality, carefully crafting her outpouring of emotion to maximise the impact that it has on her intended recipient:

You can scarcely imagine with what pleasure I anticipate the day, when we are to begin almost to live together; and you would smile to hear how many plans of employment I have in my head, now that I am confident my heart has found peace in your bosom. — Cherish me with that dignified tenderness, which I have found in you; and your own dear girl will try to keep under a quickness of feeling, that has sometimes given you pain — Yes, I will be *good*, that I may deserve to be happy; and whilst you love me, I cannot again fall into the miserable state, which rendered life a burthen almost too heavy to be borne. (*WCL*, p. 228)

This passage is from one of the earliest of Wollstonecraft's letters to Imlay – *circa* August 1793 – and there is a focus on the abstract nature of emotion here. Imlay can 'scarcely imagine' Wollstonecraft's 'pleasure', which appears to be a controlled way of hinting at the magnitude of her feelings. This control might be accounted for because her 'pleasure' is dependent on future plans coming to fruition, which are in turn dependent on Imlay's continuing affection. As Kauffman observes, the fictional heroines of amatory discourse frequently nurture illusions of their 'identity as [...] beloved' and 'of their mutual passion' (pp. 17-18). This seems precisely to be the strategy that Wollstonecraft is

¹⁸ Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin, *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark and Memoirs of the Author of 'The Rights of Woman'*, ed. by Richard Holmes (London: Penguin, 1987), p. 242.

¹⁹ Weiss, 'Suffering, Sentiment, and Civilisation', 202-203. All subsequent references to this essay will be given parenthetically.

adopting. She develops the illusion of her identity as Imlay's lover and of their shared passion by projecting her feelings on to him and imagining how he will respond to the plans that she is making: 'you would smile to hear how many plans of employment I have in my head'. By ventriloquising Imlay's response in this manner, Wollstonecraft confirms her position as his beloved and, in the process, attempts to determine how he should actually respond to what she has written.

That some level of persuasion is necessary, is hinted at in the hesitation that accompanies their potential future union: 'when we are to begin almost to live together'. This is an unusual turn of phrase – how is it possible to begin *almost* to live with someone? – and it indicates a level of doubt about the certainty of the commitment and, in particular, Imlay's commitment, which is only voiced on his behalf by Wollstonecraft. The reticence that is evident here undercuts the seemingly certain expression of feeling that follows: 'I am confident my heart has found peace in your bosom'. Again, Wollstonecraft is dictating the circumstances of their relationship to Imlay but in a way that almost makes it seem as if she is seeking his reassurance that her reading of their connection is correct. Indeed her need for reassurance is confirmed by the very carefully structured appeal that follows her assertion of confidence: 'cherish me with that dignified tenderness, which I have only found in you'. The highly emotive language that she employs – 'cherish', 'tenderness' – creates a pleading tone that is juxtaposed with the previous, seemingly self-assured utterance. In other words, she is playing the role of the submissive, sensitive "woman of feeling", but doing so in an attempt to control the relationship: a highly subversive engagement with the model of the sentimental female.

Yet as Wollstonecraft makes clear subsequently, there are conditions that Imlay must meet if she is to continue to be submissive – if he does ‘cherish’ her as she wishes, she will ‘try to keep under a quickness of feeling’ that has caused him pain. That Wollstonecraft has to ‘try’ suggests that she is self-consciously enacting a particular role for Imlay’s benefit, while the mode of bargaining that she enters into indicates a subtle shift in the power relationship between them: ‘whilst you love me, I cannot again fall into the miserable state, which rendered life a burthen almost too heavy to be borne’. As long as Imlay loves her she will not resort to her previous unhappy existence. While this confession of melancholy is part of Wollstonecraft’s sentimental performance – as Kauffman notes, her fictional counterparts frequently consider ending their lives in their letters (p. 17) – it is also perhaps the most self-revelatory line in the whole extract. Wollstonecraft offers a brief window into her past revealing, sub-textually at least, that she has contemplated suicide. There is more than a hint of emotional blackmail here and it is arguably Wollstonecraft’s trump card in her bargaining for Imlay’s affections. She is effectively warning him that should their relationship collapse she might be driven to contemplate suicide again.

The cultivation of sentiment and melancholy in this letter finally culminates in an explicit intertextual reference to Sterne’s fictional travelogue *A Sentimental Journey*; revealing another of the literary influences on Wollstonecraft’s epistolary personae which will find expression again in the public work: ‘But, good-night! – God bless you! Sterne says that is equal to a kiss – yet I would rather give you a kiss into the bargain, glowing with gratitude to Heaven, and affection to you’ (*WCL*, p. 228). It is telling that Wollstonecraft uses the word ‘bargain’ to describe the exchange of affection in her relationship: it is

almost as if she is giving Imlay something extra to garner his favour. Yet again there seems to be a subtle display of power being acted out in this section of the letter because although Wollstonecraft uses the subordinate feminised language of sentimentality ('glowing', 'gratitude' and 'affection') she is actually taking the position of the male hero: it is Yorick who utters these words to Maria in Sterne's tale.²⁰ This reversal of gender roles effectively produces a double discourse in which Wollstonecraft can play both hero and heroine. On the surface of the letter, through her use of sentimental language, she is the submissive and loving Maria; but underneath she is liberated from that role by casting herself as the dominant male hero (although Yorick is effeminate he still holds the position of power in the narrative).

Wollstonecraft's understanding response to Imlay's absence is short-lived and the recurring theme of her private letters soon becomes that of separation. One of the habitual ways that Wollstonecraft tackles separation is in the numerous references to the act and frequency of writing, which begin to dominate her correspondence with Imlay. Perhaps one of the best examples of this obsession with epistolary practices occurs in two letters that Wollstonecraft sends to Imlay in January 1794 after he has relocated to Le Havre, leaving her in Paris. This set of correspondence captures the state of emotional flux that Wollstonecraft finds herself in as she battles to retain control of the relationship in the face of longer-term separation. These letters are symptomatic of the pattern of chastisement, apology and reassertion of affection that characterise nearly all of Wollstonecraft's later letters to Imlay:

²⁰ As Todd points out in a note in the *Collected Letters*, Wollstonecraft's reference to Sterne is from the following observation made by Yorick: 'in Paris, as none kiss each other but the men, I did what amounted to the same thing – I bid God bless her' (*WCL*, p. 228n).

As I have been, you tell me, three days without writing, I ought not to complain of two: yet as I expected to receive a letter this afternoon, I am hurt: and why should I, by concealing it, affect the heroism I do not feel? (*WCL*, p. 238)

According to Kauffman, it is commonplace for a heroine of epistolary fiction to discuss 'the sole act that engages her in his [the beloved's] absence: writing' (p. 17). In these opening lines of the epistle (dated 1st January, 1794), Wollstonecraft is similarly displacing her anxieties about separation on to the physical object of the letter. She informs Imlay that she is 'hurt' because she 'expected to receive a letter this afternoon', not only chastising him for failing to meet his obligations as her lover but also for transgressing the terms of their epistolary relationship – her distress at the former is concealed by her focus on the latter. It also brings about a change in Wollstonecraft's epistolary persona. She will no longer 'affect the heroism she does not feel' and, as a result, the carefully constructed sentimental performance of the earlier letter begins to slip: 'I hate commerce. How different must —'s head and heart be organised from mine! You will tell me, that exertions are necessary: I am weary of them! The face of things public and private vexes me' (*WCL*, p. 238). This direct, personal attack on commerce is one of the earliest condemnations of the forces that are separating her from Imlay (he is in Le Havre *on business*) and anticipates her obsession with this theme in her later private and public letters. The declamatory language and angry tone of this extract are strikingly different to that of the earlier letter, so much so, that this could almost be the voice of an entirely different letter writer. In place of the carefully constructed addressee-conscious prose, is an overwhelming focus on the 'I', 'mine' and 'me' of the letter writing utterance, which culminates in a monologue in which Wollstonecraft compares her private loss of faith in Imlay with the public, political crisis in Europe:

'I am fallen', as Milton said, 'on evil days'; for I really believe that Europe will be in a state of convulsion, during half a century at least. Life is but a labour of patience: it is always rolling a great stone up a hill; for, before a person can find a resting-place, imagining it is lodged, down it comes again, and all the work is to be done over anew! Should I attempt to write any more, I could not change the strain. My head aches, and my heart is heavy. The world appears an 'unweeded garden' where 'things rank and vile' flourish best. (*WCL*, p. 238)

It is noticeable that Imlay does not merit even a cursory mention in this section of the letter, illustrating the extent to which Wollstonecraft's focus is on the externalisation of her internal thought-processes. Gone is the identification with Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey* and it is replaced instead with references to *Paradise Lost*, *Hamlet* and the myth of Sisyphus. The effect of this change in literary allusion is that Wollstonecraft shifts from positioning herself as the sentimental hero to, not only casting herself as the tragic hero, but also appropriating his language: the feminised emphasis on feeling is replaced with the masculine rhetoric of political discourse. In both the language and subtext of the letter Wollstonecraft is assuming the male role in the narrative in an overt exchange of gender roles and an attempted display of power. There is a sense also that Wollstonecraft is abandoning her private language in favour of public discourse in an intentional withdrawal of intimacy. Ironically, the effect that this creates is one of powerlessness because adopting the language of these famous literary men and resorting to dominant myths of masculinity to resist her subordination actually reinforces the power structures inherent in that discourse, confirming, rather than challenging, her submissive position.

Although Wollstonecraft is making an attempt to mask her true feelings behind the literary metaphors, it is clear that her political observations are actually a thinly disguised attack on Imlay. Irrespective of the distancing technique that she employs in the form of

the third person; the ‘person’ that Wollstonecraft refers to is undoubtedly herself, while the reference to finding a ‘resting-place’ links back to her assertion in the earlier letter that ‘my heart has found peace in your bosom’. In many ways the association Wollstonecraft makes between her personal circumstances and the political situation has the effect of trivialising the latter and over-dramatising the former – a fact made more explicit when Wollstonecraft immediately shifts the focus on to her relationship with Imlay: ‘If you do not return soon – or, which is no such mighty matter, talk of it — I will throw your slippers out of the window, and be off – nobody knows where’ (*WCL*, p. 238). To move from the serious observation that the state of the world is “rank and vile” to an empty and self-mocking threat to leave a lover is symptomatic of Wollstonecraft’s letter writing style, which is marked by radical changes in tone and content within the same epistle. As Todd observes, ‘Wollstonecraft would begin to write in one state and end in another or write herself into dramatic misery’ (p. 10). In this instance, the shift is arguably the product of Wollstonecraft’s increasing desperation and misery over the state of her relationship. This is one of many such desperate epistolary climaxes she employs in an attempt to make Imlay commit to ending their separation: ‘tell me when I may expect to see you, and let me not be always vainly looking for you, till I grow sick at heart’ (*WCL*, p. 275); ‘Do not insult me by saying, that “our being together is paramount to every other consideration!” [...] Perhaps this is the last letter you will ever receive from me’ (*WCL*, p. 281); ‘For God’s sake, let me hear from you immediately, my friend! I am not well, and yet you see I cannot die’ (*WCL*, p. 307). The repeated use of threats at the end of the letters – mostly, implicitly, of suicide – is significant because, although many seem to be influenced by Wollstonecraft’s recourse to drama, melancholy and sentimentality, they also express a very real anxiety about her abandonment.

Wollstonecraft's epistolary persona does not only change rapidly within letters, it also alters from one letter to the next as demonstrated by the frequent apologies and retractions that follow in the wake of an angry, uncontrolled letter. For example, after receiving a response from Imlay to the 1st January letter, Wollstonecraft sends him a reconciliatory reply:

I have just received your kind and rational letter, and would fain hide my face, glowing with shame for my folly. – I would hide it in your bosom, if you would again open it to me, and nestle closely till you bade my fluttering heart be still, by saying that you forgave me. With eyes overflowing with tears, and in the humblest attitude, I intreat [*sic*] you. (*WCL*, p. 240)

The contrast between the beginning of this letter and Wollstonecraft's previous epistle to Imlay is striking and, as the opening lines make clear, it is the receipt of correspondence that has brought about the change in her persona. Whereas previously the letter functioned as a reminder of separation and absence, here it is a mediating force and symbol of potential togetherness. As Mary Jacobus notes, Wollstonecraft's letters to Imlay 'defend – fantastically – against the pain of separation, substituting for it her own fiction of their intimate connection' and this is arguably the strategy that is being enacted here.²¹ The aggressive masculine language of political debate, which dominated the previous epistle, is no longer in evidence and there has been a reversion back to the carefully constructed feminised prose and pleading tone of the earlier letter. The statement that 'I am confident my heart has found peace in your bosom' and the reference in the previous letter to 'a resting-place' is carefully combined and reworked in this epistle to remind Imlay of her former faith in him and to situate 'resting-place' in a more

²¹ Mary Jacobus, 'Intimate Connections: Scandalous Memoirs and Epistolary Indiscretion', in *Women Writing and the Public Sphere 1700-1830*, ed. by Elizabeth Eger, Charlotte Grant, Cliona Ó Gallchoir and Penny Warburton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 274-289 (p. 282). All subsequent references to this essay will be given parenthetically.

appropriate, less confrontational, context. Wollstonecraft wants to imaginatively rest her head on Imlay's 'bosom' until her 'fluttering heart' is made 'still' by his forgiveness or, to put it another way, until her heart has found peace/a resting place. This amalgamation of past pleasure and the recasting of anger into submission marks a return to the performance of sentimentality – 'eyes overflowing with tears', 'humblest attitude' – that she believes Imlay finds attractive: 'I believe I deserve your tenderness because I am true, and have a degree of sensibility that you can see and relish' (*WCL*, p. 234).

As the relationship with Imlay deteriorates further – in the wake of her discovery of his infidelity – the fluctuations in Wollstonecraft's persona, apparent in the letters discussed above, become more erratic. According to Jacobus, 'unable to "estrangle" her heart from Imlay, Wollstonecraft wields the letter as an instrument of mingled self-torture and revenge. These are no longer love letters but hate letters – acts of epistolary self-destruction aimed at an imaginary rejecting or abandoning object' (p. 285). While I would not go as far as to suggest that hate (either of herself or of Imlay) is the motivation for the later letters to Imlay – it seems, rather, that they are the product of excessive (unrequited) love – Jacobus is surely correct to identify their increasingly self-destructive property, which is most noticeably detectable in the repeated references to the pain that the act of writing causes Wollstonecraft: 'I feel I cannot endure the agony of corresponding with you' (*WCL*, p. 317); 'You tell me that my letters torture you: I will not describe the effect yours have on me' (*WCL*, p. 319); 'I cannot write, my mind is so distressed' (*WCL*, p. 322). All of these examples are taken from the private letters from Scandinavia and they reveal just how desperate Wollstonecraft is during this time, reiterating that her travels are not enabling her to simply make a break from Imlay. Again, she is displacing her

anxieties about her relationship with him onto the letter itself but it is to such an extent that she becomes trapped in the epistolary narrative that she has created. Although letter-writing has become a source of mental anguish, she is condemned to write, not only because, as Jacobus suggests, it is a means of textually prolonging her relationship with Imlay (p. 286) but also because in his absence it is the *only* strategy she has for attempting to recover his affections and overcome her abandonment.

It is telling that in almost all of the Scandinavian letters where Wollstonecraft articulates the grief that writing causes, she also attempts, rhetorically at least, to initiate a break with Imlay and bring an end to the correspondence she finds so torturous: ‘we must meet shortly, or part for ever’ (*WCL*, p. 317); ‘Forget that I exist: I will never remind you’ (*WCL*, p. 319); ‘We live together, or eternally part!’ (*WCL*, p. 321). These seemingly decisive moments are probably attempts at empowerment – by literally breaking the cycle of the letters, Wollstonecraft would end her cycle of self-destruction – but, as the frequency with which they appear shows, they indicate instead that Wollstonecraft has now entirely lost control. The choice that she purports to have, reveals itself to be an illusion: she is unable to make the break; the final decision over separation rests not with her but with Imlay.

According to Kauffman, in fictional discourses of desire the heroine’s strategy is ‘subversive, for she contests the fate to which her lover has abandoned her. Her epistle is simultaneously a love letter and a legal challenge, a revolt staged in writing’ (p. 18). While Wollstonecraft may be contesting the fate to which Imlay has abandoned her, the subversive potential of this act is undermined by the creation and destruction of self that

the private letters perform. Initially, Wollstonecraft employs a sentimental persona as a seduction tactic, using this romanticised version of herself, not only to appeal to Imlay, but also to mask her less-appealing characteristics. However, as the sentimental persona increasingly becomes a means of winning back Imlay's affection when she has transgressed the terms of that performance – by being too forthright and outspoken, for example – it becomes the only strategy that she has when the relationship begins to fall apart. Like the sentimental heroine that she plays in her letters, Wollstonecraft *is* eventually abandoned: she becomes a victim of the epistolary identity that she has created. What begins as an empowering and subversive textualisation of self actually metamorphosises into a loss of self, which is almost literally realised in October 1795 when Wollstonecraft attempts suicide by plunging herself into the Thames.

Public Performance and Persona in Letters Written During A Short Residence

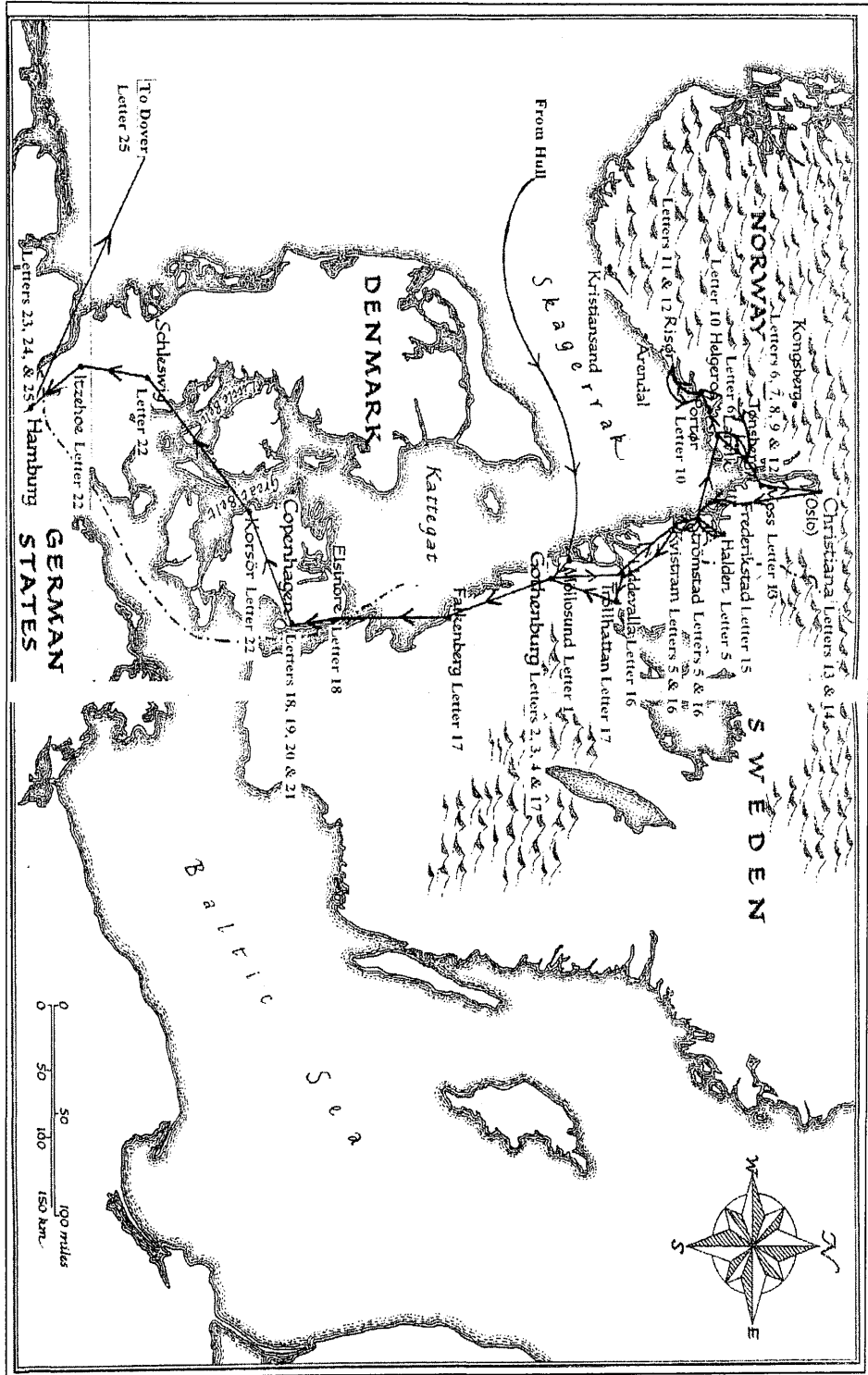
Before turning to discuss *Letters Written During A Short Residence*, I want to briefly outline the relationship which emerges over the course of the public letters between the physical act of travelling and its psychological effects. This is important because, although Wollstonecraft did not prepare the text for the press until she returned to London, there are clear connections between the locations that she visits and writes about in the public work and the success or failure of the strategies of textual self-translation that she employs. It is worth noting also, that the choice of public correspondence is undoubtedly significant because it offers Wollstonecraft a chance to subvert the private epistolary performance that resulted in her subordination in another version of the letter form. Most crucially, the public letters are not actually sent, they are effectively a one-

sided dialogue, which means not only that Wollstonecraft's construction of self is not vulnerable to the change and variance caused by receiving (or not receiving) letters from Imlay, but also that she is not constantly obsessing, as she does in the private correspondence, about the physical exchange of letters.

As the map on the following page shows (fig. 3.1) the public letters contain material about all of the places that Wollstonecraft visited, with Gothenburg, Tønsberg, Copenhagen and Hamburg featuring in the most letters. By examining the content across the public correspondence it is possible to trace changes in Wollstonecraft's emotional state determined by the different stages of the journey. While the content of the public letters does oscillate between euphoria and melancholy, the text can be still be divided into two main phases – 'Letter One' to 'Letter Eleven'; and 'Letter Twelve' to 'Letter Twenty-Five' – which demonstrate significant shifts in Wollstonecraft's mood influenced by the structure of her travels.

The first eleven epistles in *Letters Written During A Short Residence* register Wollstonecraft's increasing sense of well-being as she moves from Möllosund in Sweden to Risør in Norway. In 'Letter One' she comments on the emotional solace that she finds in nature: 'How silent and peaceful was the scene. I gazed around with rapture, and felt more of that spontaneous pleasure which gives credibility to our expectation of happiness, than I had for a long, long time before' (*LDSR*, pp. 67-68). The psychological liberation from her past circumstances, apparent in the comment from the opening letter, continues as she moves along the Scandinavian coast. In 'Letter Eight', she notes her delight at an

Figure 3.1: Map of Wollstonecraft's Scandinavian Journey in Letters Written During A Short Residence



interaction with the world that is animal rather than human – ‘Sometimes, to take up my oar, once more, when the sea was calm, I was amused by disturbing the innumerable young star fish which floated just below the surface’ (*LDSR*, p. 112) – while in ‘Letter Ten’ she again records the pleasures of nature: ‘Now all my nerves keep time with the melody of nature. Ah! let me be happy whilst I can’ (*LDSR*, p. 129). The positive tone that characterises many of these initial letters indicates that the physical freedom of travel, and the stimulus of new experiences which that freedom brings, has a direct influence on Wollstonecraft’s mental state: as she literally moves further away from Imlay, she starts to psychologically recover from her emotional trauma.

There is, however, a noticeable change of mood in ‘Letter Twelve’, which is brought about by Wollstonecraft retracing her steps from Risør to Tønsberg. Although she is willing to go over old ground textually (by revisiting her private letters to Imlay when preparing *Letters Written During A Short Residence* for the press), the physical experience of doing so affects her profoundly. When her journey from Risør begins, Wollstonecraft is still enthused by the landscape – ‘The country still wore a face of joy – and my soul was alive to its charms’ (*LDSR*, p. 135) – but that enthusiasm quickly disappears as she again approaches Tønsberg:

I grew sad as I drew near my old abode. I was sorry to see the sun so high; it was broad noon. Tønsberg was something like a home – yet I was to enter without lighting-up pleasure in any eye – I dreaded the solitariness of my apartment, and wished for night to hide the starting tears, or to shed them on my pillow, and close my eyes on a world where I was destined to wander alone. (*LDSR*, p. 135)

As Wollstonecraft travels back through Norway it is almost as if she is psychologically returning to the sorrows that her outward journey enabled her to escape. The sense of

freedom apparent in the earlier letters is replaced here with an implicit reference to her abandonment as she recalls the hopelessness of her situation. Indeed 'Letter Twelve' marks a turning point in the narrative of *Letters Written During A Short Residence* because it is from this moment on that Wollstonecraft's melancholia and awareness of past pain begins to overwhelm the positive aspects of her travel experience.

This change in attitude can be partly attributed to the fact that in 'Letter Thirteen' and 'Letter Fourteen' Wollstonecraft is in the commercial city of Christiana (Oslo). I noted earlier that Wollstonecraft blames Imlay's desertion on his preoccupation with business and, when in the city, she describes herself as 'a bird fluttering on the ground unable to mount; yet unwilling to crawl like a reptile, while conscious it had wings' (*LDSR*, p. 144). In this simile, the earlier freedom of travel is still apparent in the bird's consciousness that it has wings, but it is the impossibility of an escape from the past that Wollstonecraft is registering: 'My imagination hurries me forward to seek an asylum in such a retreat from all the disappointments I am threatened with; but reason drags me back' (*LDSR*, p. 149).

The decline in Wollstonecraft's psychological health becomes even more acute during the final stages of her journey when she is not only on her way back to England but also, as the map shows, mainly resident in the commercial centres of Copenhagen and Hamburg. In 'Letter Twenty' she describes herself as 'view[ing] everything with the jaundiced eye of melancholy – for I am sad – and have cause' (*LDSR*, p. 178); while in 'Letter Twenty-Two' she alludes to the pointlessness of her travels: 'After a long journey, with our eyes directed to some particular spot, to arrive and find nothing as it should be, is vexatious and sinks the agitated spirits' (*LDSR*, p. 189). This sense that her travels have ultimately

proved futile is reiterated in the final letter of the public work, written partly from Hamburg and partly from Dover. The short and fragmentary form of the epistle matches the sense of emotional dislocation registered in the content: 'I do not feel inclined to ramble any farther this year; nay, I am weary of changing the scene, and quitting people and places the moment they begin to interest me' (*LDSR*, p. 197). The weariness of this comment is strikingly different to the positive tone of the opening letters. As Jacqueline Labbe notes, the final epistle 'is the only letter to which she signs her name – "Mary" – as if it is only England that brings her, unfortunately, back to herself'.²²

In *Letters Written During A Short Residence*, the physical movement of travel and the psychological shift from elation to despair that accompanies the trajectory of the journey is reflected not only in the narrative of the public correspondence but also in the textuality of that work. In particular, the public letters show clear evidence of Wollstonecraft's attempts to reverse the self-destruction that occurs over the course of her correspondence with Imlay, by rewriting material from the private letters in an effort to textually translate

that private narrative of the suffering self into something more positive. Crucially, as I will go on to argue, Wollstonecraft is only able to successfully achieve this rewriting in letters that feature in the first part of the public work: letters which coincide with her outward journey and with her optimistic responses to the travel experience. As I will also show, her strategy of textual self-transformation becomes much more problematic when Wollstonecraft's return journey takes her back to the city spaces that remind her of Imlay.

²² Jacqueline Labbe, 'A Family Romance: Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Godwin and Travel', *Genre: Forms of Discourse and Culture*, 25 (1992), 211-228 (216).

In 'Letter Six' of the public work, Wollstonecraft begins to rewrite the self in the private letters by exchanging epistolary performances across these different textual spaces. The positive tone of this epistle is captured in the comment 'I cannot, without a thrill of delight, recollect views I have seen, which are not to be forgotten' (*LDSR*, p. 100), but it is not until Wollstonecraft's thoughts turn to her young daughter (whom she has left behind in Strömstad because of the demands of her travel itinerary) that her personal persona in the private letters begins to encroach on her more public observations:

I feel more than a mother's fondness and anxiety, when I reflect on the dependent and oppressed state of her [Fanny's] sex. I dread lest she should be forced to sacrifice her heart to her principles, or principles to her heart. With trembling hand I shall cultivate sensibility, and cherish delicacy of sentiment, lest, while I lend fresh blushes to the rose, I sharpen the thorns that will wound the breast I would fain guard. (*LDSR*, p. 97)

Wollstonecraft's handling of sexual oppression is couched in vividly personal terms. Through the exclusive focus on her daughter, the emphatic repetition of the first person pronoun and the emotive language – 'dread', 'sacrifice', 'trembling' – Wollstonecraft is transformed from the astute social commentator who precedes and follows this extract into an anxious mother. There is a monologic quality, communicated by the absence of any address to the intended recipient, which creates the impression of an introspective dialogue with the self. Unlike the political diatribe contained in the private letter to Imlay discussed earlier, here the discourse is controlled and feminised. Wollstonecraft casts herself in the feminine role of mother and uses the language of sentimentality, usually reserved for Imlay, to articulate her feelings for her daughter. While this sentimental performance may be almost identical to that in the private letters, significantly, the love-object has changed. It is by protecting her daughter from future abandonment and not by attempting to win back Imlay's affection that Wollstonecraft will redeem her situation.

This replacement of daughter for errant lover, played out in the public letter, is rendered more important because there is a direct correlation between the substance of this passage and that of a private letter sent to Imlay from Paris on 30th December 1794: 'I lament that my little darling, fondly as I dote on her, is a girl. – I am sorry to have to tie her to a world that for me is ever sown with thorns' (*WCL*, p. 276). The feeling in the first part of this sentence is almost identical to that in the opening line of the quotation from the published text, with the exception that Wollstonecraft communicates her fondness for Fanny more forcefully in the latter: 'I feel *more than* a mother's fondness and anxiety'. The thorn imagery, which is used negatively in the private letter – Wollstonecraft's world is 'ever sown with thorns' – becomes a stimulant for action in the public letter: she will 'cultivate' her 'sensibility' in order to avoid sharpening the thorns that would wound Fanny. While Wollstonecraft's concerns are articulated in a more eloquent, literary manner in the public text, the repetition of the thorn imagery suggests that she may have self-consciously rewritten the material from the private letters. Her motivation for rewriting appears to be to contest her fate as an abandoned woman by transforming her negative experience of heterosexual love into a positive experience of maternal love. Although this material is deeply private – both intertextually and psychologically – she is packaging it in a publicly acceptable performance of the sentimental, caring mother, which enables her to rework her personal suffering without revealing too much about her private self. That this performance effectively masks a strong political message about female sexual oppression, suggests that Wollstonecraft's manipulation of her private and public epistolary personae is transgressive. Not only is she reacting against her own subordination – a strategy that ultimately fails in the private letters – she is also becoming a spokesperson for her sex by

using the sentimental role that a woman is expected to play as a form of political resistance.

Wollstonecraft's successful rewriting of her private narrative of abandonment in the public work is perhaps most apparent in 'Letter Eight'. Here, Wollstonecraft's positive engagement with the landscape leads her to construct a micro-narrative of empowerment where she moves from submission to control over the course of the letter. After repeating the identification with Sterne's Maria, also found in the private correspondence (*WCL*, p. 111), Wollstonecraft goes on to challenge the destruction of self that her identification with the sentimental heroine brought about in the love letters:

Without hope, what is to sustain life, but the fear of annihilation – the only thing of which I have ever felt a dread – I cannot bear to think of being no more – of losing myself – though existence is often but a painful consciousness of misery; nay, it appears to me impossible that I should cease to exist, or that this active restless spirit, equally alive to joy and sorrow, should only be organised dust – ready to fly abroad the moment the spring snaps, or the spark goes out, which kept it together. (*LDSR*, p. 112)

On the surface, this passage from *Letters Written During A Short Residence* appears to be about physical death but Wollstonecraft's handling of this issue is couched in terms which suggest that she is also discussing the metaphorical 'death' of subjective identity. The initial statement that 'I cannot think of being no more', creates the impression that the 'fear of annihilation' she is articulating here is the annihilation of the bodily 'I'. The clarification that follows, 'of losing *myself*', which is emphasised by its inclusion between dashes, implies that her main concern is actually the metaphysical destruction of being and, in particular, the destruction of her self identity: 'it appears to me impossible that I should cease to exist'. The strong stress on the 'I' demonstrates that this is an

introspective dialogue and one that illustrates Wollstonecraft's awareness that she possesses some deeper essence of self, 'equally alive to joy and sorrow', that gives her a unique identity. While there is a melancholy tone to this section of the letter, for example in her acknowledgement that her existence has been 'a painful consciousness of misery', she nevertheless accepts that this melancholy is part of who she is – it almost becomes a positive force because she recognises it as being integral to her uniqueness. This recognition is a fundamental aspect of the self-translation that Wollstonecraft is enacting.

Indeed this part of the letter again appears to be an intertextual revision of a passage from a private epistle sent to Imlay from Tönsberg on 30th July 1795: 'If I am always to be disappointed and unhappy, I will conceal the anguish I cannot dissipate; and the tightened cord of life or reason will at last snap and set me free' (*WCL*, p. 315). The snapping of the 'tightened cord of life', which is equivalent to the 'spring' in the public letter, offers a solution to Wollstonecraft's unhappiness but in the public letter death is recast as an impossibility. Whereas in the private letters her frequent threats of suicide create the impression that death is the only possible means of escape from Imlay's desertion, in the above extract, death – both physical and psychical – is something to 'dread'. The sentimental, melancholic heroine, she implies, does not need to end her life to escape her fate. There is a sense that what is being played out in the public letter is a revival of self, an assertion of the power of being, which translates the destruction of the sentimental self enacted over the course of the love letters to Imlay into something more positive.

This positive rewriting of Wollstonecraft's sentimental self continues later in 'Letter Eight', when she again combines the personal and the political in order to recount the tale

of a young woman who is being forced to work as a wet nurse to support her child because ‘the father had run away to get clear of the expense’ (*LDSR*, p. 115):

There was something in this most painful state of widowhood which excited my compassion, and led me to reflections on the instability of the most flattering plans of happiness, that were painful in the extreme, till I was ready to ask whether this world was not created to exhibit every possible combination of wretchedness. I asked these questions of a heart writhing in anguish, whilst I listened to the melancholy ditty sung by this poor girl. It was too early for thee to be abandoned, thought I, and I hastened out of the house, to take my solitary evening’s walk – And here I am again, to talk of any thing, but the pangs arising from the discovery of estranged affection, and the lonely sadness of a deserted heart. (*LDSR*, pp. 114-115)

In this extract, the ‘I’ of Wollstonecraft’s writerly persona becomes merged with that of the woman she encounters: ‘It was too early for thee to be abandoned, thought I, and I hastened out of the house, to take my solitary evening’s walk’. The use of ‘thee’ in this context is ambiguous because it could apply either to Wollstonecraft addressing herself or to the narrative subject, creating the impression that both women have been ‘abandoned’. Wollstonecraft’s ‘thought’ in the published letter echoes a passage in her private correspondence with Imlay – ‘I am ready to demand, in a murmuring tone [...] “Why am I thus abandoned?”’ (*WCL*, p. 320). This connection between the performative ‘I’ of the public and private letters extends also to some of the strategies that Wollstonecraft employs in the letters to Imlay. In particular, by expressing her private feelings through the figure of the abandoned wet nurse, she is again using a masking technique to launch a personal attack on Imlay for his immoral behaviour. Although the technique may be the same, the language of Wollstonecraft’s articulation has radically altered. In the private letter, discussed earlier, Wollstonecraft compared the political situation in France to her relationship with Imlay by using masculine discourse, but here she draws on the feminine language of sentimentality: ‘pangs arising from the discovery of estranged affection’, ‘the

lonely sadness of a deserted heart'. In the private letters, this language was reserved for wooing Imlay, but in this extract from *Letters Written During a Short Residence* it is used as a weapon against him and as a means of, albeit indirectly, publicly chastising him for his behaviour. Imlay, Wollstonecraft suggests, is no better than the Norwegian husband who has abandoned his wife.

This extract culminates in Wollstonecraft triumphing over the circumstances of her desertion because, although she is articulating the woman's plight in feminine, sentimental language, she switches her role in the narrative to again become the sentimental *hero*. Despite the earlier identification with Maria and that which occurs with the abandoned wet nurse, ultimately the latter excites Wollstonecraft's 'compassion' in much the same way as Maria commands Yorick's sympathy in *A Sentimental Journey*. There is both identification and distance here, and Wollstonecraft is not trapped by her situation as a sentimental heroine would be. Like her male fictional counterpart, travel gives her the freedom to walk away from the abandonment that she witnesses. By using the performative rhetoric of her courtship in this way, then, Wollstonecraft becomes empowered by the discourse which in the private letters led ultimately to self-destruction. In the correspondence to Imlay she wrote her self into an abandoned state. In the public work she is using the same language in an attempt to write her self out of it.

Weiss argues that the role reversal and sentimentalising of the social that Wollstonecraft enacts in *Letters Written During A Short Residence* is an intentional political strategy developed 'in order to critique and revise the exploitative economic and political relationships embedded within the tradition of sentimental literature' (p. 203). While

Wollstonecraft does demonstrate a desire to challenge the oppression of her sex it is important to recognise that her strategy is both public *and* private. The various performances that she enacts in the public text have their origins in the private correspondence with Imlay. As such, if the ‘I’ of her public letter writing utterance is liberated from the circumstances that she observes, then the ‘I’ of the private letters, whose narrative is rewritten here, can also metaphorically walk away from Imlay’s desertion. The freedom of mobility enabled by travel translates into textual freedom for Wollstonecraft. It is for this reason that the passages discussed above are significant because they articulate Wollstonecraft’s struggle to regain control over, and eventually become in control of, the narrative of her own life: as she puts it in ‘Letter Nine’, ‘I ought to rejoice at having turned over in this solitude a new page in the history of my own heart’ (*LDSR*, p. 122).

Although the strategies that Wollstonecraft employs in ‘Letter Six’ and ‘Letter Eight’ do give her back some level of control over her private circumstances, some critics tend to over-emphasise the final success of Wollstonecraft’s endeavour. Weiss, for example, argues that Wollstonecraft makes ‘the painful desertion of the male – the key feminine loss in the sentimental plot – nearly irrelevant’ (p. 210); while Mary Favret suggests that ‘by the end of the correspondence. Wollstonecraft’s letter-writer clearly responds to the demands of her imagined public, not to a unique “friend”, nominal “husband” or lover’.²³ Both of these views are problematised by the way that the epistolary narrative of *Letters Written During A Short Residence* concludes. While within individual letters Wollstonecraft’s writing of her travel experiences enables her to effectively challenge

²³ Favret, *Romantic Correspondence*, p. 99.

Imlay's abandonment, by the end of the public text her focus is again overwhelmingly on him and she begins to revert back to the masculine performance of self, which signalled a loss of control in the private correspondence. Tellingly, this happens when Wollstonecraft is in the commercial city of Hamburg:

But you will say that I am growing bitter, perhaps, personal. Ah! shall I whisper to you – that you – yourself, are strangely altered, since you have entered deeply into commerce – more than you are aware of – never allowing yourself to reflect, and keeping your mind, or rather passions in a continual state of agitation – Nature has given you talents, which lie dormant, or are wasted in ignoble pursuits – You will rouse yourself, and shake off the vile dust that obscures you, or my understanding, as well as my heart, deceives me, egregiously – only tell me when? (*LDSR*, p. 191).

Holmes describes this extract as a 'final act of self-exposure' and it is, undoubtedly, one of the most revealing sections in the entire work because her censure of Imlay, which was previously implicit, is now overt.²⁴ The exposure of self that is being played out here is all the more revealing because it appears to be brought about by the same 'quickness of feeling' that Wollstonecraft struggled to control in her private letters – there are clear similarities with the tone of this extract and with the private letter where Wollstonecraft holds forth about France (*WCL*, p. 238). Again, the display of excessive feeling manifests itself as a didactic outpouring, which temporarily grants her an air of authority: 'You will rouse yourself, and shake off the vile dust that obscures you'. The seemingly self-assured and confident motivation behind this outburst is, ultimately, undermined by the final, pleading, 'only tell me when?', which reveals that Wollstonecraft's performance of strength and control, as in the private letter, is nothing more than rhetorical posturing. For all her displays of independence, she is still dependent on Imlay to liberate her from her situation. Perhaps more significantly, this outright public denunciation of Imlay's

²⁴ Holmes, 'Introduction', *LDSR*, p. 34.

character has the effect of re-contextualising all of the other implicit critiques that Wollstonecraft makes throughout *Letters Written During A Short Residence* so that, in another act of self-destruction, she is undoing the politically subversive performances she enacts with success elsewhere in the text.

As the closing paragraph of 'Letter Twenty-Three' demonstrates, Wollstonecraft's attempt to regain control over her presentation of self by translating the private letters ultimately fails: 'to business, as it is termed, every thing must give way; nay, is sacrificed; and all the endearing charities of citizen, husband, father, brother, become empty names. But – but what? Why, to snap the chain of thought I must say farewell' (*LDSR*, p. 193). If the identities of 'husband' and 'father' become empty names, empty signifiers, so too must those of wife and mother, to the extent that Imlay's perceived destruction at the hands of commerce also results in self-annihilation for Wollstonecraft – who is she if she is not his lover? The hopelessness that this loss of self-identity brings about leads her to repeat an image that she previously associated with dying: 'to snap the chain of thought I must say farewell'.²⁵ The juxtaposition of 'I must say farewell' with the reference to snapping 'the chain of thought' could be read as a metaphor for death and, in turn, as an implicit threat of suicide – she again sees death as her only option. Although Wollstonecraft does attempt to take control of her self in the public work by recasting the sentimental persona of the private letters as a positive figure, ultimately the outcome is the same. In both the public and private correspondence Imlay's abandonment culminates

²⁵ As I demonstrated earlier, in 'Letter Eight' when Wollstonecraft rejects suicide she describes death as 'the moment the spring snaps' (*LDSR*, p. 112), while in the private letter, which she appears to be revising in the public work, death is welcomed as 'the tightened cord of life or reason [that] will at last snap and set me free' (*WCL*, p. 315).

in a textually destructive presentation of the self. Ultimately, then, travel and the writing of the travelogue are not enough to overcome the ‘dysfunction relationship between self and context’ Wollstonecraft is attempting to leave behind.

Examining the self-conscious intertextual connections between the letters to Imlay and *Letters Written During A Short Residence* appears to support my view that Wollstonecraft re-read her private letters to Imlay when preparing the public work and incorporated some of the material into the latter. This literal translation of self through the manipulation of private and public textual spaces is a potentially dangerous strategy – in choosing to write public letters to one of her most intimate correspondents Wollstonecraft risks almost exposing her unmarried status to the public. Yet, although her attempt to rewrite the narrative of her abandonment ultimately fails, it is important to recognise the deeply subversive nature of Wollstonecraft’s project. By transgressing the private and public boundaries of her own texts – as she crosses geographical boundaries – she is challenging the terms of her abandonment or, as Kauffman puts it, she is staging a revolt in writing (p. 18).

Reception History and the Unnamed ‘You’

Up to now this chapter has shown how Wollstonecraft manipulates her performance of self across the private and public letters in a (failed) attempt to transform the narrative of her private suffering through the lens of her travels. I want to conclude by turning briefly to the reception history of *Letters Written During A Short Residence* – especially in relation to the effect of the unnamed ‘You’ on the reader. What I want to demonstrate is

that, following Godwin's posthumous publication of the *Memoirs* and the private letters to Imlay in 1798, *Letters Written During A Short Residence* was radically destabilised by the love letters because Wollstonecraft's manipulation of private and public textual spaces became scandalously apparent. By examining eighteenth-century reviewer responses to *Letters Written During A Short Residence* and the *Memoirs*, I will consider how readers reacted to Wollstonecraft's self-presentation before and after Godwin's intervention. In particular, I want to suggest that the posthumous loss of textual control produces negative transformations of Wollstonecraft's self as she becomes, once again, the victim of the masculinised discourse she sought to resist in both sets of letters.

The eighteenth-century critical reaction, following Wollstonecraft's publication of *Letters Written During a Short Residence*, was for the most part favourable. Of the criticisms that were levelled at the work, the majority were restricted to inaccuracies in style or detail. The *Monthly Review*, for example, 'occasionally remark, in these letters, such anomalies in expression as are common with writers of brilliant fancy'²⁶; the reviewer for the *New Annual Register* finds the descriptions 'not always regular or correct in style' and the reflections 'sometimes fanciful'²⁷; while a letter written to the *Monthly Magazine* laments 'that want of sufficient attention, should, in some instances, have given rise to an inaccuracy of expression, which may intend to mislead, rather than instruct'²⁸. It is the reviewer for the *British Critic*, however, who finds more serious fault with the text:

²⁶ 'Rev. of *Letters Written During A Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark*', *Monthly Review*, New Series, XX (1796), 251-57 (257).

²⁷ 'Rev. of *Letters Written During A Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark*', *New Annual Register for 1796*, 248-49 (248).

²⁸ 'Rev. of *Letters Written During A Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark*', *Monthly Magazine*, I (1796), 279-81 (278).

If the faults in the work before us were confined to blemishes of style, or to mere peculiarity of sentiment, we could pass them over as compensated by superior beauties, or we should take a pleasure in the exercise of that critical gallantry which may properly be extended to the *foibles* of a lady. We could allow Mrs Wollstonecraft to stand forward the champion and defender of her sex, from the ruthless oppression of ours, and we could smile at an error which is so little likely to gain converts. But when a woman so far outsteps her proper sphere, as to deride facts which she cannot disprove, and avow opinions which it is dangerous to disseminate, we cannot, consistently with our duty, permit her to pursue triumphantly her Phaeton-like career.²⁹

What is noticeable here is that the objection of the critic is not to Wollstonecraft's confessional and personal style but to the political content of the letters. The sexist and patronising tone of this passage establishes the boundaries between what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour for a woman. Minor mistakes can be explained away as 'the *foibles* of a lady', while a woman is entitled to campaign for the liberation of her sex as long as her message is likely to be unsuccessful: 'we could smile at an error which is so little likely to gain converts'. What the reviewer really takes issue with, is the challenge that some of Wollstonecraft's political ideas pose to established patriarchal authority. Citing her discussion of the fate of Queen Matilda in 'Letter Eighteen' (*LDSR*, p. 167) and her assertion 'is not man the tyrant of creation?' from 'Letter Nineteen' (*LDSR*, p. 171), he questions whether she is equipped to make these judgements: 'can she securely bid defiance to the mass of moral probabilities which has assured the most learned, and most thinking men?'.³⁰ As the selection of quotations from the text and the comparison with 'thinking men' makes clear, Wollstonecraft is outstepping her 'proper sphere' because she is adopting masculine rhetoric to tackle the public political issues, which are traditionally the domain of men. This in turn suggests that Wollstonecraft's presentation of self in *Letters Written During A Short Residence* is most risky in those moments when

²⁹ 'Rev. of *Letters Written During A Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark*', *British Critic*, VII, (1796), 602-10 (607).

³⁰ *British Critic*, VII, 607.

she abandons her subversive, feminine sentimental performance in favour of her masculine political persona.

While the *British Critic* criticises Wollstonecraft's political outbursts, the review is more complimentary about the self-confessional style of the text and even goes as far as to explicitly connect the material in the work to Wollstonecraft's personal circumstances:

We are informed by report, and indeed we collect from the book before us, that she has lately been placed in situations where sentiments and emotions have been produced, unfelt and uncaused before. In exchanging the still calm of a single state, she has experienced alternately the endearments and afflictions of married life. The thrilling sensation of maternal tenderness has been excited towards an infant; and the pang of misplaced affection inflicted by a husband. We must not wonder then to see occasionally in the book before us the painful expression of wounded sensibility and the glowing effusion of maternal rapture.³¹

It is worth quoting this passage at length because, although it does not mention the unnamed addressee, it is clear that the reviewer has endeavoured to establish his identity in order to explain the tenor of Wollstonecraft's expression of 'sentiments and emotions' to the general reader. The assumption made is that Imlay is her 'husband' and that their relationship is socially legitimate.³² The implicit praise of Wollstonecraft's articulation of feeling indicates that the reviewer is responding positively to the sentimental performance of self – 'the painful expression of wounded sensibility' – that she enacts in some parts of the letters. What is more, unlike her political persona, it is clear that this performance, and the revelation of 'maternal tenderness' and 'misplaced affection' that it produces, is acceptable. The reviewer appears to relish the self-confessional quality of the text. As he states earlier in the piece, Wollstonecraft is demonstrating 'the finer sensibilities of a

³¹ *British Critic*, VII, 603.

³² The misunderstanding about the nature of Wollstonecraft's connection with Imlay arguably arises because she had been registered as his wife in France to give her the protection of American citizenship, although a formal marriage ceremony did not ever take place.

female' here or, to put it another way, her self-presentation in this part of the public work is agreeable because it is being expressed within the boundaries of accepted feminine behaviour – she is within her 'proper sphere'.³³

Whereas the *British Critic* reviewer is not particularly sympathetic to Wollstonecraft's personal circumstances – he suggests at the end of the article that if her hopes were 'prompted by something better than *strong imagination*' she 'would find *refuge from sorrow*'.³⁴ – the majority of reviewers do empathise with her plight. The *Critical Review*, for example, praises the 'epistolary form of writing', which 'renders a degree of familiarity not ungraceful'³⁵; while the reviewer for the *New Annual Register for 1796* draws attention to 'a vein of melancholy' that 'runs throughout the whole, occasioned by some cruel disappointment; which [...] irresistibly excites our sympathy'.³⁶ Finally, the *Analytical Review*, the periodical for which Wollstonecraft was a reviewer, is 'sorry to add, that these letters [...] discover that her feeling heart has suffered deeply from some recent affliction'.³⁷ The sympathetic response that the text generates is in keeping with the reaction that a fictional sentimental novel would occasion. What is also noticeable is that all of these reviewers read the work as inherently autobiographical and not as a fictional or dramatic account of selfhood. This self-revelatory quality of the work is clearly appealing for its contemporary respondents, but as the repeated references to the unknown cause of Wollstonecraft's sorrow demonstrate, it is what is *concealed* that really

³³ *British Critic*, VII, 602.

³⁴ *British Critic*, VII, 608.

³⁵ 'Rev. of *Letters Written During A Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark*', *Critical Review*, New Arrangement, XVI (1796), 209-12 (210).

³⁶ *New Annual Register for 1796*, 249.

³⁷ 'Rev. of *Letters Written During A Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark*', *Analytical Review*, XXIII (1796), 229-38, (236).

intrigues these readers. The source of Wollstonecraft's melancholy and the identity of the unnamed 'You' who inflicts this melancholy, is the readers' pivotal interest in the text and is more appealing than her representation of travel.

In one of the few articles to address the function of the unnamed 'You' in *Letters Written During A Short Residence*, Syndy Conger argues that: 'You remains throughout the text, diametrically unlike the speaking *I*, mysteriously absent, disembodied, unidentified and silent'.³⁸ The contrast between the fully developed presentation of the 'I' and the lack of detail about the 'You', which Conger posits here, provides a reason why contemporary readers identified with, and felt sympathy for, the letter writer. Although Wollstonecraft's primary motivation for withholding information about the 'You' is probably to avoid revealing too much about her personal circumstances, in doing so she also makes him an unknowable entity. This means that the reader's impression of the 'You' is always mediated by the letter writer, which enables Wollstonecraft to manipulate the response to this figure for her own purposes. She is not only managing her self-presentation but also that of Imlay. His silence in the public letters means that Wollstonecraft determines the role that Imlay will play in the text. Based on this information, it is then up to the reader to make a decision about his character.

The way that the reader is supposed to respond to the 'You' is apparent from the beginning of *Letters Written During A Short Residence*: 'Eleven days of weariness on

³⁸ Syndy Conger, 'The Power of the Unnamed *You* in Mary Wollstonecraft's *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark*', in *Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Shelley: Writing Lives*, ed. by Helen Buss, D. L. Macdonald and Anne McWhir (Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2001), pp. 43-53 (p. 46). All subsequent references to this essay will be given parenthetically.

board a vessel [...] have so exhausted my spirits, to say nothing of the other causes, with which *you* are already sufficiently acquainted' (*LDSR*, p. 63, emphasis mine). The direct address to the 'you' in these opening lines from 'Letter One' is immediately disconcerting because it is made clear that the explicit 'You' of the narrative has intimate knowledge of the 'I' beyond what will be revealed in the text and beyond what an external reader could possibly know. The public reader is required to fill in the gaps which, by implication, would probably lead him or her to the conclusion that the addressee is the cause of the writer's exhaustion of spirits. This establishes the possibly dubious nature of his character from the outset and prepares the reader for other, similar, comments later in the work:

I took a barge with a German baron, who was hastening back from a tour into Denmark, alarmed by the intelligence of the French having passed the Rhine. His conversation beguiled the time, and gave a sort of stimulus to my spirits, which had been growing more and more languid ever since my return to Gothenburg – *you* know why. (*LDSR*, p. 182, emphasis mine)

The loaded reference to 'you know why' again references circumstances outside of the text and this, when coupled with the lack of concrete information about the addressee, drives the reader 'from the text to Wollstonecraft's life to seek answers to key questions' (Conger, p. 47). This is arguably why the reviewer from the *British Critic* found it necessary to be 'informed' of Wollstonecraft's personal circumstances 'by report', that is, by seeking details about her life from external sources. While the work may be autobiographical, the presentation of self that it enacts for the public reader is deliberately selective, not only to protect Wollstonecraft from potentially damaging over-exposure, but also as a literary device to maintain reader interest.

The inclusion of an internal reader in *Letters Written During a Short Residence*, variously addressed as ‘you’, ‘my friend’, also problematises the position that the actual reader occupies in relation to the text. In some sections, the presence of internal and external readers makes it difficult to identify which ‘You’ is being addressed:

You will ask, perhaps, why I wished to go further northward. Why? Not only because the country, from all I can gather, is most romantic, abounding in forests and lakes, and the air pure, but I have heard much of the intelligence of the inhabitants, substantial farmers, who have none of that cunning to contaminate their simplicity, which displeased me so much in the conduct of the people on the sea coast. (*LDSR*, pp. 148-9, emphasis mine)

The ‘You’ here could be Imlay or it could be a rhetorical device to engage the public reader in the text. As Conger observes, the ‘You’ ‘remains a disconcerting intrusion of the discourse of narrative context – in the form of an unspecified co-reader, sitting, as it were, beside the actual reader – into the discourse of the literary text itself’ (p. 46). This intrusion is more pronounced in the text because of its epistolary form. Imitating as it does the intimate ‘I’ and ‘You’ of familiar correspondence, the rhetoric of the public letters destabilises a dynamic that a reader would ordinarily accept unquestioningly in a private epistle. This destabilisation is particularly apparent in the more emotive addresses to the internal reader; the intimate, recipient-specific tone of which makes the public reader feel as if they are an accidental witness to a private moment: ‘you have sometimes wondered, my dear friend, at the extreme affection of my nature’ (*LDSR*, p. 111); ‘Know you of what materials some hearts are made? I play the child and weep at the recollection’ (*LDSR*, p. 189).

Conger suggests that the public letters allowed Wollstonecraft ‘to invite every reader into the scandalously intimate proximity she shares with her unnamed addressee’ (p. 51). It is

not simply Wollstonecraft's proximity to the addressee that is scandalous but also the manipulation of private and public discourse, which enables the public reader to occupy this position in the first place. Through Wollstonecraft's authorial act of publication, the reader is invited into the epistolary space she creates. Nonetheless the deeply personal, correspondent-specific content still casts the reader in the illicit role of voyeur, creating the sense that s/he is reading material not intended for his or her eyes. Just as the voyeur is attracted by the uncomfortable and the forbidden, the reader also responds to Wollstonecraft's suffering in the text: it is noticeable that her contemporary reviewers all mention this aspect of *Letters Written During A Short Residence* in their reviews. As the external reader feels as if the act of witnessing transgresses the privacy of letter writer and addressee, the uncomfortable, but thrilling, position s/he occupies also generates the illusion of objectivity. Through this, the reader is drawn into sympathising with Wollstonecraft's pain because it makes the illicit viewing of her circumstances more acceptable and draws the reader into condemning the 'You' for causing this pain.

The presence of the unnamed 'You' in *Letters Written During a Short Residence* and the sympathetic way contemporary readers reacted to Wollstonecraft's suffering at the hands of her addressee, demonstrates the fine balance she manages to strike between appropriate self-revelation and damaging personal exposure. This balance, however, is dependent on the identity of the addressee and the true nature of her attachment with him remaining secret. Once the relationship with Imlay is revealed, through Godwin's posthumous publication of the love letters and the *Memoirs*, the true source of Wollstonecraft's narrative of suffering is revealed as are her attempts to translate that suffering by manipulating private and public versions of her self. While Godwin's intentions were

honourable, he wanted ‘to give the public some account of a person of eminent merit deceased’ (*Memoirs*, p. 198); in the process of memorialising his dead wife, he revealed scandalous details about her life (her relationships with Henry Fuseli and Imlay, her suicide attempts), and ended up translating the persona that was met with public sympathy in *Letters Written During A Short Residence* into one that generated widespread public disgust. In a metaphor, which suggests the extent of Godwin’s unfitting revelation of Wollstonecraft, Robert Southey described his actions as ‘stripping his dead wife naked’.³⁹

Although the reviewers did not return to discuss *Letters Written During A Short Residence* after Godwin’s intervention, their reaction to the *Memoirs* is a good indication of the response the public letters would have generated if the identity of the addressee had been known. The *Monthly Review* begins by exhorting Godwin to bury the narrative of Wollstonecraft’s life ‘into oblivion’, and then criticises the revelatory drive of the *Memoirs*: ‘Blushes would suffuse the cheeks of most husbands, if they were *forced* to relate those anecdotes of their wives which Mr Godwin voluntarily proclaims to the world’.⁴⁰ It is the deliberate exposure of the inappropriate details of Wollstonecraft’s life that offends this reviewer and, likewise, the critic from the *Gentleman’s Magazine*, who couches his principle objection to Godwin’s text in the same terms: ‘he has disclosed *some circumstances* which one might have supposed delicacy to the memory of the

³⁹ Quoted in Holmes, ‘Introduction’, *LDSR*, p. 43.

⁴⁰ ‘Rev. of *Memoirs of the Author of ‘The Rights of Woman’*, *Monthly Review*, New Series, XXVII (1798), 321-27, (321).

deceased would have prompted him to conceal'.⁴¹ It is probable that had Wollstonecraft's connection with Imlay been known when she published *Letters Written During A Short Residence*, reviewers would have termed her self-revelation inappropriate.

The *Monthly Review* provides a clearer insight into the likely form of this criticism when the reviewer discusses her relationship with Imlay:

Her experience with Mr Imlay, of the miserable consequences to which a woman exposes herself by an unmarried connection, *must* have taught her the *imprudence* at least of disregarding the law of society respecting marriage. No evil may result from recording the vow of love: but many evils *must* result from a contempt of marriage.⁴²

The empathy toward Wollstonecraft in the reviews following her publication of *Letters Written During A Short Residence*, is replaced here with a critique of her immoral behaviour – the implication being that the 'miserable consequences' of her relationship with Imlay are her own fault because she disregarded 'the law of society respecting marriage'. There is a strong sense that the reviewer believes her emotional distress is just retribution for her social and sexual misdemeanour. 'Many evils *must* result from a contempt of marriage' and, as such, her abandonment and shame is the necessary evil she must endure to pay for her actions. The need for chastisement is arguably rendered more important to this critic because Wollstonecraft is a woman and must, therefore, be publicly denounced for transgressing the acceptable roles of wife and mother lest other women choose to follow suit.

⁴¹ 'Rev. of *Memoirs of the Author of 'The Rights of Woman''*, *Gentlemen's Magazine*, LXVIII (1798), 186-87, (186).

⁴² *Monthly Review*, New Series, XXVII, 323.

Wollstonecraft was already a transgressive figure because of her campaigning for sexual equality – as the 1796 review from the *British Critic* demonstrates – but the publication of the *Memoirs* gave this periodical leave to vilify her on the grounds of sexual immorality. In the 1798 review, Wollstonecraft is cast as a dangerous example of female sexuality: at the beginning of her affair with Imlay she is described as in a state of ‘sensual delirium’, and by the end of their attachment ‘her senses were now so *completely awakened* that she could not exist without their gratification; and she was prevented from quitting England, only by finding in Mr Godwin a man able and willing to satisfy her desires’.⁴³ The overtly sexist and sexualised nature of this criticism is then taken a step further by the *Anti-Jacobin Review*: ‘The biographer does not mention many of her amours. Indeed it was unnecessary: two or three instances of action often decide a character as well as a thousand’. This allegation of promiscuity – the inference being that Wollstonecraft had ‘a thousand’ sexual partners – is then transformed into a warning against her particular brand of sexual politics: ‘Mary’s theory, that it is the right of women to indulge their inclinations with every man they like, is so far from being new that it is as old as prostitution’.⁴⁴ In a linguistic sleight of hand the critic transforms Wollstonecraft from political activist to prostitute and, in the process, undermines the power of her feminist rhetoric.

As the reviews that follow the publication of the *Memoirs* show, Wollstonecraft undergoes another self-transformation, initially at the hands of Godwin and then at the hands of the male reviewers. Although the consequences of Godwin’s posthumous

⁴³ ‘Rev. of *Memoirs of the Author of ‘The Rights of Woman’*, *British Critic*, XII (1798), 228-35 (231-2).

⁴⁴ ‘Rev. of *Memoirs of the Author of ‘The Rights of Woman’*, *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine*, I (1798), 94-102 (97).

editorial acts are serious, they do work to demonstrate the risky nature of the strategy Wollstonecraft employs in the public letters. To borrow Southey's metaphor, her manipulation of private and public epistolary spaces and the type of exposure this produces is the textual equivalent of a partial striptease. Wollstonecraft offers her voyeuristic readers a tantalising glimpse into her personal circumstances and, through the inclusion of material from the private letters, reveals just enough of her private self for her public performance to be acceptable. The details that she conceals are just as important as those that she reveals because her withholding of information both maintains the reader's attention and, initially, excites their sympathy. Godwin's fault, it seems, was to provide those biographical details that Wollstonecraft had wished to keep private.

To conclude, this chapter has considered travel as an enabling context for textual self-transformation and has found evidence of this in the textuality of Wollstonecraft's private and public correspondence. Although the experience of travel and the process of writing publicly about her experiences in Scandinavia clearly does provide a space where she can attempt to rewrite the narrative of abandonment in her private letters; ultimately this attempt is unsuccessful. Leed notes that 'the transformation of social being in travel, becoming someone else through territorial passage, is a cliché of the literature' (p. 263). In the light of the conflicting and, in the end, destructive self-representation apparent in Wollstonecraft's letters perhaps we need to question the accuracy of this cliché more rigorously, rather than simply accepting the development of a new, or rejuvenated self, as a given of all travel texts. Wollstonecraft's attempt to commit suicide on her return from Scandinavia – to literally annihilate the self – is a barometer of the failure of the self-transformation she tries to achieve through the writing of the public letters. Moreover, the

posthumous and damaging reconstruction of Wollstonecraft's self-identity reveals the instability inherent in any autobiographical travel text written for a public readership.

On a broader level, what has become clear over the course of this and the previous two chapters is that eighteenth-century published travel writings are textually complex entities because of their chequered private and public histories, and their addressee-specific dynamics. Indeed it seems to be the case that there is something inherent in the freedom of journeying, which is reflected in the textual liberties that writers and editors take with travel texts. While Wollstonecraft cuts a far more radical figure than Gray – not only in her motives for travelling and writing but also in the way that she self-consciously manipulates her private and public letters – like his *Journal*, her private correspondence and *Letters Written During A Short Residence* have their meaning redefined by a non-authorial act of publication. Whereas the *Journal* became a popular example of Picturesque travel writing; Wollstonecraft's writings ended up becoming scandalous and shameful narratives of her illicit relationship with Imlay. Godwin's interventions aside, Wollstonecraft's correspondence was already highly subversive because of the deliberate authorial intertextuality which enabled her to cross private and public boundaries. This kind of intertextuality is repeated by the Shelleys who, as I will show in Chapter Five, use *Letters Written During A Short Residence* as a model for the public version of their private, and also potentially scandalous, elopement journal. In addition, Wollstonecraft's risky strategy of partially exposing her private self in the public letters anticipates the subject of the next chapter – Byron – who uses travel to enact an even more sophisticated performance of self in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage I-III*.

Chapter Four

Poetic Composition, Travel and Exile in Childe Harold's Pilgrimage I-III

The great object of life is sensation – to feel that we exist – even though in pain – it is this “craving void” which drives us to Gaming – to Battle – to Travel – to intemperate, but keenly felt, pursuits of any description, whose principal attraction is the agitation inseparable from their accomplishment.¹

The previous chapter considered textual self-transformation in the context of travels partly motivated by a desire to escape damaging personal circumstances. This chapter will continue with that theme but will examine perhaps the most radical form of escape that travel can enable – self-exile. Rather than concentrating on the autobiographical self, the focus here will be on writing as a form of creative recovery and, in particular, on how poetic composition during exiled travel might facilitate the development of a different creative persona through an active creative process. The subject of this chapter is the Romantic poet, Lord Byron, who, in the wake of a series of public scandals, boarded a boat at Dover and began his journey into exile on 25th April 1816. It was during the crossing to Ostend that he wrote the opening stanzas of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage III*, recommencing work on the poem that had made him famous after a break of five years. Byron's decision to return to *Childe Harold* at this crucial moment in his personal history, and while he was quite literally *in motion*, establishes a vital connection between travel, exile and the compositional process which is sustained throughout the canto. Although recent critical work on the poem has usefully explored the importance of place and examined the construction of the Byronic travelling self,² relatively little attention has been paid to how the act of travelling influences, or is reflected in, Byron's writing. What

¹ Letter from Lord Byron to Annabella Milbanke, September 1813. *BLJ*, III, p. 109.

² See, respectively, Cheeke, *Byron and Place*; and Thompson, *The Suffering Traveller*.

is the connection between the process of travelling and the process of composition? To what extent is Byron deliberately structuring his travels to set up particular conditions to produce a certain kind of writing in exile? In seeking to answer these important questions it is crucial both to consider *Childe Harold III* in the context of Cantos I-II (the first of Byron's poems written during travel) and to recognise that Canto III is stimulated and provoked by a series of unique circumstances at the time of writing.

To this end, the chapter will begin with Byron's tour of 1809-1811 and examine the motives for journeying in his private letters and the representation of travel in the poem. Then, following a brief discussion of the circumstances leading up to Byron's 1816 exile, the materiality of the first draft manuscript of Canto III and the transition from first draft to fair copy will be outlined in order to identify what these different compositional stages reveal about the way the canto progresses during travel. Finally, this chapter will focus on three key moments of writing: at Waterloo, in the Alps and on the shores of Lac Léman (Lake Geneva). These moments have been chosen because they most explicitly chart the relationship between the locations of Byron's travels and the evolution of his creative self in exile.

Exile and the Construction of Byron's 1809-1811 Travels

Before discussing Cantos I-II, I want to think about what it means to be 'in exile' because this is crucial to understanding Byron's attitude toward, and handling of, this theme in his writing. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, there are two principle meanings of 'exile' emerging from the Latin *exsilium* and the French *essil*. The first refers to 'a state

of banishment', while the latter additionally denotes 'devastation, destruction' (*OED*, p. 540). In its verb form, exile as 'enforced removal from one's native land' entered the English language in 1300; while its secondary meaning, 'to devastate, ravage, bring to ruin', was not introduced until almost a century-and-a-half later (*OED*, pp. 540-41). Around 1340 the concept of home became part of the definition – 'to banish or separate *from* (one's home, a pleasant or endeared place or association)' – and forty years later the term acquired a more general application: 'to banish, expel, get rid of' (*OED*, p. 541). In all of these instances, exile is imposed or forced and it was not until 1393 that it included 'expatriation, prolonged absence from one's native land, endured by compulsion of circumstances or voluntarily undergone for any purpose' (*OED*, p. 540). The evolution of this last definition to 'self-exiled' happened in 1737, while 'self-exile', to describe 'voluntary exile', did not enter common usage until 1827 (*OED*, p. 920).

This etymology of exile usefully draws attention to a connection between (physical) expulsion from home and the destructive (psychological) potential of that expulsion, but what it does not make clear is whether exile is a permanent or an impermanent state. Despite the seeming finality of the language – 'get rid of', 'banish' – exile is presented at most as a lengthy absence from home occasioned by force, circumstance, personal need, or a combination of these factors. This means that permanent absence from home does not, in itself, constitute exile and that it is possible for a subject to move in and out of exile (just as Byron's hero Napoleon did at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century). The uncertainty inherent in the definition raises the issue of what distinguishes exile from prolonged periods of travel that end with death abroad, or from multiple sustained journeys away from one's homeland.

Although there is an important physical dimension to exile, in the form of an actual uprooting and displacement, it seems to be primarily a psychological state in which the subject is always attempting to (re)define himself in relation to an irrecoverable idea of home. Self-identity, whether exile is voluntary or forced, is negatively constructed against this absence, and against the referent of a self-at-home that is paradoxically both there and not there because it once existed but cannot now be reclaimed. The exiled subject is effectively the embodiment of the *unheimlich* which, as Sigmund Freud reminds us, is both ‘the opposite of *heimlich*, *heimisch*, meaning “familiar”, “native”, “belonging to the home”’, but also necessarily defined in relation to that opposite.³ Like the *unheimlich*, the exiled self is always bound up in a relational psychic association with its double (or other), because as a very condition of being *in exile* the subject must be referencing an alternative self *not in exile*. To travel as an exile, then, is to travel with the uncanny presence of a lost, or rejected, self-identity that is rooted in a specific place and set of circumstances designated as home. Whether consciously or unconsciously, this loss inscribes the engagement with the places experienced in exile, foregrounding and challenging the relationship of the subject to home and world, and ultimately forcing the renegotiation of conceptions of the self.

The complex psychology of exile and its links with travel and self-identity go some way toward explaining why exiled figures feature so prominently in Byron’s writings. For a poet who thrives on casting himself as both outsider and traveller, exile must have held a particular attraction, not only because it represents social ostracism at its most extreme

³ Sigmund Freud, ‘The Uncanny’, *Collected Papers*, 5 vols (London: Hogarth Press, 1934) IV, pp. 368-407 (p. 370).

but also because travel is a consequence of that ostracism. As Carl Thompson notes, Byron often ‘casts himself as an exile from his own nation’ a role that is ‘central to his self-dramatisation both as poet and as traveller’.⁴ Even before his own expulsion from England in 1816, the powerful impact of exile on Byron’s creative imagination is apparent in poems such as *The Giaour*, *The Corsair* and, most significantly for this chapter, *Childe Harold I-II*. Yet the critical tendency has been to restrict discussions of Byron and exile to poetry composed post-1816 and, as a result, there has been relatively little consideration of how his earlier treatment of this theme contributes to his development as a poet.⁵ What I want to suggest is that Byron begins experimenting with tropes of exile during his 1809-1811 travels – both through his construction of those travels and through the figure of Harold in Cantos I-II – and that this experimentation paves the way for the later poetic exploration of his actual self-imposed exile in Canto III.

Byron embarked on his first period of Continental travel on 2nd July 1809 and his two-year itinerary took him through Portugal, Spain, Gibraltar, Malta, Albania, Turkey and Greece. On the whole, Byron’s itinerary and immediate response to the landscapes of his 1809 tour is that of the enthusiastic traveller relishing the possibility of exciting experiences ahead: ‘Thus far we have pursued our route, and seen all sorts of marvellous sights, places, convents &c’ (*BLJ*, I, p.215). There is, however, a stark contrast between the enthusiastic tone of this, and many other letters from abroad, and the personal motives for the tour expressed in his earlier correspondence. In the months leading up to his

⁴ Thompson, *The Suffering Traveller*, pp. 261-263. All subsequent references to this text will be given parenthetically.

⁵ For examples of criticism that focuses exclusively on Byron’s post-exile writing see: Ann Gelder, ‘Wandering in Exile: Byron and Pushkin’, *Comparative Literature*, 42 (1990), 319-34; Drummond Bone, ‘First Look at Exile: Byron’s Art in 1816’, *The Byron Journal*, 19 (1991), 69-79; and Mark Phillipson, ‘Alteration in Exile: Byron’s Mazeppa’, *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 58 (2003), 291-325.

journey, what Byron repeatedly emphasises is not his excitement at the prospect of the trip but his increasingly negative attitude toward England: ‘allow me to depart from this cursed country’ (*BLJ*, I, p. 202); ‘I leave England without regret, and without a wish to revisit any thing it contains’ (*BLJ*, I, p. 206); ‘any thing is better than England’ (*BLJ*, I, p. 215). Travel is not presented in these letters as the pleasurable experience it is later discovered to be, but apathetically as the only viable alternative to life in England. As Byron states in an epistle to John Hanson, underlying his antipathy are undisclosed events which apparently *require* him to seek refuge abroad:

If the consequences of my leaving England, were ten times as ruinous as you describe, I have no alternative, there are circumstances which render it absolutely indispensable, and quit the country I must immediately. (*BLJ*, I, pp. 200-1)

The urgency and forcefulness of the expression – ‘absolutely indispensable’, ‘quit’, ‘immediately’ – constructs the 1809 tour as an enforced departure from England, creating the impression that travel is not a choice but a necessity. This is not the language of the adventurer-traveller but is closer to that of the self-exile who feels compelled by ‘circumstances’ to ‘quit’ his homeland.

Byron is still reiterating the clandestine reasons for his departure some six months later when he is in Albania: ‘I never will live in England if I can avoid it, *why* must remain a secret, but the farther I proceed the less I regret quitting it’ (*BLJ*, I, p. 232). His emphasis on the need to keep his motives for leaving ‘secret’ (and the absence of any other justification for travel in the pre-departure letters) could be read as a deliberately performative gesture and as a self-conscious attempt to set up his journey as a kind of exile from England. As the comment from the Albania letter shows, during his journey

Byron continues to define his travelling-self in relation to the secrecy that surrounds the cause for his departure.⁶ In the process, he develops the persona of the travelling outsider with an undisclosed reason for journeying, which comes to be one of the dominant tropes of the Byronic hero. The origins of this trope can be traced back to the textual identity of the self-exiled traveller Byron is partially constructing in his correspondence, and to the more in-depth presentation of this figure in the opening cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. Although only fragments of the first draft manuscript of Cantos I-II survive, it is likely that Byron did compose the poem, as he suggests in the 'Preface', 'for the most part, amidst the scenes which it attempts to describe'.⁷ This on-location composition and the material in the letters indicates that Byron may have been responding to the actual landscapes of his travels through a constructed self-exiled persona in order to write poetry. This is not to imply that Byron is Harold, or vice versa, but rather that Byron adopts an identity for creative purposes in order to experiment with exile as a potentially interesting, and fruitful, poetic model.

Experimentations in Exile: Childe Harold's Pilgrimage I-II

As very little of the first draft manuscript of Cantos I-II is still extant, in this section of the chapter I will be focusing on the representation of exile in the poem and not on the compositional materials. This representational context is important for understanding the creative development of Canto III because it marks Byron's first attempt to explore the

⁶ As Thompson notes, some 'contradictions and ambiguities are attendant on Byron's larger persona as some sort of exile or renegade.' For example, during his 1809-11 tour he travelled 'in British army regimental costume (to which he was not entitled), and had conducted some of his voyaging as a passenger on a British man-of-war' (p. 263). Nonetheless, as Thompson points out, the persona of the exile was still central to Byron's sense of himself as poet and traveller (p. 262).

⁷ *BCPW*, II, p. 3.

theme of exile in his poetic writing. The first two cantos most explicitly negotiate the experience of an exiled subject through the central figure of 'Self-exiled Harold'.⁸ Broadly speaking, Harold's exile is structured around two interrelated tensions. Firstly, tropes of isolation and non-belonging and, second, a conflict between the escapist possibilities of travel and the weariness that accompanies a sense of journeying without a clearly defined endpoint. The departure stanzas of Canto I deal with both of these themes as they chart Harold's process of becoming an exile:

Apart he stalk'd in joyless reverie,
And from his native land resolved to go,
And visit scorching climes beyond the sea;
With pleasure drugg'd he almost long'd for woe,
And e'en for change of scene would seek the shades below. (I. 6. 50-4)

The Childe's transition into exile begins whilst he is still in his 'native land'. Setting himself 'apart' from society he becomes an isolated figure, no longer capable of interacting with those around him: 'from his fellow bacchanals would flee' (I. 6. 47). This initial retreat into the 'joyless reverie' of isolation eventually translates into a need for physical escape, which is presented as an inevitable consequence of the withdrawal from society: 'then loath'd he in his native land to dwell, / Which seem'd to him more lone than Eremite's sad cell' (I. 4. 35-6). Within this narrative of necessary escape, travel is presented – as it is in Byron's pre-departure correspondence – not as a pleasurable occupation, but as the only alternative to home. Harold's choice is between the desert wasteland evoked by the 'scorching climes beyond the sea' or the figurative

⁸ *BCPW*, II, iii. 16. 136. All subsequent line references to this poem will be given parenthetically. Harold also refers to himself as an exile in the 'To Inez' lyric in Canto I: 'What Exile from himself can flee?' (I. 6. 877).

representation of death in the form of 'the shades below'. Like death, Harold's 'weary pilgrimage' (I. 10. 85) is nothing more than an essential 'change of scene'.

The actual moment of Harold's departure is captured in the 'Good Night!' lyric, which Byron introduces at a crucial point in Canto I to provide direct access to Harold's subjective experience of travelling into exile while that transition is occurring: 'And now I'm in the world alone, / Upon the wide, wide sea' (I. 9. 182-3). When Harold takes to the waters, the earlier self-exclusion from the society of his homeland expands into an experience of being 'in the world alone'. The use of 'alone' and the repetition of 'wide' is an allusion to Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* – 'Alone, alone, all, all alone / Alone on a wide wide sea!'⁹ – and evokes an image which is concurrent with the idea of exile as an expulsion or casting out. The nature of the solitude that Harold experiences on the ocean can, however, also be read as a positive replacement for the emotional wasteland of home where, even in a crowd, he felt isolated because 'none did love him' (I. 9. 73). As Byron's revisiting of this theme in Canto II explicitly states, being 'midst the crowd, the hum, the shock of men [...] With none who bless us, none whom we can bless [...] This is to be alone; this, this is solitude!' (II. 26. 226-34). The company of others should offer security to the individual but in Byron's construction it is instead a painful reminder of non-belonging and displacement. Similarly, Harold's negotiation of his detachment from his fellow human beings is marked by an awareness that, at its most negative, solitude is feeling isolated in a situation where he should have felt included. His initial 'grief' at leaving 'No thing that claims a tear' (I. 9. 180-1),

⁹ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner', in *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. by J. C. C. Mays, 16 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970-2001), XVI, I.i, pp. 365-419 (p. 390, lines 232-233).

quickly becomes a renouncing of grief: 'But why should I for others groan, / When none will sigh for me? (I. 9. 184-5). This is a turning point for Harold because the anxiety of non-belonging is replaced by the potential of positive solitude as the Childe's metaphorical and literal separation from 'the crowd' opens the world up to him:

With thee my bark, I'll swiftly go
Athwart the foaming brine;
Nor care what land thou bear'st me to,
So not again to mine. (I. 10. 190-3)

Harold is effectively relinquishing human interaction in favour of a state of communion with the boat and the ocean. The personification of the ship, through the use of the personal pronoun 'thee', transforms it into Harold's travelling companion so that the physical means by which he is transported away from his native shores also becomes a comforting imaginative presence at the moment of his exile. The lack of any pre-determined destination is liberating at this point in the poem: it does not matter where the boat takes Harold as long as it is to somewhere other than the place being left behind. Again, there are echoes here of Byron's assertion in his letters that 'any thing is better than England' (*BLJ*, I, p. 215) and, like Byron's self-exiled persona, Harold's attitude to travel changes once he leaves home: 'Welcome, welcome ye dark blue waves! [...] Welcome, ye deserts, and ye caves!' (I. 10. 194-6). Harold's impassioned invocation to the ocean and to the 'deserts' and 'caves' of his destination is different from the images of 'scorching climes' and 'shades below' of the earlier stanza. Malaise is replaced by euphoria as the escape into exile marks the possibility of a new beginning and of belonging elsewhere. The form of this new belonging is identified in Canto II, when places off the beaten track where the 'mortal foot hath ne'er or rarely been' (II. 25. 220)

are identified as the sites where loneliness can be overcome: 'This is not solitude; 'tis but to hold / Converse with Nature's charms, and view her stores unroll'd' (II. 25. 224-5). The suggestion here is that the exiled traveller can find comfort in the landscape, which offers an interaction with the world that is natural as opposed to human.

It is not until the final lyric in Canto I that this view of travel as escape is re-evaluated:

What Exile from himself can flee?
To Zones, though more and more remote,
Still, still pursues, where e'er I be,
The blight of life – the demon, Thought. (I. 6. 857-60)

This is the first time in the poem that Harold explicitly identifies himself as an exile, and with the identification comes an awareness that his past will follow him wherever he goes, tainting his experience of new places: 'weariness [...] springs / From all I meet or hear, or see' (I. 4. 848-9). Beyond the knowledge that he has 'known the worst' (I. 8. 868), new scenes 'though more and more remote' can no longer offer Harold any solace because his consciousness, in the form of 'the demon, Thought', is always in pursuit. This 'demon' is effectively Harold's troubling doppelganger and can be read as the uncanny other self that was earlier identified as a product of being in exile. Harold's experience of travel is always negatively coloured by the presence of this psychic double. As a condition of being 'in exile' he is condemned to repeatedly reference a self 'not in exile' no matter how much he tries to use travel in an attempt to escape from that bind. The crucial thing travelling in self-exile cannot achieve is an exile from a past self. As Harold implies in the lyric, it is the *impossibility* of being transported away from this self that the state of exile reveals: 'Oh! may they still of transport dream, / And ne'er, at least like me,

awake!’ (I. 7. 864). When combined with the earlier reference to consciousness in the shape of ‘Thought’, the use of the word ‘awake’ links with the idea of ‘Consciousness awaking to her woes’ (I. 92. 941). This effectively brings Harold full-circle as he achieves the woe that he desired in the earlier stanza of the canto: ‘With pleasure drugg’d he almost long’d for woe’ (I. 6. 53).

Harold’s ‘awaking’ to his woes is, however, not equivalent to an exploration of his consciousness and it is important not to grant too much significance to this movement toward self-awareness. Although Harold recognises the futility of his journey, this recognition does not actually lead to greater self-knowledge because he actively turns away from the moment of introspection: ‘nor venture to unmask / Man’s heart, and view the Hell that’s there’ (I. 9. 870-1). Harold is speaking these lines to Inez but the implication is that he is offered the opportunity for redemption, in the form of an unmasking of his heart, but chooses to remain ignorant. The Childe has the potential to transform exile *from* himself into a pilgrimage *to* the self but he settles instead for the woe of endless travelling: ‘ye shall hear what he beheld / In other lands, where he was doom’d to go’ (I. 93. 951). Harold is ‘doom’d’ to travel because, rather than ‘awaking’ to his consciousness, he continues running from ‘the demon, Thought’.

Byron’s exploration of self-exile in Cantos I-II is perhaps best summed up in his evaluation of the Childe’s character in the 1814 ‘Addition to the Preface’:

He never was intended as an example, further than to show that early perversion of the mind and morals leads to satiety of past pleasures and disappointments in new ones, and that even the beauties of nature, and the stimulus of travel [...] are lost on a soul so constituted or rather misdirected. (*CPW*, II. p. 6)

In terms of self-exile, the issue Byron seems to primarily be tackling in *Childe Harold I-II* is whether the impact of early psychological and moral corruption can be overcome, or whether it is inescapable because it acts as a filter through which all pleasures (past and new) are experienced and tainted. For Byron, 'the beauties of nature, and the stimulus of travel' offer the only possible means by which corruption of this kind might be remedied. As such, Harold, the self-exiled subject who embodies a compulsion to travel in order to escape from a damaged self, provides a useful means of creatively exploring that possibility. What Byron ultimately discovers is that Harold is too 'misdirected' to be saved by his travels – he uses exile not as an opportunity to gain self-knowledge, but as a means of trying to run away from it, even though that eventually proves to be unfeasible.

Writing in Exile: Childe Harold's Pilgrimage III

Having discussed Byron's treatment of the theme of self-exile in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage I-II*, I want to turn now to consider Canto III in the context of Byron's actual self-exile from England in 1816. It is worth reiterating that *Childe Harold III* offers an exclusive insight into Byron's creative response to his expulsion from England because he resumes work on the poem onboard the boat from Dover to Ostend; quite literally restarting composition at the moment of his journey into exile. That Byron only returns to the poem when his travels recommence is highly significant, and suggests that the writing process of this text is bound up with the physical act of journeying. Indeed Canto III foregrounds the vital relationship between travel and the creative process, and enables an exploration of how Byron's altered conception of his poetic identity, brought about by the circumstances of exile, affects his compositional practices. While Cantos I-II present a

poet experimenting with the concept of self-exile through the dramatic persona of Harold, the unique circumstances surrounding the coming-into-being of Canto III chart Byron's imaginative attempt to come to terms with his actual exile through the writing process. By examining the manuscript materials of Canto III, this vital intersection of poetic composition, travel and exiled identity will be the focus of the discussion that follows.

The circumstances leading up to Byron's departure from England in 1816 differ significantly from those of 1809. Although Byron constructed his earlier travels in terms concurrent with self-exile, there is no evidence to suggest that the events of that time merited such radical action. In contrast the events of 1816, catalysed by the separation from Lady Byron, were far more serious. As is well known, in addition to charges of cruelty and infidelity, Byron was accused of marital sodomy, homosexuality and incest. As Fiona McCarthy notes: 'Had the scandal been only that of the breakdown of his marriage Byron might [...] have ridden out the storm. It was the additional element of incest, and more critically sodomy, that made his departure unavoidable'.¹⁰ Byron knew that of all the allegations the latter was the most dangerous. He lived in constant fear of mob violence and became so distressed that he threatened to commit suicide by shooting himself in the head (McCarthy, p. 276, 267). These final months in England were, undoubtedly, genuinely upsetting but at the same time they also provided Byron with a unique creative opportunity. For a poet who had already experimented with figures in exile, the reality of his own exile presented him with a chance to revive one of the most

¹⁰ Fiona McCarthy, *Byron Life and Legend* (London: Faber and Faber, 2003), pp. 275. McCarthy's detailed account of the days leading up to Byron's departure can be found on pp. 263-80. All subsequent references to this text will be given parenthetically.

powerful aspects of Byronism by actually experiencing it first hand, and to explore his response to that experience in a much more immediate way in his poetry.

This immediacy is captured at the very start of Canto III which, as Byron notes in the fair copy manuscript, was ‘Begun at Sea’.¹¹ The first three stanzas, written onboard the boat, are important because they set up the terms of Byron’s treatment of his exile by explicitly positioning him at the creative centre of his text:

Is thy face like thy mother’s, my fair child!
 Ada! sole daughter of my house and heart?
 When I last saw thy young blue eyes they smiled,
 And then we parted, – not as now we part,
 But with a hope – (III. 1. 1-5)

These opening lines are an elegy on the loss of Ada, establishing that the canto is, in part, a lamentation for Byron’s grief at leaving his infant daughter. Cast as the ‘sole daughter of my house and heart’, Ada embodies Byron’s hopes for the continuation of his family line and is established, probably in a swipe at Lady Byron, as his only remaining emotional tie to England.¹² As James Treadwell notes:

Ada was a central element in the private-public discourse of the 1816 crisis, so her appearance in the first line of the new publication, alongside her mother, draws the clearest possible attention to the scandalous circumstances that Byron’s departure from England might have been supposed to put behind him.¹³

¹¹ Lord Byron, *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage Canto III: A Facsimile of the Autograph Fair Copy found in the ‘Scrope Davies’ Notebook*, ed. by T. A. J. Burnett (New York: Garland Publishing, 1988), p.5.

¹² Byron’s strategy of self-revelation is much more overt than Wollstonecraft’s in *Letters Written During A Short Residence* because he explicitly identifies his daughter and his wife at the beginning of the canto.

¹³ James Treadwell, *Autobiographical Writing and British Literature 1783-1834* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) p. 187. All subsequent references to this text will be given parenthetically.

Although the canto appears to ‘open in nakedly autobiographical mode’ (Treadwell, p. 187), Byron’s use of apostrophe deliberately transforms the personal crisis of the separation scandal into a textual event, creating layers of reality in which the actual historical backdrop to Byron’s departure becomes a poetic device driving the opening of the canto. This device works in two main ways. Firstly, the textual parting from Ada bears witness to the reality of the actual parting brought about by the separation scandal; positioning her both as a poetical expression of Byron’s grief and as an integral part of the real circumstances that led to that grief. Second, Byron’s evocation of Ada at the beginning of the canto suggests that she is performing the function of his muse, making her presence in the poem both literal and figurative. If Ada, as muse-figure, is integral to the coming-into-being of the poem then the circumstances of Byron’s departure are being acknowledged *in the poem* as a creative stimulus *for the poem*. This positions Canto III not as a purely autobiographical text but as a creative exploration of Byron’s actual exile.

The opening stanza, which begins with Ada as a symbol of Byron’s grief, ends with an imaginative severing of ties in a denial of past pain and past connections: ‘the hour’s gone by, / When Albion’s lessening shores could grieve or glad mine eye’ (III. 1. 8-9). The sight of the diminishing coastline at Dover becomes a metaphor for the declining significance of former events as Byron tries literally and psychologically to leave the past behind or, as he puts it, to ‘fling / Forgetfulness around me’ (III. 4. 33-4). As Alan Rawes notes, ‘Byron steps forward at the beginning of the canto, as a pioneer and example, to

explore his own capacity for forgetfulness'.¹⁴ This attempt to forget the past is, paradoxically, articulated within the parameters of a previous model of creativity. There is a self-conscious echoing of Harold's departure in Canto I because just as he shifts from a state of grief to renouncing that grief so too does Byron. In fact, the stanza that follows reads like a rewriting of Harold's moment of self-exile in the 'Good Night!' lyric:

Once more upon the waters! yet once more!
And the waves bound beneath me as a steed
That knows his rider. Welcome, to their roar!
Swift be their guidance, wheresoe'er it lead! (III. 2. 10-13)

There is a euphoric sense of freedom in these lines as the image of looking back at the 'lessening shores' of England is replaced with an emphatic movement forward and onward. The brisk meter and syllabic shortness of the words imitates the rapidity of the driving motion of the waves, creating an immediacy of experience that is consistent with Byron composing onboard the boat. This implicit marriage of travel and the creative moment, indicates that what is being celebrated is not simply Byron's journey away from England but the resumption of work on the poem that made him famous. This connection is then further emphasised by the similarity with the 'Good night!' lyric from Canto I. There is a combination of familiarity and the spontaneity of the unknown, which in the earlier verse is captured in the contrast between the personification of the boat as a travelling companion – 'With thee my bark, I'll swiftly go' (I. 10. 190) – and the lack of care about 'what land thou bear'st me to' (I. 10. 192). In Canto III the comparison is between the waves that are 'as a steed / That knows his rider' and the unknown

¹⁴ Alan Rawes, '1816-17: Childe Harold III and Manfred', in *The Cambridge Companion to Byron*, ed. by Drummond Bone (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 118-132 (p. 119). All subsequent references to this essay will be given parenthetically.

destination: ‘Swift be their guidance, wheresoe’er it lead!’. It is made clear that Canto III records a return to travel *and* a return to writing; and because of the allusion to Harold’s earlier journey into self-exile – ‘Welcome, welcome, ye dark-blue waves!’ (I. 10. 194) – the reader is invited to make an identification between Byron’s exile and that of his poetic creation. This identification is then furthered by the explicit reference Byron makes to that earlier moment of writing:

In my youth’s summer I did sing of One,
The wandering outlaw of his own dark mind;
Again I seize the theme then but begun,
And bear it with me, as the rushing wind
Bears the cloud onwards: (III. 3. 19-23)

The juxtaposition of Byron’s journey and the retrospective glance back to the past creation of Harold, emphasises again that the journey into forgetfulness might be happening in the present of the canto, but that it is also referencing a past experience of travel and a creative moment that cannot be fully recovered: ‘I *did* sing of One’. Byron’s attempt to ‘seize the theme’ of Harold’s exile indicates a desire to try and redeem his creation’s inability to harness the emancipating possibilities of travel. Yet when Byron looks back he does not find inspiration but ‘the furrows of long thought, and dried-up tears, / Which, ebbing, leave a sterile track behind’ (III. 3. 24-5). The image of the past as barrenness and nothingness implies that Byron needs to seek inspiration elsewhere or risk ‘Plod[ing] the last sands of life, – where not a flower appears’ (III. 3. 27). It seems that travel which looks back to the past rather than engaging with the “now” of the experience stunts the growth of the poet’s mind: ‘it may be, that in vain / I would essay as I have sung to sing’ (III. 4. 30-1).

The opening stanzas of Canto III mark the point at which Byron begins to negotiate the reality of his exile in poetic form. Although he cites the real circumstances of the separation scandal as the reason for his departure from England – positioning himself as the speaker of the poem in the process – the imitation of stanzas from the ‘Good Night!’ lyric also indicates a conflicting temptation to revisit the theme of exile through the figure of Harold. Looking back at this earlier moment of writing brings about the realisation that his current travels cannot be understood in relation to a past model of creativity, and that he needs to find a new means of expression to articulate his response to the landscapes of his exile. As his inscription on the boat shows, Byron is still responding spontaneously to travel just as he composed Cantos I-II on location. The difference in the first three stanzas of *Childe Harold III* is that the focus is already shifting toward a more personal poetic investment in the immediacy of experience. Byron’s understanding of that experience is inextricably tied up with his identity as a poet and, as the connection he begins to make between the “now” of the moment of writing and the growth of the poet’s mind indicates, the result is a poem that interrogates the workings of its own process.

First Draft Materiality and the Transition to Fair Copy

To understand the workings of the compositional process of Canto III, I want to turn now to examine the materiality of the first draft manuscript and the transition from first draft to fair copy. In particular, I want to think about the extent to which the condition of the manuscript is consistent with a writing practice linked to travel, how that practice affects the creative development of the canto and why Byron chooses to compose in the way that he does. This analysis will provide a crucial context for the final part of this chapter,

which will discuss three key located moments of writing: at Waterloo, in the Alps, and on the shores of Lac Léman. In terms of manuscript materials, I will concentrate primarily on the first draft held in the Murray Archive at the National Library of Scotland (*MS M*) and secondly on the fair copy of this manuscript in the Scrope Davies Notebook (*MS BM*).¹⁵ It is worth noting that although stanzas 1-3 and 115-118 were initially included in the first draft, they became detached and are now held separately at New York Public Library (*MS B*). The condition of these documents indicates that they were originally part of Byron's drafting process and, as such, I shall incorporate them in my discussion of the first draft manuscript.

The first draft of Canto III was in the possession of Augusta Leigh until she sent it to Byron's publisher, John Murray, in July 1832. On receiving the draft, Murray wrote to Leigh expressing his surprise at the striking physical condition of the manuscript:

You cannot conceive how much I am astonished at the way in which it is *obvious from the MSS* this magnificent Canto was written from actual moments of instantaneous inspiration, & at the very places wch it actually describes – the scraps of variously coloured paper – the writing in Pencil – all forcibly mark the Genius of the writer.¹⁶

Murray's emphasis accurately captures the distinctive materiality of the first draft, which is made up of forty-two individual leaves of various size, quality, colour and texture. There are small scraps that appear to be torn from a larger sheet; pages roughly two-thirds the size of A4 that look to be taken from a notebook; and A3-sized pieces that have been folded in half to make four-page booklets. Due to restoration work on the manuscript, it is

¹⁵ For a detailed summary of the different stages of the composition of Canto III see *BCPW*, pp. 297-9n.

¹⁶ National Library of Scotland, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage III* MS, fol. 1^r. The letter from Murray to Leigh is included in a manuscript bundle with the poem and the transcription given here is my own. The following analysis is also based on that MS.

difficult to tell exactly how many types of paper Byron used but the varying thickness, the different weave and the range of colour indicates that he wrote on whatever material was to hand at the time of composition. As paper was expensive and difficult to acquire, it is likely that Byron carried pieces with him rather than relying on obtaining it at the location. For the most part, he wrote on both sides of the paper and tried to draft the stanzas in sequential order. The first draft (*MS B* + *MS M*) contains all of the stanzas in the final version of the poem, with the exception of 67 and 88 which appear to have been written at the fair copy stage. The majority of the stanzas are numbered, but 33, 92-104, 110 and 113-114 remain unnumbered, most probably because Byron had not, at this stage, decided where to place them in the canto.

It seems likely that the number of leaves Byron had with him at the time of composition determined the style of entry on the page. If he had enough paper he continued stanzas on the overleaf or on another sheet, but if paper was in short supply he often finished stanzas by writing the final lines up the side of the page, by filling all of the margins on the page, or by writing the remaining part of a stanza across text he had already composed. There are also instances of whole stanzas being drafted on top of existing verses to keep a poetical unit together.¹⁷ In cases where it was necessary to draft a stanza out of order, for example if Byron needed to use the overleaf of a piece that only had text on one side or use a space on an existing page, he distinguished the new stanza from the earlier entry by writing it upside down to illustrate that it was out of sequence.¹⁸

¹⁷ See for example *MS M*, fol. 27^r. Stanza 57 was composed first and then stanza 56 was drafted on top in order to keep the poetical unit 56-57 together.

¹⁸ See for example *MS M*, fols 7^r-7^v. Stanza 6 was composed first and then stanzas 13 and 14 were composed upside down on the overleaf.

The variety of paper and entry is also matched by changes in writing materials and handwriting. Byron used a number of quills and wrote stanza 26 in pencil. The handwriting also alters across the course of the draft, ranging from subtle adjustments – the use of a thinner quill, slightly smaller handwriting – to more obvious variations, such as larger handwriting and sloped entry on the page. The changes in handwriting are not necessarily consistent with changes in paper, which means that both need to be taken into account when identifying which stanzas were composed as units.

Revisions to the text in the first draft were largely restricted to individual words or phrases and there is no major rewriting of any parts of the canto. The most revised stanzas in the first draft are 7, 20, 23 and 34-39, although the changes indicate problems finding the correct expression rather than a desire to alter the meaning and direction of the canto. On the whole, amendments were made in the same ink used during writing, suggesting that they were part of the first draft compositional process and not made at a later stage. In instances where Byron returned to the manuscript, the changes were again minor and included stanza renumbering and the alteration of individual words or phrases. Byron also included some notes in the manuscript relating to Waterloo and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, which were written in the same ink as the stanzas on those pages and probably composed at the same time. Of all the entries in the first draft only two are dated: the Drachenfels Lyric Byron wrote to Augusta and the first stanza of the storm sequence at Lac Léman.

As Murray's letter identifies, the condition of the first draft reflects Byron's attempt, not only to articulate spontaneously a poetic response to place but also to rely on those physically located moments of 'instantaneous inspiration' to develop the structure of the

canto. The different types of paper, entry, handwriting style and materials reveal that Byron's composition of the canto may have been more episodic than has previously been recognised. Depending on how we differentiate between separate compositional acts, combining *MS B* and *MS M* shows that over the course of the first draft process Byron could have engaged in as many as forty discrete acts of composition (see Appendix A at end of thesis). Recognising each of these acts is important because it means that the narrative of the canto was probably produced from short and self-contained moments of writing. In keeping with this, there seems to be no long-term vision of how the poem will develop, which is consistent with Byron responding creatively to the locations of his travels as he moved within certain places (Waterloo, Lac Léman), or from place to place (along the Rhine, through the Alps). The inclusion of notes and dates also adds to the sense that he wanted to record an immediate response to place.

The spontaneity of response, evident from the material condition of the manuscript, demonstrates not only how crucial the locations of Byron's travels were to the creative development of the canto but also that he was committed to recording the immediacy of his communion with place. Although Byron did plan his itinerary proactively in order to use certain locations as a stimulus for writing (as I will show later in my discussion of Waterloo), the presence of unnumbered stanzas in the draft suggests that he also took advantage of unexpected moments of inspiration. In some instances, the experience of place was reactive, coming before the structure of the poem, and he composed stanzas

without knowing how to integrate them into the canto.¹⁹ Byron's desire to retain the impression of his original engagement with place is also reflected in the integration of the composition and revision processes in the first draft. It appears that writing on the spot and *retaining* the power of that moment is crucial to the poetic project of Canto III.

Byron also seeks to preserve the power of the moment at the fair copy stage. In his fair copy manuscripts, Byron always dates and, quite often, locates the start and end point of writing. As I have already noted, we know from the Scrope Davies Notebook that Canto III was 'Copied in Ghent. April 28th' and 'Begun at Sea'.²⁰ 'Begun at Sea' must relate to the opening three stanzas of the poem, written between 25th-27th April, because Byron did not add anything further to the canto until 4th May. This means that he began transcribing into fair copy within days of first draft composition, knowing that a substantial amount of the poem was still to be written. It is likely that he continued this practice throughout the period of composition as the stanza numbers in the fair copy have been amended to make way for the inclusion of additional material written en-route.

The short gap between drafting and copying indicates that Byron must have been engaged in working on these two stages of the poem at the same time: he is writing original material and transcribing what he has already written. This dual process sets up a tension between creative certainty and uncertainty. On the one hand, Byron's transcription of the drafted stanzas into fair copy demonstrates a firm commitment to making these

¹⁹ See for example *MS M*, fols 38^r-41^r. The storm sequence stanzas (92-104) remain unnumbered in the first draft suggesting that, at the compositional stage, Byron had not yet decided where to place them in the canto.

²⁰ *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage Canto III: A Facsimile of the Autograph Fair Copy found in the 'Scrope Davies' Notebook*, p.5.

spontaneous responses to travel part of the final piece (and all of them are); while on the other he is reliant on the future locations he visits to provide material for the rest of the poem. Excepting the addition of stanzas and notes to the fair copy as his travels progress, there is very little revision to existing text and, as in the first draft, where changes have been made they tend to be restricted to words or phrases rather than major rewriting. This lack of revision and the close proximity of the draft and fair copy stages is in keeping with Byron's desire to retain both the immediacy of the original moment of writing and the vital connection between the compositional act and travel. As Thompson notes, 'there is a refusal to step back from the immediacy of the traveller's initial thoughts and moods, in keeping with Byron's sensationalism' (p. 240). In Canto III Byron's desire 'to feel that we exist – even though in pain' is tied in with the way in which he composes and revises the narrative of his exile.

A New Creative Manifesto

Why is developing and maintaining a spontaneous creative practice so important to Byron and what does it tell us about his attitude to poetry and travel in the immediate aftermath of his exile? Byron provides the answer to this question in stanza 6, in which he outlines his creative manifesto for the canto:

'Tis to create and in creating live
 A being more intense, that we endow
 With form our fancy, gaining as we give
 The life we image, even as I do now.
 What am I? Nothing; but not so art thou,
 Soul of my thought! with whom I traverse earth,
 Invisible but gazing, as I glow
 Mix'd with thy spirit, blended with thy birth,

And feeling still with thee in my crush'd feelings' dearth. (III. 6. 46-54)

Rawes suggests that 'to imagine is to "gain" a "life" that is not our own. To "create" is to be animated by – "blended with" – the "life" of a "soul" or "spirit" that is not the self. And to be blended with the "birth" of that spirit [...] is what Byron is looking for' (p. 120). Byron's aim, then, is not simply to 'create', but to 'live' another version of himself – 'A being more intense' – through the composition of the poem. The connection between travel and writing is rendered explicit in the reference to 'Soul of my thought – with whom I traverse earth'. Journeying is identified as being crucial to Byron's attempt to 'live' the creative process because this living is achieved by fusing the stimuli of travel and the poetic response. The 'Soul of my thought!' is the vital link in this chain because its imaginative existence as travelling companion enables Byron to become, through the act of composition, something other than the nothingness he feels. There is an obvious allusion to 'the demon, Thought!' that plagues Harold throughout the first two cantos and, again, there are connotations of the uncanny double, or other, accompanying the exiled traveller on his journey. The key difference here is that the presence of another self is positive because it is the locus of inspiration which enables Byron to write.

The imaginative moment that Rawes identifies is given 'form' when that locus of inspiration becomes textualised or, to put it another way, when the 'life we image' is inscribed as words on the page. The poet gains this life at the time of inscription which suggests that writing is the most significant stage in the process. This is further emphasised when Byron self-consciously draws attention to himself as the originating poet. As Michael O'Neill argues, "'even as I do now" demands to be read as referring to

the moment of composition [...]; the implication is that the lines we are reading do not just talk about, but are living instances of what it is to create'.²¹ The lines bear witness to their own coming-into-being but, just as importantly, they also stress the spontaneity of the compositional act. The creative moment is happening 'now', which means that the poetic utterance must reflect an immediate communion of thought and writing. It is precisely such a communion that is apparent throughout the first draft, the materiality of which imitates Byron's desire to bind together lived experience and creativity by capturing the immediacy of that moment on the manuscript page.

In fact the draft of stanza 6 (fig. 4.1) supports O'Neill's argument that the lines are 'living instances of what it is to create' because it is possible to see the creative process that Byron articulates in the stanza in the very process of being articulated:

'Tis to [?] create and in creating live
 brighter
 A ~~better~~ being – and a that we [?then] endow
 ^ ^
 as we
 With form [?] our fancies – and in gaining [?] give
 ^
 The
 A life [?to] we image – even as I do now –
 ^
 What am I! – nothing – but not so art thou
 Soul of my thought – with whom I traverse earth
 [?Unheeding?Unfeeling]
 [?Forgetful] of
 ^
 Headless of [?loveless?homeless] hope
 [?] though gazing
 Invisible but [?seeing] – as I glow
 ^
 Mixed with thy Spirit – blended with thy birth

²¹ Michael O'Neill, *Romanticism and the Self-Conscious Poem* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), p. 114.

And feeling still with thee – in my own feelings' dearth ²²

According to Rawes, 'imaginative creativity' is one of the activities Byron undertakes in Canto III to experiment 'with his own ability to distract himself from memory' (p. 119). It is significant, then, that in the most revised section of the manuscript page (the three lines following the introduction of the 'Soul of my thought') Byron seems to be attempting to articulate the characteristics of his doppelganger and it is this articulation that causes him the most creative difficulty. Although these lines are heavily crossed out, it is possible to develop a potential reconstruction of the original wording. The reconstruction (given above) shows that Byron might be attributing the capacity for forgetfulness and thoughtlessness to the 'Soul of my thought'; as if it is this other that embodies the distraction from memory that Rawes identifies, and which Byron himself craves at the beginning of the canto. Crucially, however, these lines are erased and do not make it beyond the first draft manuscript. In an important turn in the meaning of the stanza, they are substituted instead with a clear statement of Byronic sensationalism: 'And feeling still with thee – in my own feelings' dearth'. It is the memory of past pain 'blended' with the new beginnings ('birth') of inspiration that signals creative recovery and not forgetting. As an extension of this, what Byron seems to be saying is that Canto III is about poetry, and about finding a way of writing poetry when the creative self has been fundamentally altered by circumstance – in his case by exile.

²² *MS M*, fol. 7^v. All of the transcriptions are mine and are taken directly from the MS. Subsequent references to the MS will be given parenthetically in the abbreviated form *MS M*.

Figure 4.1: *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage III*, Stanza 6 (MS M, fol. 7^v)

1.8
 1.9 to ~~see~~ create. and in creating live
 A ~~lightning~~ ^{lightning} - ~~and that~~ ^{that} ~~has~~ ^{has} ~~end~~ ^{end}
 All form ~~the~~ ^{our} fancies ~~and~~ ^{as we} gaining ~~to~~ ^{to} give
 A life to us wings - ~~and~~ ^{and} I be now -
 What an ~~!?~~ ^{!?} nothing - but not ~~we~~ ^{we} ~~are~~ ^{are}
 But of my thought with whom I traverse earth
~~Myself~~ ^{Myself}
~~And of my own hope~~
~~Invisible~~ ^{Invisible} ~~to~~ ^{to} ~~me~~ ^{me} ~~as~~ ^{as} ~~glow~~ ^{glow}
~~Which~~ ^{Which} with thy spirit - ~~bleed~~ ^{bleed} with thy birth -
 And feeling all with thee - in my own feeling, 'death'

On the Spot Writing (i): Waterloo

Throughout the canto Byron is constantly re-evaluating and re-defining what it means to ‘live’ the creative process and, as the materiality of the manuscript indicates, he is doing so moment by moment in response to the changing landscape. As I have already suggested, Byron deliberately structures his itinerary to incorporate places that he knows will stimulate his creativity. Of these places, the field of Waterloo is one of the most important. The first draft manuscript indicates that, during his tour of the battlefield, he engaged in as many as ten separate acts of composition (see Appendix A), producing an impressive total of 26 stanzas over the course of the day – including his outline for the creative manifesto for the canto in stanza 6. Considering that Byron spent much of his time viewing places of interest, the writing of so many stanzas stands as a testimony to the imaginative power of the place: a power that is linked with the historical and literary significance of Waterloo.²³

In *Napoleon and English Romanticism*, Simon Bainbridge offers a detailed account of the historical and literary background to the battle of Waterloo, which he describes as ‘a landmark in the political and imaginative landscape of British Romanticism’.²⁴ Napoleon’s defeat marked the end of more than two decades of European unrest, which began with the French Revolution in 1789, and ended with battles at Ligny and Quatre-Bras on 16th June and at Waterloo and Wavre on 18th June, 1815. As Bainbridge shows,

²³ For a contemporary account of Byron’s visit to Waterloo see John William Polidori, *The Diary of Dr John William Polidori 1816: Relating to Byron, Shelley etc.*, ed. by William Michael Rossetti (Pennsylvania: Folcroft Library Editions, 1975), pp. 61-9.

²⁴ Simon Bainbridge, *Napoleon and English Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 153. All subsequent references to this text will be given parenthetically.

the victory at Waterloo ‘prompted an extraordinary explosion of writing on the subject’, ranging from the highly exaggerated press accounts of the British Army’s role in the conquest to the publication of hundreds of poems (pp. 154-155). For the most part, the poems were formulaic and structured around ‘the matter of Waterloo’:

A poem on Waterloo was clearly expected to be a “celebration” and a “tribute”, its martial tones perhaps softened by a note of elegy. By its very nature it would be an expression of a “patriotic impulse”. The majority of the works on the subject shared certain features; features that were expected by the reading public. There was a definite “matter of Waterloo” in these works; an agenda that was political rather than aesthetic. (p. 157)

Poetry on the subject of Waterloo was required to follow stringent political guidelines and every writer had to be ‘aware of the cultural context in which he was working; of other versions of his chosen subject and other celebrations of the scene he intended to celebrate’ (Bainbridge, p. 155). To write a poem on Waterloo was to write under a specific set of compositional circumstances, which demanded an explicit awareness of contemporary reader-consciousness and the intertextual locating of the work within the other, enthusiastically patriotic, discourses on the battle. As it was difficult to develop an individual and authoritative voice within this sea of poetic accounts, some writers chose to undertake a literary pilgrimage to the site as a means of authenticating their creative responses to the British victory. Of these writers, Walter Scott was the first major literary figure to make the journey in August 1815 with his resulting poem, *The Field of Waterloo*, published early in 1816. Following in the footsteps of Scott, Robert Southey also went to Waterloo in October 1815. What Southey’s and Scott’s journeys to Waterloo have in common is that both poets planned their visits to the battlefield with the specific intention of writing a publicly acceptable patriotic set-piece and, in the process, of writing

themselves into the narrative of, what Southey termed, ‘the greatest victory in British history’ (quoted in Bainbridge, p. 156).

Byron’s visit to the site of the battle on 4th May 1816 needs to be understood in relation to how it differs from this political and literary ‘matter of Waterloo’. In contrast to Scott and Southey, Byron’s prevailing attitude to the warfare was not that the victory should be celebrated as a moment of radical political overthrow but that it had changed nothing: ‘Every hope of a republic is over, and we must go on under the old system [...] I am sick at heart of politics and slaughters’ (*BLJ*, IV, p. 302). In the same letter, Byron is equally scathing about the distorted accounts of the British role in the conquest, ironically noting that Wellington ‘may thank the Russian frosts, which destroyed the *real élite* of the French army, for the successes of Waterloo’ (*BLJ*, IV, p. 302). As these comments show, Byron’s views on the British victory do not chime with the triumphant patriotism that is a hallmark of so many other accounts of the battle. This anti-establishment and even anti-British attitude is also evident in Byron’s decision to travel in an extravagant carriage modelled on the Napoleonic coach – ‘including sleeping quarters, dining quarters, library, and a little perambulating zoo with birds, peacocks, a dog and a monkey’²⁵ – identifying with the notorious emperor as a means of branding himself as a fellow exile and symbolically renouncing any political affiliation with England. Although Byron did not make the actual trip to Waterloo in his Napoleonic carriage (it was being repaired), as Bainbridge suggests it is ‘the place where his identification with Napoleon [is] at its closest’ (p. 153). The Byron who visits the battlefield is a Napoleonic Byron a ‘spirit

²⁵ Feifer, *Going Places*, p. 142.

antithetically mixt' (III. 36. 317) and one determined to launch a literary assault on the 'matter of Waterloo'.

There is no evidence to suggest that Byron had read Southey's *Poet's Pilgrimage* by the time of his visit, but he was definitely familiar with *The Field of Waterloo* which he had read in the presence of Scott whilst in England (Bainbridge, p. 156). Byron's writing at Waterloo thus seems to be stimulated by imaginative conflict, and by a desire to contest and un-write the dominant ideological significance of the location found in the verses of his contemporaries. An integral part of this is a strong desire to engage with a negative view of English politics and writing; specifically in order to creatively redefine his role as a poet in exile in opposition to those discourses. One of the key ways that he seeks to articulate this redefinition is by pitching his poetic response against the elegiac tradition of Waterloo poetry in general and that of Walter Scott specifically. In a material embodiment of his challenge to Scott, Byron copied two of the Waterloo stanzas from *Childe Harold III* into an album belonging to Mrs Pryse Gordon, the wife of his guide around the battlefield. Pryse Gordon had also been Scott's guide around Waterloo and Scott had transcribed some of his stanzas from *The Field of Waterloo* into the same album. As well as pitching his response to Waterloo against Scott in this unpublished textual space, Byron also engages publicly with Scott's verse in Canto III.²⁶

²⁶ For contemporary accounts of Byron writing in the Pryse Gordon album see Pryse Lockhart Gordon, *Reminiscences of Men and Manners At Home and Abroad During the Last Half of the Century*, 2 vols (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1830), II, pp. 325-7; and *The Diary of Dr John William Polidori*, pp. 70-1.

In *The Field of Waterloo*, Scott spends five stanzas commemorating those who lost their lives, the tone of which is captured in this verse:

Forgive, brave Dead, the imperfect lay!
 Who may your names, your numbers, say?
 What high-strung harp, what lofty line,
 To each the dear-earn'd praise assign,
 From high-born chiefs of martial fame
 To the poor soldier's lowlier name?²⁷

By imaginatively inscribing the memory of the war dead onto the battlefield, Scott's poetic epitaph stands as a textual monument to all of those who were killed and, in a nod to posterity, grants the poet the right to claim his own place in the narrative of the conquest. In *Childe Harold III*, Byron acknowledges Scott's contribution in an allusion to *The Field* by echoing 'What high-strung harp, what lofty line' with 'Their praise is hymn'd by loftier harps than mine' (III. 29. 253). Initially, it appears as if Byron is paying tribute to the power of Scott's verses but, in his version of an elegy that follows, it is revealed to be an ironic reference to the questionable motives behind the 'matter of Waterloo' and its failure to truly engage with the significance of the location:

Yet one I would select from that proud throng,
 Partly because they blend me with his line,
 And partly that I did his sire some wrong,
 And partly that bright names will hallow song; (III. 29. 254-7)

The individual Byron selects is Fredrick Howard, a cousin of his who was killed in the battle and whose temporary grave he visited during his tour. Byron does not claim a special relationship with Howard, and even admits that he was not close to him on

²⁷ Walter Scott, 'The Field of Waterloo', in *Poetical Works*, ed. by J. Logie Robertson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1904), pp. 619-629 (p. 625, XXII). All subsequent references to this edition will be given parenthetically.

account of an earlier disagreement with his 'sire', Lord Carlisle. Then, in a swipe at his poetic contemporaries, he acknowledges a purely cynical reason for writing the eulogy: 'bright names will hallow song'. Byron's poem has more chance of achieving posterity if it functions as a monument to the men who died, however tenuous his connection with those men might be. By self-consciously drawing attention to the fact that writing on Waterloo is as much about trying to achieve poetic posterity as it is about the battle, Byron suggests that the celebrated textual "monuments" of other poets, like the monuments that will eventually be erected on the battlefield, are nothing more than empty gestures. Byron then goes on to reiterate this point in stanza 17:

There have been tears and breaking hearts for thee,
And mine were nothing, had I such to give;
But when I stood beneath the fresh green tree,
Which living waves where thou didst cease to live,
And saw around me the wide field revive
With fruits and fertile promise, and the Spring
Come forth her work of gladness to contrive,
With all her reckless birds upon the wing,
I turn'd from all she brought to those she could not bring. (III. 30. 262-70)

Byron's Waterloo is entirely different to Scott's 'sad Field! whose blighted face / Wears desolation's withering trace' (p. 626, XXIII). The renewal of the landscape disguises the events that have taken place and Spring is made to function as a poignant reminder of ongoing life in the face of death. The condition of the site does not bear witness to the horrors that have taken place there: 'As the ground was before, thus let it be; – / Now that red rain hath made the harvest grow!' (III. 17. 150-51). For Byron, the recognition that others will have grieved for Howard in a way that he cannot, attests to the sincerity of his reaction to the scene and ultimately gives way to a more profoundly personal realisation about the significance of Waterloo. The turn comes in the third line of the stanza when

Figure 4.2: Childe Harold's Pilgrimage III, Stanza 30 (MS M, fol. 12^v-13^v)

It can't be covered with a day
What we can say - what we find -
Finds - & here - mind - be - as one and David's (it)
~~There's more in the world~~ ^{There's more in the world} ~~than we can say~~ ^{than we can say}
~~and hence the poet -~~ ^{and hence the poet -} ~~is not~~ ^{is not} ~~the same~~ ^{the same}
That we of poets select from the world's song -
Fluffy measure they measure to the line -
As long as it will be - as long as it will be -
But - ~~nothing~~ ^{nothing} ~~that~~ ^{that} ~~we~~ ^{we} ~~can~~ ^{can} ~~say~~ ^{say} -
As ~~there~~ ^{there} ~~is~~ ^{is} ~~of the heart~~ ^{of the heart} ~~and when~~ ^{and when} ~~we~~ ^{we} ~~know~~ ^{know}
We certainly understand the kind of thing
When we the heart of the world in our hand -
But we would be well - ~~as~~ ^{as} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~same~~ ^{same} ~~as~~ ^{as} ~~you~~ ^{you} ~~shall~~ ^{shall}
Harold

It can't be covered with a day
What we can say - what we find -
Finds - & here - mind - be - as one and David's (it)
~~There's more in the world~~ ^{There's more in the world} ~~than we can say~~ ^{than we can say}
~~and hence the poet -~~ ^{and hence the poet -} ~~is not~~ ^{is not} ~~the same~~ ^{the same}
That we of poets select from the world's song -
Fluffy measure they measure to the line -
As long as it will be - as long as it will be -
But - ~~nothing~~ ^{nothing} ~~that~~ ^{that} ~~we~~ ^{we} ~~can~~ ^{can} ~~say~~ ^{say} -
As ~~there~~ ^{there} ~~is~~ ^{is} ~~of the heart~~ ^{of the heart} ~~and when~~ ^{and when} ~~we~~ ^{we} ~~know~~ ^{know}
We certainly understand the kind of thing
When we the heart of the world in our hand -
But we would be well - ~~as~~ ^{as} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~same~~ ^{same} ~~as~~ ^{as} ~~you~~ ^{you} ~~shall~~ ^{shall}
Harold

This is the final stanza that Byron writes on the day of his visit to Waterloo and it is composed as part of a poetical unit that also contains stanzas 27-29 and a prose note on the battlefield. All of this material is drafted on a larger leaf that has been folded into a four-sided booklet and the handwriting is consistent throughout, suggesting that the stanzas and the note were written at the same time. Byron's revisions to this stanza, all made during the initial writing process, reflect his attempt to capture his poetic response to the scene. He experiments with 'sheltering', 'tall' and 'beauteous' before settling on 'fresh green' as the adjective for the tree. 'Sheltering' has connotations of comfort and protection; while 'tall' and 'beauteous' are purely descriptive terms without any emotive referent. The substitution of these words with 'fresh green', which connotes new life, creates a stronger contrast between the striking vitality of the tree and the sombre spot that it unknowingly marks, ironically juxtaposing the rejuvenation of nature with the death of Howard. This contrast is then reiterated in the change that Byron makes to the next line, where he substitutes 'living waves' for 'still it waves' in order to stress the excess of life at the place where Howard 'didst cease to live' – the alteration emphasises the two very different contexts in which 'living' and 'live' are being used. Byron also experiments with different orderings of the phrases 'With all its reckless birds upon the wing'; 'With fruits and fertile promise'; and 'Doing its work of gladness' in an attempt to emphasise the effect of the Spring's renewal on a *genius loci* infused with historical significance. These alterations to the stanza all work to enhance the fissure between the appearance of the scene and the tragedy that has taken place there. Unlike Scott, who embellishes the landscape so that the field wears the visual scars of the battle, the impact for Byron is to be found in the ironic juxtaposition between the natural cycle of the recovery of the land and the absolute end of human lives upon that ground.

In fact the impact of this experience is so powerful that Byron turns away from the Spring landscape and, metaphorically, looks back toward the past:

~~My soul thought back to those –~~
 turned from to
 I ~~hated~~ all it brought – ~~for~~ those it could not bring. —
 ^ ^

The erased phrases and words are, perhaps, more revealing than those that survive because they illustrate that Byron is blending the tragedy of the lost lives at Waterloo with his own sense of grief and loss: he is inscribing his personal history onto the landscape. The initial utterance ‘my soul thought back to those’ has echoes of the earlier reference to ‘Soul of my thought!’, again connecting a harnessing or remembering of past pain with his current creative process. This connection implies that Byron is thinking ‘back’ either to the people who exile has forced him to leave behind or to loved ones who have died: ‘I turned from all it brought – to those it could not bring’. The original use of ‘hated’ in the final line of the draft stanza emphasises that Byron’s immediate reaction is emotive and personal and, although he substitutes this with the softer non-emotive ‘turned’, there is still a sense that the creative process is enabling him to reconnect with his past and to transform the pain of loss into a stimulus for writing poetry.

Indeed the draft of stanza 30 illustrates Byron’s desire to respond spontaneously and in a more “authentic” way to the *genius loci* of Waterloo. The inclusion of the note on the bottom half of the manuscript page, which also contains the last six lines of this stanza, adds to this sense of authenticity by explicitly connecting the poetic expression with a prose description of the exact location where Howard died (fig. 4.3):

+ My guide from Mont St Jean – over the field – was in =
= telligent & seemed accurate; – the place where Major Howard
fell was not far from two tall & solitary trees / there
had been a third lately cut down / which stand a few yards
by the
from each other next to a pathway [?] side – beneath these he

[end of manuscript page]

died & was buried – the body has since been moved to
for the present probably
England – a small hollow marks where it lay, but will soon
be effaced. – The Guide told me that he was near him
the different place spots
where after he was wounded – and pointed out where Picton
and many other gallant men who perished. — — He
he
mentioned Major Howard's name among the first [?] having
the
been near him – and when [?] I told him that th Major
was my relative – seemed anxious to point out the par =
= ticular spot – & circumstances – the place is one of the
from
most marked in the field – by the peculiarity of the
two trees above mentioned. (MS M, fols 13^r-13^v)

This is the first note to appear in the draft manuscript and, although it is separated from the poetic stanza by a horizontal line drawn across the page, its presence on that page suggests that it functions *not* at a merely subsidiary level of explanation – as we might suppose from reading the published work – but as an important part of the writing process. The note is another recording of Byron's response to his physical presence at the field of Waterloo and it further reflects a desire to capture the essence of that particular place on the battlefield. The detailed description of exactly where Howard's body is initially laid to rest attempts to connect actual, historical happening (textualised in prose) directly with its poetic counterpart in a way which suggests that the two complement one

Figure 4.3: *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage III*, Waterloo Note (*MS M*, fol. 13^r-13^v)

[illegible]

about a new friend. He told me since I was married, I
 had a small business nearly where it is now, but
 he said the little one that he was now in
 when he was married - at first it was
 and ~~many~~ the rest was the same.
 was not long back when I was
 he was then, and when I had the
 in my relative - some saying to him, it is
 a whole lot - a business - his name is
 and would as the first - by the same name
 but this was confirmed.

another. In the poem, Howard is one of ‘thousands, of whom each / And one as all a ghastly gap did make’ (III. 31. 271-272) and, as Philip Shaw observes, ‘he leaves behind a “hollow”, a “gap” that no amount of public rhetoric [...] can fulfil’. Shaw goes on to suggest that, ‘heroic death and poetic exile enter into an uneasy relationship as if the poet is using the declivity expressed in the field by Howard’s body to locate his own, embittered sense of the costs of literary fame’.²⁸ There is a relationship here between ‘heroic death and poetic exile’ but, as the revisions to the draft manuscript indicate, it seems to be less about ‘the costs of literary fame’ and more about the psychological complexities of Byron’s immediate poetic response to Waterloo. Outwardly, Byron is memorialising the fallen war dead but what gives his memorial so much power is his inward battle with the personal losses that are driving his creativity. This shift from place to self marks the point at which Byron’s conflict is no longer with other writers but with himself. The critique of the failure of the ‘matter of Waterloo’ becomes a questioning of his own poetic practices as his spontaneous on the spot composition and authentication of the act of composition become the means through which he attempts to ‘live’ the creative process by writing his despair: ‘There is a *very life* in our despair’ (III. 34. 298, emphasis mine). Again, Byronic sensationalism overcomes the desire to forget.

On the Spot Writing (ii): The Alps

I want to turn now to look at another example of Byron’s on the spot composition in which he continues to redefine what it means to ‘live’ the creative process but finds an alternative stimulus to the despair that was driving his poetic writing at Waterloo. Again,

²⁸ Philip Shaw, *Waterloo and the Romantic Imagination* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 189.

there seems to be a deliberate connection between his travel itinerary and compositional practices as he leaves the peopled, historical landscapes of Waterloo behind in order to experiment with the stimuli afforded by the natural sublimity of the Alps. In the first draft manuscript, the key Alpine stanzas (72-76) are all composed on a single leaf, which is roughly two-thirds the size of A4 and looks to have been torn from a larger sheet of paper (fig. 4.4). Byron's handwriting is neat but the leaf is relatively complex because of the amount of stanzas it contains and the over-writing that is a feature of both sides. Stanza 72 is written down the first side of the leaf and the first seven lines of 73 are written underneath. The unnumbered stanza 75 is written across the right-hand side of the page crossing over the top of 72 and 73. Overleaf, the remaining lines of 73 are at the top of the page, while underneath is the whole of 74 and then the first four lines of 76. The remainder of 76 is written across the right hand side of the leaf over parts of 73, 74 and 76. Consistencies in the handwriting and ink indicate that 72-74 and 76 were all composed at the same time, with the cross-writing of the final lines of 76 suggesting that Byron may have only had this one sheet of paper with him at the time of composition. Stanza 75 is in similar handwriting to 72-74 and 76 but the ink looks darker in places, so it may have been added at another compositional sitting. As is the case in the rest of the manuscript, revisions look to have been made at the time of writing.

With the exception of 76 all the stanzas on this leaf attempt to articulate what it means to 'live' the creative process (the following stanza is located at the top of 32^r):

I [~~?breath~~] live not in myself but I become
 Portion of that around me and to me
 High
 These mountains are a feeling – but the hum
 ^

Of peopled cities torture – I can see
 Nothing to loth in Nature – but to be
 A ^{fleshly}
 Thus a [?link] reluctant in a [^{living}] chain
 ^
 Oh! – Could I [^{breath[e]}] [^{and}] [[?]] [^{unmingled}] [^{by}]
 I would be
 Classing with creatures – when the soul can flee
 with ^{cliff peak}
 And in the air the ^{mount} – the heaving plain
 ^ ^
 Of Ocean – or the stars mingle [and] & not in vain. – (*MS M*, fol. 32^r)

There are echoes here of Harold's search for natural solace in Cantos I-II. However, the effect is not a repetition of that earlier model of poetic engagement with the landscape but rather a juxtaposition, emphasising that Byron is seeking a communion with the natural world which goes far beyond what his errant protagonist was capable of achieving. The substitution of 'live' for 'breath[e]' in the draft, explicitly links back to Byron's earlier desire to 'live' the creative process in stanza 6. What is different at this stage in the canto is that to become a 'being more intense' Byron must fuse the individual mind with the natural world during the creative act: a fusion which requires composition on location in the Alps. The temporary escape from the physical self – 'I [^{breath}] live not in myself' – marks the birth of a transcendental self: 'I become / Portion of that around me'. In this context, the replacement of 'living' with 'fleshly' in the reference to being 'a [?link] reluctant in a [^{living}/fleshly] chain' is significant because, for Byron, to be confined in human form is not to live but to half-exist. As the following lines make clear, it is through the union of the imagination and the landscape that 'living' in the Byronic sense can be achieved: the poet's 'soul can flee' and 'mingle' with 'the air the [^{mount}/cliff/peak] – the heaving plain / Of Ocean'. As Vincent Newey notes, 'Byron commits himself

[illegible][illegible]

Figure 4.4: *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage III*, Stanzas 72-76 (*MS M*, fol. 32^r-32^v)

progressively to the extinction of any self prior to the word and the image'.²⁹ Byron can only truly connect with the 'Soul of my thought' in a moment of Romantic self-abandonment, which occurs at a point during the compositional process when engagement with nature enables the imagination to override the conscious mind.

It seems to be this self-abandonment that enables Byron to begin to leave behind the pain of exile, which was still driving his creative process at Waterloo (the following stanza begins 2/3 of the way down 32^r and is continued at the top of 32^v):

And thus I am absorbed – & this is life –
 I look upon the peopled desert past –
 As on a place of agony & strife
 for [~~happier~~]
 Where ~~from~~ some brighter being I was cast
 sin to sorrow
 [?]] & suffer
 To [~~battle~~] [~~?~~] but remount at last
 With a fresh pinion – & I feel it [?]]
 yet [~~growing~~] vigorously
 yet unequal to the blast
 Though young in feather? [?] [?] on the blast

[end of manuscript page]

of Which it shall cope with on
 Still [~~with~~] [~~a~~] [~~growing~~] & delighted wing –
 ^ ^
 Spurning
 Leaving the clay cold bonds which partly round me cling. – (MS M, fols 32^r-32^v)
 ^

The positive affirmation – 'And thus I am absorbed – & this is life' – suggests that Byron has achieved the fusion of his imagination with the external world; and that he is, at this very moment of writing, living his new creative process. As a result, a new distance and

²⁹ Vincent Newey, 'Authoring the Self: *Childe Harold* III and IV', in *Byron and the Limits of Fiction*, ed. by Bernard Beatty and Vincent Newey (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1988), pp. 148-190 (p. 157).

perspective is established between the ecstasy of momentary absorption and the agony of the past: 'I look upon the peopled desert past – / As on a place of agony and strife'. The paradoxical construction of a 'peopled desert', which is suggestive of being alone and yet part of a crowd, again evokes the negative solitude of the earlier cantos – 'midst the crowd, the hum, the shock of men [...] This is to be alone; this, this is solitude!' (II. 26. 226-234). Byron establishes an implicit link with Harold's exile and then explicitly relates it to his own expulsion from England: 'Where from some ~~brighter being~~ I was cast'. This image of casting out is consistent with exile as a banishment from God found in the biblical narratives of Lucifer and Cain. The cancellation of 'brighter being' and its replacement with 'sin to sorrow' lessens these religious connotations, but it also suggests that Byron may have had stanza 6 in mind when correcting the line. Byron uses the original phrase in the draft of that stanza: "'Tis to [?] create and in creating live / A [~~better~~/brighter] being'. The 'brighter being' in this context is Byron's new creative self which, in terms of the development of the canto, he cannot also associate with his past exiled self. This is especially important in stanza 73, which records Byron looking back at the 'agony and strife' of the 'past' and harnessing it to instigate a process of creative self-renewal. Like the phoenix rising from the flames, Byron hopes to be able to 'remount at last / With a fresh pinion' and to spurn the 'clay cold bonds', which hamper the imaginative transcendence that he is seeking.

Although stanzas 72 and 73 seem to be about the vitality of an imaginative life – of living the creative process – Byron recognises that the experience can only be transitory. The metaphysical and holistic blending of 'the bodiless thought' and 'the Spirit of each spot' (III. 74. 705) is something he can only share in 'at times' (III. 74. 706). In another

paradox, he suggests that it is only in death that he can permanently achieve the life he desires: ‘When elements to elements conform, / And dust is as it should be, shall I not / Feel all I see’ (III. 74. 702-4). Byron reaches an impasse as he realises that his creative drive has become a death drive. Significantly, it is at this moment of realisation in the first draft manuscript that Byron initiates an abrupt change of direction: ‘But this is not a theme – I must return / [?] To that which is immediate’ (*MS M*, fol. 32^v).³⁰ Despite Byron’s initial determination to move away from the ‘theme’, he does return to this section of the canto during the drafting process and adds stanza 75 (at a right angle to the base text on 32^r) to the unit containing 72-74 and 76:

~~mountains, waves & skies~~
 Are not the ~~waters and the [?skies]~~ a part –
 universe [?a] [?breathing]
 Of me and of my soul ~~and~~ as I of ^{them} ~~them~~ –
 Is not the love of these deep in my heart
 With a
~~Purer than~~ pure passion – should I not contemn
 All objects if compared with these – and stem
 A tide of suffering to ~~behold once [?—]~~
 rather than forego
 The birth place of my Spirit—
 My Spirit’s [?birth] place—
 [?This] And change these feelings for the worldly phlegm
 Of those whose eyes are only turned below
 And gaze upon the ground – with sordid thoughts & slow (*MS M*, fol. 32^r)

There is a reassertion of the power of being here. In an un-writing of the previous stanza, Byron acknowledges that his interaction with nature is a two-way process which depends on his existence. The reference to ‘my soul’ links back again to ‘Soul of my thought’, emphasising that it is the imaginative act which not only essentially connects Byron with

³⁰ The stanzas that follow the change of direction are focused on Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who will be discussed in relation to Byron and Shelley in Chapter Five, pp. 229-245.

the natural world but also makes the natural world a part of him. What he seems to be recognising retrospectively, as William Wordsworth does in 'Tintern Abbey', is that his mind partially creates the landscape that it perceives so, in a sense, the 'universe' on the page is quite literally a part of him.³¹ Although the lines 'The birth place of my Spirit – / My Spirit's [?birth] place' are erased, they echo the earlier 'Mixed with thy Spirit – blended with thy birth' of stanza 6. What Byron seems to be suggesting, even if he subsequently rejects the lines, is that the Alps is the place where his poetic spirit is reborn; and where, by opting for a brand of sensationalism that rejects the pain of the past in favour of the immediacy of a natural experience, he begins to realise the creative project of the canto.

On the Spot Writing (iii): The Storm Sequence

It is important not to award too much significance to the moment of creative realisation that occurs in the Alps. As McGann reminds us 'Byron's absorption into a sense of nature's transcendental process is not a culminating or defining event, it is one experience among many'.³² The coming together of place, imagination and poetic language in the Alps is not the end of Byron's creative journey, and the environments of his travels continue to raise questions about his writing process in exile. In particular, it is Byron's response to a storm over Lac Léman which, as McGann suggests, most accurately

³¹ 'Of all that we behold / From this green earth; of all the mighty world / Of eye and ear, both what they half-create, / and what perceive'. William Wordsworth, 'Tintern Abbey' in *Lyrical Ballads and Other Poems*, ed. by James Butler and Karen Green (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1992), pp. 116-120 (p. 119, lines 105-108).

³² Jerome McGann, *Byron and Romanticism*, ed. by James Soderholm (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 176.

demonstrates ‘the poet’s persisting sense of inquietude’.³³ This more transitory moment of on the spot composition reveals just how vital the immediacy of experience is to the ideas that Byron expresses in *Childe Harold III*.

As if registering a literal ‘sense of inquietude’, this section of the canto stands out in the first draft manuscript because of its materiality and because, along with the Drachenfels lyric, it is the only part of the draft to be dated. Stanzas 92-98 are written on four leaves that are roughly A5 in size and which look to have been torn from a small notebook. Each side of each leaf contains only one stanza: 92 and 93 are on the first leaf; 94 and 95 on the second; 96 and 97 on the third; and 98 on the fourth with a blank page overleaf. With the exception of 92 and 93, which are entered portrait-style on the page, all of the other stanzas are written landscape-style across the page. Stanzas 92-97 appear to have been written in one compositional sitting. The ink is consistent and the handwriting is messy and spaced out, which suggests that writing occurred in a hurry. Byron’s decision to date the beginning of the storm sequence – ‘June 12th 1816’ appears in the top right-hand corner of the page containing stanza 92 – specifically locates the day of composition, most probably indicating that Byron is writing as he witnesses the storm. On the spot composition would also account for the state of the handwriting and for the fact that the stanzas are unnumbered at this stage – as they are composed spontaneously Byron does not yet know where to place them in the structure of the canto.³⁴ Above all, the use of the core image of word as ‘lightning’ may be a literal “flash” of inspiration which Byron

³³ McGann, *Fiery Dust*, p. 119.

³⁴ Stanza 98, which begins ‘The Morn is up again – the dewy Morn’ (*MS M*, fol. 41’) is composed in much smaller, neater handwriting and is almost certainly written at a different time to 94-97, most probably, as its content indicates, the day after the storm.

harnesses as he watches the storm or, to put it another way, what is written on the manuscript page is a direct representation of the external phenomena Byron is experiencing as he engages in the act of composition.

An affinity between materiality, content and event certainly seems to be more acute in the storm sequence draft than anywhere else in the manuscript as the intense composition of 94-97 reflects Byron's ecstatic attempt to unite with the tempest (fig. 4.5):

And this is in the night – Oh glorious Night
 That art not sent for slumber – let me be
 A sharer in thy fierce & far delight –
 And portion of the [?heavens] – a part of thee – (*MS M*, fol. 38^v)

Byron's endeavour to transcend the self, clearly echoes his earlier desire to 'become / Portion of that around me'. The repetition of 'portion' suggests that once again Byron is attempting to 'live' the creative process by blending his imaginative power with the *genius loci* in order to write the poem. As the storm sequence is written in response to a natural event that Byron could not have predicted it is one of the most direct pieces of writing in the canto, explicitly demanding the immediate communion of experience, imagination and composition that he tries to achieve in the Alps stanzas. What Byron actually finds in this instance is that the holistic communion he is seeking may not, after all, be possible because of the limitations inherent in the creative process (fig. 4.5):

Could I embody & embosom now
 That which is [?great] within me – could I wreak
 My thoughts upon expression – and thus throw

feelings—
 and all passions
 passions – feelings – strong or weak –
 All that I would have sought – & all I seek
 [?—]
 all that [?—] into
 Or ever shall [?] [?] [?and] [?—] – [?] one word
 [?—] [?to] [?know] [?&] [?feel] ^
 [?&] [?yet] [?for]
 [?—]
 Bear – know – feel – & yet breathe: one word
 And that one word were lightning – I would speak –
 But as it is – I live and die unheard –
 most my heart the sheath – & it
 A But In & voiceless hope – thought – [?—] & yet with a
 ^ sheathed as a bloodless sword [?—]
 And voiceless [?—] sheathing it as a sword the [?sword]
 (MS M, fol. 40^v)

[Could I embody and unbosom now
 That which is most within me, – could I wreak
 My thoughts upon expression, and thus throw
 Soul, heart, mind, passions, feelings, strong or weak,
 All that I would have sought, and all I seek,
 Bear, know, feel, and yet breathe – into *one* word,
 And that one word were Lightning. I would speak
 But as it is, I live and die unheard,
 With a most voiceless thought, sheathing it as a sword. (III. 97. 905-13)]

According to Newey, what Byron discovers here is that ‘the self can never be fully embodied or fully lost (“unbosomed”) through language’ (p. 163). There is, as Newey asserts, an acknowledgement of the limitations of language in this stanza but it is expressed in terms that relate it directly to Byron’s creative self. It is by ‘wreak[ing] / My thoughts upon expression’ – by forcing his imagination into the form of written words on the page – that Byron attempts, and fails, to ‘embody’ and ‘unbosom’ the very essence of his being: ‘That which is *most* within me’. The violent yoking together of thought and expression, implied by the use of ‘wreak’, is a variation on the characteristically Romantic idea that language is insufficient to capture the product of the imagination

when it is at its most powerful. What Byron seems to be endeavouring to achieve in this stanza is the encapsulation of the vital energy of lightning into a 'one word' language of self-expression. The immediate experience of the storm leads Byron to attempt to represent himself as the transient brilliance of the lightning but, as a human being, he cannot express himself as a pure burst of energy and so uses the image instead to explain that failure. As the comparison with 'Lightning' implies the creative moment occurs in a brilliant flash, which disappears too quickly for it to be fully represented on the page (an observation that anticipates Shelley's later comment that 'the mind in creation is as a fading coal').³⁵ Byron's frustration with language is also apparent in the draft manuscript. There is a large inkblot on the left-hand side of the page; and the heavily erased lines are concentrated, appropriately, in the sections of the stanza where Byron is trying to articulate the 'one word' that might enable him to 'speak' and when he accepts that his 'thought' will remain 'voiceless'.

The draft and content of this stanza, then, both seem to register a failure of the creative process in comparison to the creative energy of nature which brings it about. Yet the words on the page do come into being despite the difficulties that Byron describes and experiences, suggesting that something else might also be happening here. Significantly, Byron makes another reference to 'live', which connects back both to the manifesto for the canto and to the Alps stanzas: 'But as it is I live and die unheard / With a most voiceless thought sheathing it as a sword'. As I have been suggesting throughout the second half of this chapter, to 'live', for Byron, is to create; and to create is to push his poetics way beyond what he was capable of achieving in Cantos I-II. In stanza 97, he sets

³⁵ Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'A Defence of Poetry', *SPP*, pp. 509-535 (p. 531).

himself the impossible task of attempting to capture his ‘Soul, heart, mind, passions, feelings’ in ‘one word’: a word that is itself the embodiment of the transitory. He lives, briefly, by challenging the bounds of what it is possible for words to do and, metaphorically, ‘die[s] unheard’ when he realises that he cannot transcend the limits of language. The pleasure is in the process and, in another manifestation of Byronic sensationalism, in feeling the euphoria of the attempt and the disappointment of its failure. Perhaps it is the case that Byron does not see an endpoint – ‘one word’ – because, like travelling in exile, the power is in the ongoing response to the moment rather than in reaching a final destination. In fact, as the closing lines of the stanza make clear, this failure is not necessarily permanent. There is always the potential that a ‘voiceless thought’ might, at some stage become voiced, and that the sheathed sword might be unsheathed. As Byron writes later in the canto: ‘I do believe,/ Though I have found them not, that there may be/ Words which are things’ (III. 114. 1059-1061).

What I have been attempting to show, through the analysis of the manuscript and the key moments of writing, is that *Childe Harold III* charts Byron’s poetic growth in the aftermath of his exile through the self-conscious articulation and re-evaluation of what it means to ‘live’ his evolving creative process by and through the physicality of the act. The poem not only maps an actual journey, but also a compositional and imaginative journey that sees Byron attempting to piece together a new creative identity as he travels from place to place. As the condition of the manuscript suggests, an integral part of this attempt is a sustained commitment to a more personal investment in the immediacy of experience, and to maintaining the spontaneity of the moment of writing through all of the stages of the poem’s development. The origins of this practice can be traced back to

Canto I-II which, as the first of Byron's poems to creatively experiment with tropes of exile and composition during travel, needs to be recognised as a crucial stage in his early development as a poet.

There is, however, a major difference between the writing of Cantos I-II and Canto III, which is a direct reflection of Byron's actual exile during the composition of the latter. When Byron returns home from his 1809-1811 travels he makes some significant changes to Cantos I-II which, as McGann notes, fundamentally alter 'the poem from a series of loosely connected descriptive and reflective set-pieces [...] into a dramatic personal record of the growth of the poet's mind – to sorrow, even despair' (*BCPW*, II. p. 271n). The revisions that Byron makes to the first two cantos when he is in England sees him reworking *Childe Harold I-II* into a discourse of personal grief. The root of this grief does not lie in his travels, but in the death of those loved ones associated with an idea of home that has been irrecoverably lost while he was away: 'In the short space of one month I have lost *her* who gave me being, and most of those who had made that being tolerable' (*BCPW*, II. p. 189n).

While an exploration of exile, through the figure of Harold, is still part of the fabric of Cantos I-II, the changes Byron makes to the poem transform it from a spontaneous narrative of travel into a more autobiographical narrative of return. On the one hand, this transformation anticipates the exploration of personal grief in Canto III, but on the other it distinguishes the early cantos from his writing in exile. In particular, the fact that he does not (or cannot) go back to England after the composition of *Childe Harold III* is reflected in the way that his continuing exile is inextricably linked to the constant interrogation of

his poetic process, and to his repeated return to the question of how to write poetry which reflects a continually evolving creative self. Although the individual poems that Byron writes post-1816 have a clearly defined endpoint (that is to say, most of them *end*), his poetic project as a whole is redefined as endless because creatively and personally, there can be no final destination or resting place in exile. In this way, the shift of poetic mode through travel, that I have articulated here for Canto III, enables the open-ended poetic mode of *Don Juan*; Byron's great unfinished (unfinishable) masterpiece.

Chapter Five

Shared Writing, Shared Travel: History of a Six Weeks' Tour

Nothing can be more unpresuming than this little volume. It contains the account of some desultory visits by a party of young people to scenes that are now so familiar to our countrymen, that few facts relating to them can be expected to have escaped the many more experienced observers, who have sent their journals to the press. In fact, they have done little else than arrange the few materials which an imperfect journal, and two or three letters to their friends in England afforded.¹

The final chapter of this thesis centres on Mary and Percy Shelley's *History of a Six Weeks' Tour* (1817); a text directly influenced by Mary Wollstonecraft's *Letters Written During A Short Residence* and Lord Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage III*.² While the previous two chapters on Wollstonecraft and Byron were primarily concerned with individual attempts to recreate textual versions of the self during travel; the focus here will be on writing and travel as *shared* activities. As the epigraph shows, the Shelleys present *History* as the casual arrangement of already-written materials produced during a series of commonplace excursions. Yet the composition, editing and publication of the journals, letters and poetry that make up *History*, provides vital information about how the Shelleys travelled and wrote together during the period which produced *Frankenstein* and some of Shelley's major poetry. Despite the fact that *History* offers such a unique insight into the Shelleys' writing practices – and is also Mary's first venture into print – it has received surprisingly little critical attention. The responses that are currently available tend to concentrate only on individual texts within the whole and either explore the

¹ 'Preface', *HSWT*, pp. iii-iv.

² To avoid confusion I will use 'Mary' for Mary Shelley and 'Shelley' for Percy Shelley throughout this chapter because these are the names that they used to refer to each other. Mary Shelley was Mary Godwin during her 1814 and 1816 travels, but she had married Shelley prior to the publication of *History*. As such when I discuss the two together, I will refer to them as the 'Shelleys'.

textuality of Shelley's writings, or examine Mary's contributions for the purposes of identifying a feminist or political agenda underpinning the responses to travel articulated in the text.³ Both of these approaches assume that the separate elements of *History* can be read as the distinct products of single authorship; a privileging of single authorship that does not accord with the facts of textual production or with the broader collective context in which the individual writings are purposely situated by their authors. In fact this author-specific focus elides one of the most crucial dimensions of *History*: its status as a co-authored and co-edited account of shared travel.

The aim here is to take an approach to *History*, which is sensitive to the text as a whole, to the individual writings and to the actualities of textual production during travel. How does the act of shared travel affect the writing process? What impact does the imaginative and physical presence of other writers have on the creative representation of place? How do different generic accounts of the same experiences of travel interconnect; and what do these interconnections tell us about the relationship between direct and textual experiences of place? In order to address these questions three different models of shared writing during travel will be examined: collaborative authorship in the *Journal* of the Shelleys' 1814 elopement tour; creative literary tourism in the Lac Léman journal and Shelley's 17th July, 1816 letter to Thomas Love Peacock; and intertextual composition in

³ Robert Brinkley, for example, provides an excellent compositional account of the two letters that Shelley contributes to *History*, but does not discuss that correspondence within the collaborative structure of the volume. Brinkley, 'Documenting Revision', 66-82. The textual critic, Donald Reiman, while focusing only on Shelley's contributions to *History* does show some awareness of the broader context. Donald Reiman and Doucet Fischer (eds), *Shelley and his Circle (1773-1822)*, vol. 7 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), pp. 37-49. For examples of critics who take the feminist/political approach to Mary's contributions to *History* see Angela Jones, 'Lying Near the Truth: Mary Shelley Performs the Private' in *Iconoclastic Departures: Mary Shelley after Frankenstein*, ed. by Syndy Conger, Frederick Frank and Gregory O'Dea (London: Associated University Presses, 1997) pp. 19-34; and Moskal, "'To speak in Sanchean phrase'", pp. 18-37.

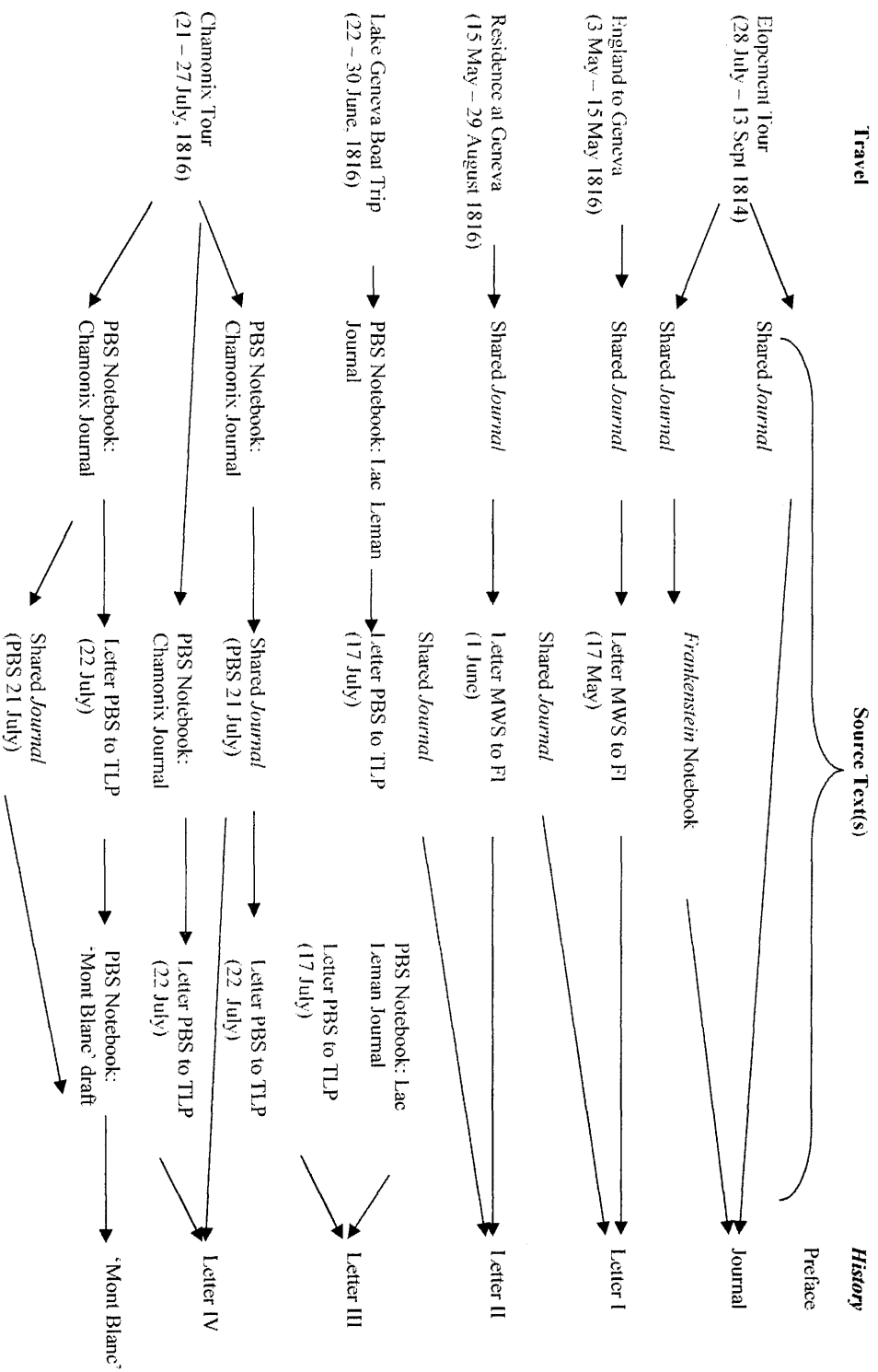
Shelley's 22nd July, 1816 letter to Peacock and 'Mont Blanc'. As the macro-structure of *History* provides a vital context for the published versions of the source texts, the ways the individual writings intersect and function within the volume as a whole will also be considered. What I hope to show, is that it is only by exploring the constructed and co-authored nature of the texts that make up *History* – and their emergence from shared writing and shared travel – that the complex dynamics driving the Shelleys' early creative practices can be fully understood.

Constructing History of a Six Weeks' Tour: Travel and Textual Sources

As there is currently no critical account of the travels and texts that contribute to *History*, it is necessary to begin by providing a brief outline of the different journeys and textual sources that make up the volume. In the discussion of the individual texts that follows later in the chapter, I will provide more detailed information about the relationship between the source texts and *History*. For now though, as these textual sources are complex, I have chosen to represent them in diagrammatical form (fig. 5.1).

As the diagram shows, *History* is written out of four episodes of travel: Mary and Shelley's 1814 elopement tour through France, Switzerland, Germany and Holland; the Shelleys' 1816 journey from England to Switzerland and their subsequent residence in Geneva; Shelley's boat tour around Lac Léman with Byron from 22nd-30th June 1816; and the Shelleys' trip to Chamonix from 21st-27th July, 1816. Initially these excursions were recorded en-route across a variety of textual forms, which were then heavily edited and collected in *History*. When *History* was first published in December 1817, it appeared

Figure 5.1: *History of a Six Weeks' Tour* Travel and Textual Sources



anonymously with the only attribution of authorship confined to the initials ‘M’ or ‘S’ at the end of the individual sections. In this form, given on the right-hand side of the diagram, the volume comprises a ‘Preface’ written by Shelley but purporting to be from Mary’s hand; a ‘Journal’ attributed to Mary; ‘Letters I-II’ from Geneva to an unidentified correspondent, again attributed to Mary; ‘Letters III-IV’ from Shelley to Peacock, and the poem ‘Mont Blanc’.

Although the structure of *History* appears simple and straightforward, the middle part of the diagram shows the multiple source texts that contribute to the individual sections of the volume. The ‘Journal’ in *History* is a version of the elopement tour recorded by Mary and Shelley in their shared *Journal* and also draws on material from the second of the *Frankenstein* notebooks, which Mary was working on from the latter stages of 1816 until May 1817.⁴ The first two letters are a combination of accounts in the shared *Journal* and actual items of correspondence sent by Mary to her half-sister Fanny Imlay on 17th May and 1st June 1816.⁵ ‘Letter III’ is constructed from Shelley’s Lac Léman journal (recorded in the same notebook as the Chamonix journal and ‘Mont Blanc’) and his letter to Peacock dated 17th July, 1816. ‘Letter IV’ is an amalgamation of text from Shelley’s Chamonix journal, his entry for 21st July in the shared *Journal* and his 22nd July, 1816

⁴ A description of Holland from the *Frankenstein* notebook is incorporated, with some slight changes, in *History* and then excised from the novel before its publication in 1818. Like the Holland entry in the shared *Journal*, the much longer extract from the *Frankenstein* draft mentions the narrow roads and problems these caused for the carriages. For the passage in the notebook see Mary Shelley, *The Frankenstein Notebooks: A Facsimile Edition*, ed. by Charles E. Robinson, 2 vols (New York: Garland, 1996) II, pp. 449-51. The equivalent section in the *Journal* and *History* can be found in *JMWS*, I, p. 24; and in *HSWT*, pp. 75-77.

⁵ As the letters to Fanny Imlay are no longer extant, there has been some discussion over whether the letters in *History* are genuine items of correspondence. However, in her work on Mary’s letters, Betty Bennett persuasively argues that this correspondence is based on two lost epistles sent by Mary to her half-sister, Fanny Imlay, so it seems likely that the versions in *History* were from genuine source texts. *LMWS*, I, p. 19n.

letter to Peacock. Finally, 'Mont Blanc' draws on images from Shelley's 21st July entry in the shared *Journal* and his 22nd July letter to Peacock.

This outline of the complex textual relationships within *History* also shows that, in its published form, the volume is a constructed mosaic of writings that are already vitally connected *before* they are included in the volume. As the diagram illustrates, the shared *Journal* provides material for the *Frankenstein* notebook, for Mary's letters to Fanny Imlay and for Shelley's letters to Peacock and 'Mont Blanc'.⁶ Similarly, as the 'Mont Blanc' part of the diagram shows, prose from Shelley's Chamonix journal feeds into both his 21st July entry in the shared *Journal* and into his 22nd July letter to Peacock. Then, Shelley draws on the letter to Peacock and the entry in the shared *Journal* when he is composing 'Mont Blanc' in his notebook. These individual accounts are edited, amended, added to and merged as the Shelleys attempt to articulate their responses to travel for their chosen readers; regardless of whether those readers are one another, close members of their circle or the public. Moreover, this cross-over is not just registered in the texts that make up *History*. It is apparent that Mary draws on her entry in the shared *Journal* and is influenced by a description in 'Mont Blanc' (which in turn emerges out of Shelley's 22nd July letter to Peacock) when she is writing Frankenstein's ascent to the Mer de Glace in the novel:

The ascent is precipitous, but the path is cut into continual and short windings, which enable you to surmount the perpendicularity of the / mountain. It is a scene terrifically desolate. In a thousand

⁶ The first of Mary's letters to Fanny Imlay in *History* contains some short passages originally from an epistle Shelley sent to Peacock from Geneva on 15th May, 1816. This sharing of content raises two possibilities: Mary either copied the passages from Shelley's letter into her own letter to Fanny Imlay; or Mary and Shelley used the, now extant, section of their shared *Journal* as a source for both their letters. As the *Journal* often functions as a base text, it seems likely that it was Shelley's source for the passages in the 15th May letter; and that Mary also used the shared text when she was writing to Fanny Imlay.

spots the traces of the winter avalanche may be perceived, where trees lie broken and strewed on the ground; some entirely destroyed, others bent, leaning upon the jutting rocks of the mountain, or transversely upon other trees. The path, as you ascend higher, is intersected by ravines of snow, down which the stones continually roll from above.⁷

The image of the trees is taken from the shared *Journal* – ‘the trees in many places have been torn away by avelanches [*sic*] and some half leaning over others intermingled with stones present the appearance of vast & dreadful desolation’ (*JMWS*, I, p. 117) – while the impression of desolation in the *Journal* and in *Frankenstein* closely echoes Shelley’s description of the Glacier des Bossons in his letter to Peacock:

The verge of a glacier, like that of Boisson [*sic*], presents the most vivid image of desolation that it is possible to conceive [...] The pines of the forest, which bounds it at one extremity, are overthrown & shattered;—there is something inexpressibly dreadful in the aspect of the few branchless trunks which nearest to the ice rifts still stand in the uprooted soil. (*LPBS*, I, pp. 498-99)

This description is then reworked in ‘Mont Blanc’, where Shelley introduces the ‘rocks drawn down’, which are also found in the expression ‘the stones continually roll from above’ in the novel:

vast pines are strewing
Its destined path, or in the mangled soil
Branchless and shattered stand; the rocks, drawn down
From yon remotest waste, have overthrown
The limits of the dead and living world,
Never to be reclaimed. (*HSWT*, p. 181)

Although these different textual elements are brought together by Mary in *Frankenstein*, the complex weaving of source materials makes it difficult to clearly attribute the passage from the novel to a single author – this is not a reflection on Mary’s creative abilities but rather *a fact of production*. Examining the source texts that make up *History*, then, reveals

⁷ Mary Shelley, ‘Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus’, in *MSNSW*, I, p. 72.

the authorially intertextual and cross-generic way that the Shelleys worked together during their early travels; a form of collaborative authorship that influences many of the texts that they were writing during this period. As I will go on to show, this collaboration emerges out of their shared experiences of travel and of writing.

Writing Travel: Collaborative Authorship in the Shared Journal

In order to fully understand how the Shelleys' process of co-authorship works, I want to turn now to examine the elopement tour section of the shared *Journal* (from 28th July-13th September, 1814), both in its original form and in *History*. This text has been chosen because it is the Shelleys' first explicitly collaborative writing project and because it functions as a base text that feeds into a host of other writings. In addition, when the *Journal* is edited and amended for *History*, the compositional context is almost entirely elided by the Shelleys' deliberate removal of the real motive for travel (the elopement) and the attribution of the text solely to Mary. In the following section, then, I want to think about how the Shelleys' process of joint composition works, how it is affected by travelling, and how their decision to conceal the collaborative nature of the *Journal* and the motive for travel in the published work affects interpretation of the text.

Mary was just sixteen when she eloped to the Continent with Shelley and her step-sister Claire Clairmont.⁸ In the early hours of Tuesday 28th July, 1814 the party met on the corner of a London street and made their way to Dover. After successfully reaching

⁸ Claire was, at this time, called Jane but she changed her name toward the end of 1814. To avoid confusion, she will be referred to as Claire throughout this chapter.

Calais, they travelled part way through France on foot with a vague plan to go to Switzerland. Hampered by an injury to Shelley's ankle, the group soon abandoned pedestrianism and resolved to travel to Lucerne by carriage and take up residence there. The journey was beset by transportation problems and financial difficulties; and, just a few days after arriving at Lucerne, they decided to make their way home to England. They travelled back through Germany and Holland, mostly by boat, eventually reaching Rotterdam after days of being constantly on the move. Exhausted and travel-weary, they finally set sail for home on 9th September, 1814 arriving at Gravesend four days later.

The notebook containing the *Journal* of the elopement tour was purchased by the Shelleys when they arrived in Paris and has entries covering the period from 28th July, 1814 until 13th May, 1815. The first entry in the *Journal* is for the date of the elopement, which suggests that the text is specifically begun to mark and record both the start of their union and their first taste of foreign travel together. The compositional pattern of the elopement section of the *Journal* can be divided into three distinct textual phases – from 28th July-11th August; from 11th August-21st August; and from 22nd August-13th September – which each coincide with a change in the Shelleys' travel circumstances.

From 28th July to part way through 11th August all of the entries are written in Shelley's hand and they capture both the drama of the escape from England – '*How dreadful did this time appear. It seemed that we trifled with life and hope*' (JMWS, I, p. 6) – and thoughts on the liberating possibilities of their elopement once they are safely resident in Paris: '*Mary especially seems insensible to all future evil: She feels as if our love would*

alone suffice to resist the invasions of calamity' (JMWS, I, p. 11).⁹ In terms of inscription, the handwriting in the manuscript suggests that Shelley composed more than one daily entry in a single sitting and that composition in the *Journal* was not a daily task but was undertaken every few days.¹⁰ This irregular style of entry may be partly owing to the fact that the *Journal* notebook was not purchased until they arrived at Paris, so out of necessity there is some retrospective composition. However this pattern continues throughout the majority of the elopement tour, perhaps reflecting that the demands of travel have a direct impact on the writing process. The physical act of journeying limits the amount of time available to write, so the Shelleys update the text when they have the opportunity.

Time limitations may also account for how the Shelleys share the writing once Mary begins making contributions to the text on 11th August. Up until the entry for 22nd August, they diligently take turns to write in the *Journal* every few days, which suggests that Mary continues the compositional pattern already established by Shelley. Mary's written contributions to the text also coincide with the beginning of the journey through France. In contrast to the carefully planned and orchestrated itineraries of the Grand Tourists, like Thomas Gray, the Shelleys avoided taking an established route and, instead, attempted to journey through France on foot because it '*was secure & delightful to walk in solitude & mountains*' (JMWS, I, p. 11). In *Romantic Writing and Pedestrian Travel*, Robin Jarvis suggests that:

⁹ When I quote from the *Journal*, I will follow Feldman and Scott-Kilvert and italicise Shelley's entries in order to differentiate them from Mary's. Feldman and Scott-Kilvert attribute the line "S.helley [sic] was also with me" to Mary (JMWS, I, p. 7), but my close inspection of the handwriting and ink in the MS indicates that it was probably written by Shelley. Bodleian: Abinger Dep. d. 311/1.

¹⁰ All of the individual entries in the *Journal* are dated and it is apparent from changes in handwriting style and ink that Shelley drafted blocks of entries covering a number of days in one sitting.

Walking affirmed a desired freedom from context, however partial, temporary or illusory that freedom might be: freedom from the context of their upbringing and education, the context of parental expectations and class etiquette, the context of hierarchical and segregated society. Freedom, finally, from a culturally defined and circumscribed self.¹¹

Localised pedestrianism had become a fashionable part of the Picturesque tour by 1814. As Jarvis suggests, from as early as 1790 ‘whereas such tours had most commonly been undertaken on horseback, the pedestrian alternative [was] now being seriously pursued and promoted’ (p. 9). Similarly, as I mentioned in the Introduction, more lengthy walking tours had already been made by major literary figures such as William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Even so, at the time when the Shelleys were travelling, pedestrianism was still a form of transgression which allowed the walker to feel that he or she was free from the constraints of other social contexts. The Shelleys’ decision to travel on foot is coherent with the escape motive for the excursion as a whole. Walking through France might draw attention to the transgressive nature of their travels, but it simultaneously validates their relationship by placing it outside of the culturally defined rules under which it would ordinarily be condemned. Jarvis notes that ‘walking leads a mental and aesthetic life that is both distinct from, and continuous with, its bodily one’ or, to put it differently, pedestrianism is a physical and imaginative process (p. 4). This connection between travel and aesthetic experience suggests that the Shelleys’ mode of joint composition is a symbolic expression of their transgressive travels. They write together because they are on a journey which is enabling them to be together. The *Journal* is a collaborative record of their collaborative experience of elopement.

¹¹ Jarvis, *Romantic Writing and Pedestrian Travel*, p. 28. All subsequent references to this text will be given parenthetically.

Indeed the Shelleys' method of recording the elopement tour sets their *Journal* apart from its other nineteenth-century counterparts. Although it was common practice for travel journals to be written for another reader or readers – for example, Dorothy Wordsworth's journal writing for William – the *direct* participation of more than one party in the writing process is rare and does radically alter the status of the text. In the Shelleys' *Journal*, this alteration is reflected at a formal and stylistic level. In terms of form, a shared journal is fundamentally different from a private journal because both the text and the writing of the text is affected by the knowledge that another person, who is also participating in the compositional process, will read what is written. For the Shelleys, the self-conscious awareness of the other reader and writer has a prior impact on the content because it determines what can and cannot be written. On the one hand, Mary and Shelley have shared knowledge and experience, which means that they do not have to include the more personal elements of their relationship in their *Journal*; while on the other they may want to include this information but avoid doing so because it may be hurtful to the other person. The intimacy of the *Journal*, then, lies in its shared form. As Mary Jean Corbett suggests, the elopement tour *Journal* 'devotes itself not to the history of a single individual, but to the "pleasure and security"', in Shelley's words, that two lovers – who are also two readers and two writers – seek and find in each other'.¹² For the Shelleys, collaborative writing is a creative means of documenting their togetherness.

The joint readerly and writerly status of the *Journal* is also apparent stylistically. The use of the personal pronoun is usually consistent in journal writing, but as Sheila Ahlbrand

¹² Mary Jean Corbett, 'Reading Mary Shelley's *Journals*: Romantic Subjectivity and Feminist Criticism', *The Other Mary Shelley: Beyond Frankenstein*, ed. by Audrey Fisch, Anne Mellor and Esther Schor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 73-88 (pp. 77-8).

has noted, during the elopement section of the *Journal* there is a shift from the first to the third person.¹³ From 8th August onwards, Shelley begins referring to himself in the third, as well as the first, person – ‘*Jane and Shelley go to the ass merchant. We buy an ass*’ (*JMWS*, I, p. 11) – and Mary follows his pattern when she begins her contributions from 11th August: ‘as night approached our fears increased that we should not be able to distinguish the road – and Mary expressed these fears in a very complaining tone’ (*JMWS*, I, p. 12). Ahlbrand suggests that the Shelleys’ decision to begin ‘specify[ing] to whom they were referring’ indicates that they may have ‘decided to publish an account of their expedition based on the journals’ (p. 44). This is certainly possible, although there is no other evidence to indicate an intention to publish at this stage, and the use of the third person is not consistent enough to attribute it to any coherent plan.

In a number of places, the third person is used to distinguish Mary and Shelley from Claire, as in the entry from 2nd September: ‘*Mary and Shelley walk for three hours: they are alone*’ (*JMWS*, I, p. 22). The loaded reference to being ‘*alone*’ enables Shelley and Mary to effectively write Claire out of their shared narrative by explicitly positioning themselves at the centre of their text (although this comment also draws attention to the fact that they are not always alone). In other instances, the shift in pronoun coincides with self-reflexive observations – ‘*S. [...] looks grave*’ (*JMWS*, I, p. 17) – which suggest self-consciousness about the act of writing since the writer displays an awareness of the reader’s prior response to their behaviour. These self-reflexive comments also indicate an

¹³ Sheila Ahlbrand, ‘Author and Editor: Mary Shelley’s Private Writings and the Author Function of Percy Bysshe Shelley’, *Iconoclastic Departures: Mary Shelley after Frankenstein*, ed. by Syndy Conger, Frederick Frank and Gregory O’Dea (London: Associated University Presses, 1997), pp. 35-61 (p. 44). All subsequent references to this essay will be given parenthetically.

interpersonal communication within the text whereby Mary and Shelley claim ownership of their actions, perhaps in an attempt to implicitly apologise or accept responsibility for their negative behaviours. Both the self-consciousness and the marginalisation of Claire link to the status of the *Journal* because the style of entry reflects the fact that mutual composition and reading is occurring in a shared intimate space.

The change in the use of the pronouns also coincides with the beginning of Mary's contributions to the text and their walking tour. While the use of the third person does identify who is being discussed, paradoxically, it also merges the writerly personas of Mary and Shelley. In some instances, without the handwriting, it would be difficult to tell who was writing: 'Mary is not well, & all are tired of wheeled machines – Shelley is in a jocosely horrible mood' (*JMWS*, I, p. 18). The effect of this merging is that it imitates the unique intimacy of the Shelleys' union which, as I suggested earlier, is also being signalled by the choice of pedestrianism. Shared travel and shared writing are deliberately connected in a text that, like the walking, functions to validate the intimacy of the Shelleys' developing attachment to one another. The motive for, and modes of, travel are reflected in the textual form.

This connection between travel and text is most apparent in the final compositional phase of the *Journal*. From Monday 22nd August until the Shelleys' return to England the textuality of the *Journal* is radically altered. The pattern of alternate composition begins to break down with Mary, and then Shelley, writing consecutive entries at more than one sitting; the entries become much shorter and in several cases contain only information about a single day; and there is a shift in tone and content. Significantly, the changes to

the composition and content of the *Journal* coincide with the Shelleys' changing motives for travel. By this stage, the desire to wander freely has been abandoned and travel as an expression of freedom has been transformed into travel as a means of getting home. As a consequence, from 27th August onwards the Shelleys are continually on the move: a fact that is reflected in the shifts in the *Journal*.

Broadly speaking, Shelley's earlier comments are mostly reserved for the landscape – '2 leagues from Neufchâtel we see the Alps. Pile after pile is seen extending its craggy outline before the other & far behind all, towering above every feature of the scene the snowy Alps' (*JMWS*, I, p. 17) – while Mary's tend to be criticisms of the people: 'in this walk we have observed one thing – that the French are exceeding inhospitable and on this side [of] Paris very disagreeable' (*JMWS*, I, p. 13). Increasingly, however, the records of the tour become dominated by descriptions of journeying: 'Unable to procure a boat we walk a ¼ of a league further where after being threatened with the evil of sleeping at this nasty village we get a boat and arrive Basel at 6 cold & comfortless' (*JMWS*, I, p. 21). By the end of the tour all of Mary's earlier optimism that 'love would alone suffice to resist the invasions of calamity' has been replaced with outright contempt for travelling: 'the sea is horribly tempestuous & Mary horidly [*sic*] sick nor is Shelley much better – There is an easterly gale in the night which almost kills us while it carries us nearer our journeys end' (*JMWS*, I, p. 24). This growing disillusionment with journeying is matched in the text by the more fragmented entries – 'Mary begins Hate. & gives S. the greater pleasure. S. writes part of his Romance' (*JMWS*, I, p. 24) – which suggests that the demands of being constantly on the move are making it even more difficult to find time to write in the *Journal*. Paradoxically, the very travels that prompted the joint writing of the *Journal* end

up hampering that process, forcing the Shelleys to adapt the collaborative pattern of composition that they have established.

What this discussion of the elopement *Journal* has shown is that the composition of the text is directly affected both by the motives for travel and the practicalities of writing on the move. The ethos of shared travel and shared writing emerges from the Shelleys' more personal motives for their tour; while the reality of journeying shapes and determines the nature of the text. Crucially, in its compositional context, the *Journal* is not just *about* the shared experience of travel, it is the product *of* that experience. This in turn suggests that, for the Shelleys, joint participation in travel prompts, and perhaps even necessitates, a particular kind of compositional practice that thrives on collaborative creativity.

Editing Travel: From Journal to History

When the *Journal* is edited and revised for inclusion in *History* the text undergoes several important authorial changes which have the effect of entirely erasing the real motive for travel and the fact that the text is co-authored. Although the version of the *Journal* in *History* is still presented as the product of the 1814 'six weeks' tour', it is contextualised in the 'Preface' as a text for the amusement of the travel enthusiast who 'will perhaps find some entertainment in following the author, with her husband and sister, on foot, through part of France and Switzerland' (*HSWT*, pp. iv-v). The detail about pedestrianism is retained, probably because at the time of publication it was still a relatively unusual means of travelling, but the more radical reason for the tour is masked by the reference to the author's 'husband'. The journey is no longer an elopement, but a respectable, and

somewhat ordinary, excursion undertaken by a husband, wife and sister. As an extension of this, the collaborative textual production of the original *Journal* also remains deliberately unacknowledged: an erasure which is consistent with attribution of this section of *History* to Mary's authorship.

The recontextualisation of the published version of the *Journal* encourages the reader to interpret it as a record of travel from a single, and female, authorial perspective. Unlike the private text, the use of the pronoun is consistently personal throughout and, from the beginning, there is an explicit address to the public reader:

It is now nearly three years since this Journey took place, and the journal I then kept was not very copious; but I have so often talked over the incidents that befell us [*sic*], and attempted to describe the scenery through which we passed, that I think few occurrences of any interest will be omitted. (*HSWT*, p. 1)

The shared *Journal* is self-consciously described as 'the journal I then kept'; Shelley's contribution is elided as Mary makes it clear that her 'not very copious' account has been expanded with verbal recollections. Indeed her contributions to the *Journal* are almost entirely rewritten in *History* with very little remaining of her original response to her travels. There is increased information about the character and dress of the people which, for the benefit of the reader, is presented in relation to English habits: 'The lower orders in France have the easiness and politeness of the most well-bred English; they treat you unaffectedly as their equal, and consequently there is no scope for insolence' (*HSWT*, p. 9). Although Mary still expresses her disgust at some of the French people, 'squalid with dirt, their countenances expressing everything that is disgusting and brutal' (*HSWT*, pp. 23-4), unlike in the *Journal*, her response is tempered by a more sympathetic

understanding of their plight: 'these people did not know that Napoleon was deposed, and when we asked why they did not rebuild their cottages, they replied, that they were afraid that the Cossacs would destroy them again' (*HSWT*, pp. 23-4). While detailed descriptions of travel do remain a regular feature of the text, these are mostly included to convey the adventurous spirit of the writer-traveller. For example, the sea which is described as almost killing them in the *Journal* becomes, in *History*, a playground for porpoises: 'Shoals of enormous porpoises were sporting with the utmost composure amidst the troubled waters' (*HSWT*, pp. 80-1).

There is more than an echo in the revisions to the *Journal* of Wollstonecraft's anthropological, political and highly-spirited observations in *Letters Written During A Short Residence* discussed in Chapter Three. Within *History*, the Shelleys acknowledge reading this book – 'S*** read aloud to us Mary Wollstonecraft's Letters from Norway' (*HSWT*, p. 62) – and may well have used it as a model for the journal in the published edition. *Letters* is an interesting choice of text because, while the Shelleys draw on Wollstonecraft's more functional descriptions, they deliberately avoid offering a sentimental account of what is essentially a sentimental journey. Jacqueline Labbe observes how reviewers of both Wollstonecraft's *Letters* and the Shelleys' *History* 'find it easier and less threatening to elide the unconventional and recast it as perfectly respectable'.¹⁴ The allusions and explicit reference to Wollstonecraft's text draws attention to what is missing from the Shelleys' own public narrative – the unconventional nature of their journey and their attachment – but it does so by positioning that narrative

¹⁴ Labbe, 'A Family Romance: Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Godwin and Travel', 213.

safely within the tradition of women's travel writing in which such contexts are often overlooked.

The anonymous contemporary reviewer in the *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (1818) responds in precisely this gendered way. He begins by describing *History* as 'the simplest and most unambitious journal imaginable of a Continental Tour' before praising the appropriately feminine style of the author: 'The writer of this little volume, too, is a Lady, and writes like one – with ease, gracefulness, and vivacity [...] She prattles away very prettily in the true English idiom'.¹⁵ The reviewer's (rather patronising) responses are a testimony to the Shelleys' highly effective repositioning of the elopement *Journal* as a commonplace account by a female traveller. Yet the text is much more complex than this reading allows. Nearly all of the descriptions of natural scenery are taken, with minor changes, from *Shelley's* entries in the *Journal* – and these account for a substantial bulk of the text. The inclusion of this material problematises any reading of *History* that accepts the Shelleys' deliberate positioning of the text as a woman's journal.

So why do the Shelleys choose to present the journal under Mary's name? Part of the reason for this may again relate to gender. Jeanne Moskal notes how the 'constructed ascent' of *History* 'uses both a traditional hierarchy of genres (her diary, her letters, his letters, his lyric poem) and a conventional hierarchy of gender (writings by a woman superseded by those of a man)'.¹⁶ While the genre and gender structure of the volume can

¹⁵ 'Rev. of *History of a Six Weeks' Tour*', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* July (1818), 412-416 (412). This is the only contemporary review of the volume.

¹⁶ Jeanne Moskal, 'Travel Writing', in *The Cambridge Companion to Mary Shelley*, ed. by Esther Schor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 242-258 (p. 243).

be read as hierarchical it is also beneficial to both Mary and Shelley. It introduces *her* acceptably feminine forms of writing to the public by juxtaposing them with the work of an already-published poet; and it positions *his* less accessible transcendental poetics in the context of a female authored and commercially viable travel volume. Attributing the journal to Mary may have been an attempt to attract a public readership (both male and female) who had developed a taste for travel accounts by women. Moreover, *History* sets a precedent that the Shelleys continue to follow: Shelley's role as the editor of *Frankenstein* and his composition of the preface remained unacknowledged until 1831 when Mary posthumously registered his contribution in her introduction.

Creative Literary Tourism: Rousseau, Byron and Shelley

Although the collaborative dynamic is deeply entrenched in the Shelleys' writings during their 1814 and 1816 travels it is not the only shared model of writing to emerge from the source texts that make up *History*. Just as the motives for travel initiate a particular mode of expression in the elopement journal, so Byron and Shelleys' poetic and prose accounts of the Lac Léman boat tour are the products of their desire to 'go to Meillerei [*sic*] – & Clarens – & Vevey – with Rousseau in hand – to see his scenery – according to his delineation in his *Heloise*' (*BLJ*, V, p. 81). In his work on the Lac Léman boat tour, Gavin de Beer observes that this 'famous excursion by Shelley and Byron roughly repeats a tour undertaken by Jean-Jacques Rousseau sixty-two years previously'.¹⁷ The poets were

¹⁷ Gavin de Beer, 'Shelley's Journeys: Around Lake Geneva (with Byron) and from Geneva to England', in *Shelley and his Circle (1773-1822)*, ed. by Kenneth Neill Cameron, vol. 4 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), pp. 690-702 (p. 690). All subsequent references to this essay will be given parenthetically.

travelling as literary tourists and their itinerary, which included stops at Evian, Clarens and Vevey was structured so that they could visit the landscapes made famous in *La Nouvelle Heloise*. Like Samuel Rogers, James Boswell and countless others before them Byron and Shelley were seeking to experience the sites around the lake through the imaginative lens of Rousseau's famous sentimental novel. Nicola Watson notes that:

With *La Nouvelle Heloise*, spectacular landscapes first became invested with fictional figures and sentimental narrative. Not only was a new way of looking at the landscape thus born, so, too was a new way of living with reading. Clasp[ing] the text in one hand, tourists would travel to Lake Geneva [...] in search of spots infused with sentiment.¹⁸

As Watson's emphasis on the literary interpretation of actual and fictional landscapes suggests, her work is primarily concerned with the relationship between place, text and reader. This relationship is important, and both Byron and Shelley were reading *La Nouvelle Heloise* during their excursion – in fact, Shelley writes that 'it ought to be read amongst its own scenes which it has so wonderfully peopled'.¹⁹ Their aim, however, was not simply to see the places Rousseau had 'wonderfully peopled', but to use his text and the actual locations around the lake as an active creative stimulus. Byron and Shelley were visiting Rousseau's text and the scenes of that text in order to *compose* accounts of their responses: their form of literary tourism was not merely interpretative it was also creative. It is this type of shared *writerly* engagement with an already-written landscape that will be explored here by thinking about how *La Nouvelle Heloise* functions as an intertext for Shelley and Byron's process of textualising the landscape; and about the poets' contrasting representations of their mutual experience of Rousseau's topography.

¹⁸ Nicola Watson, *The Literary Tourist: Readers and Places in Romantic & Victorian Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 132. All subsequent references to this text will be given parenthetically.

¹⁹ Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'SC 571: P. B. Shelley to T. L. Peacock, July 17, 1816', in *Shelley and his Circle (1773-1822)*, vol. 7, pp. 24-49 (p. 33). All subsequent page references to this text and to the letter will be given parenthetically and prefixed by SC 571.

The focus here, then, is not on direct collaboration but on how different forms of literary influence can affect the creative response to place. I will consider, in particular, Shelley's prose writings and stanzas 99-104 of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage III* because these texts were either composed during – or are revised versions of – the tour; and because they self-consciously chart the poets' interactions with Rousseau's landscapes.²⁰

Shelley's literary response to the scenes of *La Nouvelle Heloise* takes three different forms: a journal written during the tour; a familiar letter to Peacock composed on 17th July after his return to Geneva; and a revised, public version of the journal and correspondence in the form of 'Letter III' in *History*. Only fragments of the journal survive in the notebook which also contains 'Mont Blanc' but, from these, it is apparent that Shelley was keeping a daily record of the excursion. All of the extant journal entries are made in pencil, with the handwriting and style of inscription suggesting composition occurring in a hurry and probably also outdoors; while the length of individual entries indicates writing during relatively short sittings. There are also instances where Shelley composes part of an entry for a day and then returns to the text later on the same day in order to document new experiences. The lack of revision to the journal and the condition of the manuscript is consistent with a textual response which, while not necessarily immediate, seeks to capture and retain something of the spontaneity of the original moment:

I never felt more strongly than on landing at Clarens that the spirit of old times had deserted a retreat it once embellished-- A thousand times have Julie & St Preux walked on this terraced

²⁰ It is possible that Shelley also composed the first draft of 'Hymn to Intellectual Beauty' during the boat tour, but as the first draft manuscript is no longer extant – only a fair copy survives in Shelley adds. e. 16 – it is not possible to date the poem with any certainty.

[sic] road looking towards those mountains which I now behold.-- nay treading on the ground where now I tread-- From the window of our lodging our landlady pointed out the "bosquet de Julie."²¹

This passage, which records Shelley's sentimental reaction to arriving at Clarens, is structured around a series of complex spatial and temporal layers. Through the use of the present tense – 'landing', 'now', 'treading' – Shelley emphasises and foregrounds his experience of place almost as if it is happening at the same time as it is being inscribed on the page. In this way, he asserts his writerly control over the immediate meaning of the scene whilst simultaneously referencing another act of writing located in the past. The 'spirit of old times', which is equated with the *genius loci* and, implicitly, with Rousseau's literary embellishment of Clarens has been irrecoverably lost. Yet the strong feeling of that loss is powerful enough for Shelley to forge an imaginative connection with what is absent from the location. Julie and St Preux have never actually 'walked on this terraced road' because they are fictional characters, but Shelley evokes them as if they are historical beings whose footsteps he can trace. The mention of the 'Bosquet de Julie', again as if it is a real place rather than a literary construct, similarly demonstrates what Watson describes as Shelley's 'unsophisticated keenness to locate the "precise spot" for a fictional happening' (p. 142). Indeed it is through this type of imaginative spatial identification with the lovers – 'treading on the ground where I now tread' – that Shelley grants them a literary existence beyond the boundaries of Rousseau's novel and, in the process, positions himself as an observer with the appropriate sensibility to sympathise with their tragic narrative and to recognise the emotional significance of the landscape.

²¹ Bodleian Library, MS. Shelley adds. e. 16.. pp. 55-54.

Shelley revisits this journal account two weeks later when he is composing the letter to Peacock and adds a sentence before the mention of the 'Bosquet de Julie', which retrospectively contextualises his initial response: 'All the people at Clarens are convinced of the existence of these creations of Rousseau' (SC 571, p. 33). Perhaps aware of the naïveté of his first reaction, Shelley displaces what he actually felt at that time onto the 'people' and detaches himself from Julie and St Preux by recasting them as the fictional products of Rousseau's imagination. What begins as a homage to the lovers and their place of residence is transformed into an appreciation of Rousseau's unique genius: 'a mind so powerfully bright as to cast a shade of falsehood on the records that are called reality' (SC 571, p. 33). This powerful connection between imagination and reality is reinforced when Shelley walks toward the 'Bosquet de Julie' and is not reminded of Julie and St Preux's first kiss and declaration of love but of Rousseau's legacy:

All breathed the spirit of Rousseau – the trees were aged but vigorous ~~but~~ & interspersed with younger ones which were destined to succeed them & and when we are dead to afford a shade to future worshippers of nature (SC 571, p. 33).

The features of the landscape become, what Shelley calls earlier in the letter, 'monuments of the being of Rousseau' (SC 571, p. 33). The 'aged' trees are a living, breathing epitaph to the spirit of the great writer whom Shelley is also memorialising in his prose; while the younger trees function as a metaphor for Rousseau's poet successors – Byron and Shelley the 'we' who themselves become the epitaphic trees that will shade 'future worshippers of nature'. There is more than an echo here of Wordsworth's reference in 'Michael' to the 'youthful poets, who among these hills / will be my second Self when I am gone'.²²

²² William Wordsworth, 'Michael', in *Lyrical Ballads and Other Poems*, ed. by James Butler and Karen Green (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1992), pp. 252-268 (p. 253), lines 38-39.

Shelley's response to the 'Bosquet de Julie' in the letter, is not that of the naïve literary tourist but of the poet who, through the act of writing, not only becomes one of Rousseau's second selves but looks forward to a future when he will himself be immortalised in the landscape of Clarens.

Over a year later, Shelley revisits his textual account of Clarens when he is revising the journal and letter versions of the tour for inclusion in *History*. Once again he amends and augments the original experience and, according to Watson, adds 'a dash of St Preux-style emotion' (p. 142):

We walked forward among the vineyards, whose narrow terraces overlook this affecting scene [the 'Bosquet de Julie']. Why did the cold maxims of the world compel me at this moment to repress the tears of melancholy transport which it would have been so sweet to indulge, immeasurably, even until the darkness of night had swallowed up the objects which excited them? (*HSWT*, p. 132)

If Shelley is identifying himself with St Preux through the use of overtly sentimental language – 'cold maxims', 'melancholy transport' – then he is also casting himself as a Rousseauvean spirit; and, equally importantly, as a writer who can recreate the emotional intensity of *La Nouvelle Heloise* through his literary engagement with the landscape. Although the use of present tense – 'at this moment' – associates Shelley's response with the visit to the 'Bosquet de Julie', it is not a spontaneous feeling but one prompted both by memories of the novel and of his actual tour of the scene. Shelley is assuming the narrative voice of St. Preux and the writerly persona of Rousseau in order to further sentimentalise what he actually felt when he was present in the landscape – although he is repressing and not indulging in those feelings. In fact the account in *History* is often characterised by such effusions of sensibility. For example, the aside from the journal –

‘we gathered some roses on/i [*sic*] the terrace’ (adds. e.16, p. 53) – is supplemented in *History* with ‘in the feeling that they might be the posterity of some planted by Julia’s hand’ (*HSWT*, p. 133). In the published text the roses are no longer simply flowers but tokens of high romance and an organic means of physically connecting with the past through nature – even though that past never actually existed.

Considering the differences between Shelley’s accounts of the Lac Léman tour it becomes apparent that his writing of the experience is not simply a record of his reactions during the actual journey. In the weeks and years after the trip the creative stimulus of the scenery of the lake continues to have an effect as he imaginatively revisits its locales, rewriting his response to the landscape both by revising the memories of what he actually experienced at the time of his visit and through deeper engagement with the novel. After the boat tour, Shelley reflects on his visit to Meillerie, writing in the letter to Peacock that when he first visited that place he ‘had not yet read enough of Julie to enjoy the scene [at Meillerie] as I do by retrospect’ (SC 571, p. 32). This suggests that his response to the real scene is enhanced by later knowledge of *La Nouvelle Heloise* and by reviewing the memory of the visit through the novel. Even though Shelley is capable of recognising the special qualities of Meillerie itself – ‘Mellerie [*sic*] is indeed enchanted ground, were Rousseau no magician’ (SC 571, p. 32) – his actual experience of place and his writing and rewriting of that experience always relies on the novel as an intertext: ‘Mellerie is the scene of St Preux’s visionary exile’ (SC 571, p. 32). Indeed it is noticeable that descriptions of the actual landscape are relatively brief across all of Shelley’s accounts as he prefers instead to refer to *La Nouvelle Heloise*: ‘The waters of the Rhone mixed with

the blue lake turbidly (Julie letter 17 part 4)' (SC 571, pp. 32-3).²³ Similarly, Shelley and Byron's near-shipwreck in a storm off the coast of St Gingolph 'took place precisely in the spot where Julie and her lover were nearly overset, and where St Preux was tempted to plunge with her into the lake' (*HSWT*, p. 133).

If Shelley's various accounts of the tour are a testimony to the power of the novel they also demonstrate his growing admiration for its author. What seems to be driving Shelley's repeated returns to his writings about the tour is not a desire to assert his authorial response to the Lac Léman scenery over and above that of Rousseau, but to pay tribute to his predecessor's unique genius by keeping the Rousseauvean sensibility alive in his prose – even if that prose sometimes seems overly sentimental. When Byron gathers some acacia leaves at Gibbon's house 'to preserve in memory of him', Shelley refuses to do the same 'fearing to outrage the greater and more sacred name of Rousseau' (*HSWT*, p. 137-8). Like the Genevan landscape, then, the letter in *History* becomes a textual epitaph to Rousseau both in its form – *La Nouvelle Heloise* was written entirely as correspondence – and in its content. As an extension of this memorial function, Shelley invites his readers not simply to imaginatively trace Rousseau's footsteps, or those of his creations, but also those of the younger poet who, through his writing, is linking his own imaginative powers with the 'sublimest genius' of the great novelist (SC 571, p. 330).

²³ The description to which Shelley is referring in *La Nouvelle Heloise* reads as follows: 'I showed her in the distance the mouths of the Rhone whose rushing current suddenly stops after a quarter of a league, and seems hesitant to soil with its muddy waters the azure crystal of the lake'. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Julie or the New Heloise*, trans. by Philip Stewart and Jean Vaché (New Hampshire: Dartmouth College Press, 1997), p. 422.

In contrast to Shelley's prose accounts of the Lac Léman tour, Byron's response to the landscapes of *La Nouvelle Heloise*, with the exception of some brief references in his letters and a prose note, is in poetic form. As I demonstrated in my earlier discussion of Waterloo in Chapter Four, Byron's creativity is frequently stimulated by the challenge of re-writing landscapes that are already infused with historical and literary significance.²⁴ Unlike Shelley, Byron's brand of creative literary tourism is not reverential but contentious. He seeks to demonstrate his poetic abilities by challenging the writings of his predecessor.

Byron's composition of the Clarens stanzas, which were retrospectively inserted into the existing structure of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage III*, suggests precisely this desire to rewrite Rousseau's account of place. In the first draft of 99-104, the consistencies in ink, handwriting and style of entry indicate that these stanzas were all written in one sitting; and, as the handwriting is small and neat, it is likely that Byron wrote indoors rather than on the spot as he did at Waterloo (*MS M*, fols 42^v-44^v). The short delay that probably occurred between Byron's direct experience of the landscape and the act of writing may have given him time to re-read the relevant passages in *La Nouvelle Heloise* and to formulate a poetic response to the Rousseauvean landscape. What Byron decides is to offer an account of Clarens which, while drawing some significance from *La Nouvelle Heloise*, is not wholly dependent on the novel as an intertext. The only direct reference to the work in this section of the poem is in a note that Byron adds to the leaf containing stanza 99 in the first draft manuscript:

²⁴ Chapter Four, pp. 182-194.

Rousseau's *Héloïse* – Lettre 17th Part 4. – Note

sont

“Ces Montagnes si hautes qu’une demi-heure après

^

“le Soleil couche, leurs Sommets sont encore éclairs

“ de ses rayons, dont le rouge forme sur ces cimes

“ blanches une belle couleur de Rose qu’on aperçoit

de fort loin,-----

This applies more particularly to the heights over Meillerie. (*MS M*, fol. 42^v)

[These mountains are so high that a half-hour after sunset their crests are still lit by the sun's rays, the red of which covers these white peaks with a lovely rose colour that can be seen a long way off.]²⁵

This description of the mountains is not taken from the fictional prose of St Preux's correspondence but from one of *Rousseau's* footnotes about Meillerie. It is a reference to the features of the real landscape rather than to the more sentimentalised fictionalised accounts in the novel, which suggests that, in contrast to Shelley who references the letter, Byron is more interested in engaging directly with Rousseau and his factual delineations of the scenery. The inclusion of the quotation shows that Byron has read *La Nouvelle Héloïse*; that his representation of the Alps – ‘The very glaciers have his colours caught, / And sun-set into rose-hues sees them wrought’ (III. 99. 926-27) – is influenced by Rousseau's prose note; but also that he has used poetic licence by borrowing a description of Meillerie and applying it to the summits around Clarens. By playing with Rousseau's landscape writing in this way, Byron upsets the conservative dynamic of literary tourist discourse, which relies on a fixed relationship between the real scenery and the way that it is described in the text, as well as challenging the hierarchical structures implicit in it. In doing so, he paves the way for an account of the Lac Léman boat tour that does not have to follow the pattern established in *La Nouvelle Héloïse*.

²⁵ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Julie or the New Héloïse*, p. 424n.

Unlike Shelley, and other literary tourists before him, Byron does not seek out Julie and St Preux in the scenery or associate the *genius loci* directly with Rousseau. Instead he offers a personified representation of love that is inherent in the landscape: 'Clarens! by heavenly feet thy paths are trod, – / Undying Love's' (III. 100. 932). The image of 'heavenly feet' treading the paths is similar to Shelley's sense of Julie and St Preux 'treading the very ground which now I tread' (SC 571, p. 33), which suggests that there could be a connection between 'Undying Love' and Rousseau's fictional characters. However, the apostrophe to Clarens here and in the first line of stanza 99 – 'Clarens! Sweet Clarens, birth-place of deep Love!' (III. 99. 923) – implies that Byron is evoking the spirit of place as his muse. Repeated references to the poetic qualities of the location also position the landscape as an independent imaginative force. The air is 'the young breath of passionate thought' (III. 99. 924); the trees 'take root in Love' (III. 99. 925); and the mountains narrate their own story: 'The permanent crags, tell here of Love' (III. 99. 929). What Byron seems to be saying is that, although Clarens is always associated with Rousseau's novel, it is in fact an inherently poetic place where the landscape creates material for the writer, rather than the writer creating the landscape:

'Twas not for fiction chose Rousseau this spot,
 Peopling it with affections; but he found
 It was the scene which passions must allot
 To the mind's purified beings; 'twas the ground
 Where early Love his Psyche's zone unbound,
 And hallowed it with loveliness (III. 104. 968-73)

Any hint that Clarens is infused with 'Love' because of *La Nouvelle Heloise* is undercut by Byron's assertion that this pervading spirit was already present before Rousseau conceived his novel. The use of 'found' and 'must' suggests that the unique qualities of

the scene were waiting to be discovered and demanding to be written. The reference to 'early Love' locates the moment when the place was 'hallowed [...] with loveliness' in the distant past; the implication being that its sacred qualities existed pre-Rousseau. Byron's emphasis is on the real landscape: 'here the Rhone / Hath spread himself a couch, the Alps have rear'd a throne' (III. 104. 975-76). This privileging of the actual place over its literary counterpart has the effect both of displacing Rousseau's authorship of place and of demonstrating the authority of Byron's account.

Sometime after his return to Villa Diodati, Byron inserted a transcript of stanzas 99-104 into Claire Claremont's fair copy of Canto III and made a lengthy addition to the prose note from the first draft. Although he does not make any changes to the poem, like Shelley, Byron revisits and augments the prose element of his earlier writing beginning by quoting the following extract from Rousseau's *Confessions*:

J'allai à Vévay loger à la Clef, et pendant deux jours que j'y restai sans voir personne, je pris pour cette ville un amour qui m'a suivi dans tous mes voyages, et qui m'y a fait établir enfin les héros de mon roman. Je dirois volontiers à ceux qui ont du goût et qui sont sensibles: allez à Vévay – visitez le pays, examinez les sites, promenez-vous sur le lac, et dites si la Nature n'a pas fait ce beau pays pour une Julie, pour une Claire et pour un St Preux; mais ne les y cherchez pas. (BCPW, p. 312n)

[On arriving at Vevay I put up at 'The Key', and in the two days that I spent there without seeing anyone I took a liking to the town, which has remained with me on all my journeys, and which finally caused me to make the characters of my novel live there. I would say to all those possessed of taste and feeling: "Go to Vevay, explore the countryside, examine the scenery, walk beside the lake, and say whether Nature did not make this lovely land for a Julie, a Claire, and a Saint Preux. But do not look for them there".]²⁶

Rousseau both initiates and denies the function of the literary tourist here. As he makes clear, 'Nature' is the true creator while he is just a translator of what is already present.

²⁶ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Confessions*, trans. by J. M. Cohen (London: Penguin, 1953), p. 149

The inference is that anyone equipped with the appropriate sensibility could have placed ‘a Julie, a Claire, and a Saint Preux’ in this beautiful setting. Conveniently, Rousseau’s comments coincide with the views Byron expresses in the poem, and quoting from the *Confessions* in the note creates the impression that he is following Rousseau’s instructions by recognising nature as the origin of the *genius loci*. After adding weight to his opinions by informing the reader that he ‘made a voyage round the Lake of Geneva’ undertaking a ‘survey of all the scenes most celebrated by Rousseau in his *Heloise*’ (*BCPW*, p. 312n), Byron reinforces the central message of stanzas 99-104:

If Rousseau had never written, nor lived, the same associations would not less have belonged to such scenes. He has added to the interest of his works by their adoption; he has shown his sense of their beauty by the selection; but they have done that for him which no human being could do for them. (*BCPW*, p. 312n)

By claiming that the ‘associations’ derive from the scenery rather than an imaginative source, Byron is, according to Watson, ‘denying Rousseau primacy over the meaning of the landscape’ (p. 144). In a final swipe at his literary predecessor, Byron wryly remarks that Rousseau’s legacy has ultimately proved itself to be transient: ‘Rousseau has not been particularly fortunate in the preservation of the “local habitations” he has given to “airy nothings”’ (*BCPW*, p. 313n). As Watson observes, it is perhaps fitting that after the publication of *Childe Harold III* ‘the environs of Geneva would remain the country of Julie and Rousseau, but it would be seen largely through the lens of Byron’s famous celebration’ (p. 144). Yet despite Byron’s attempts to contest the primacy of Rousseau’s prose, he does still end up confronting an inevitable consequence of literary possession, which is similarly encountered by post-Wordsworthian authors who write about the Lake District. In his work on the twentieth-century Cumberland poet Norman Nicholson, David

Cooper draws attention to Nicholson's 'inability to circumnavigate the region's literary heritage' and to overcome "'the problem of precedent'".²⁷ As Cooper recognises, the main problem of precedent is the impossibility of ever removing a literary association once it has been established. For Byron, then, even to deny Rousseau's literary influence is to respond and, therefore, to reassert the enduring power of his predecessor's prose.

Shelley and Byrons' prose and poetry offer two different examples of creative literary tourism. On the one hand there is a model of writing that pays homage to the genius of the earlier author and his text; while on the other there is an attempt to engage with and try to reclaim the legacy of the previous response. Although the end products are fundamentally different, both of these approaches depend on the same shared imaginative process: reading the novel *in situ*; viewing the landscape through the descriptions and events in the text; evaluating the relationship between scenery and text; writing a response; and, finally, re-evaluating that response either by re-reading the novel or imaginatively revisiting the locations around the lake. What Byron and Shelley's accounts demonstrate is that their brand of literary tourism is characterised by a series of complex interactions between place, text, reader, writer and re-writer. For established literary figures, like them, the stakes are high because their interpretation of the landscape needs to show their creative strengths in the context of the legacy of another author. To put it another way, *how* they engage with Rousseau and *La Nouvelle Heloise* determines the perceived effectiveness of their accounts because, whether reverential or contentious, it is on this

²⁷ David Cooper, 'Staying Put: Norman Nicholson and the Poetics of Place and Space' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Lancaster University, 2007), p. 172.

basis that their writings will be evaluated by their readers who are either presented with a doubled literary response or who must privilege the new response *over* the old one.

Rousseau is not the only literary influence Byron and Shelley were exposed to during their time on Lac Léman: they would also have had an impact, direct or indirect, on each other. The tour proved fruitful for Byron who not only composed the *Childe Harold III* stanzas but also the 'Prisoner of Chillon' during the journey. However, as Richard Holmes notes, creatively 'Shelley was unusually subdued in the older poet's presence', but in addition to his journal he probably also began 'Hymn to Intellectual Beauty'.²⁸ In his work on the relationship between the two poets, Charles Robinson suggests that 'the literary influences that such different poets provided for each other were [...] of a complex nature' and, as a consequence, are difficult to identify with any certainty.²⁹ There is no evidence to suggest that Byron and Shelley discussed the literary endeavours that they were undertaking during the boat tour and, as such, it is important to look for material evidence of connections between their writings from that period. For the most part, these connections become apparent at the publication stage. By the time *History* appeared in late 1817, *Childe Harold III* had already become a huge commercial success, and there are compelling indications that some of Shelley's contributions to the editing and construction of *History* were designed to exploit his association with Byron.

Although Shelley does not name Byron in the boat tour letter in *History*, he drops hints as to the identity of his companion. He refers to the tour Byron had undertaken during the

²⁸ Richard Holmes, *Shelley: The Pursuit* (London: Harper Perennial, 2005), pp. 334-36.

²⁹ Charles E. Robinson, *Shelley and Byron: The Snake and Eagle Wreathed in Fight* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), p. 12.

composition of the first two cantos of *Childe Harold*, writing that the inn ‘reminded my companion of Greece: it was five years, he said, since he had slept in such beds’ (*HSWT*, p. 112). He also mentions his fellow traveller gathering leaves in memory of Gibbon – a writer who is eulogised in *Childe Harold III* (III. 105-108. 977-1012). Byron is then even more explicitly evoked in the ‘Preface’ to *History*, which was written by Shelley but is presented in Mary’s narrative voice. The reader is invited to join the author ‘sailing with her down the castled Rhine, through scenes beautiful in themselves, but which, since she visited them, a great Poet has clothed with the freshness of a diviner nature’ (*HSWT*, p. iv-v). The allusion is to the Rhine stanzas in *Childe Harold III* and it identifies the ‘great Poet’ as Byron, linking him with the description of the boat tour that follows: ‘They will be interested to hear of one who has visited Mellerie, and Clarens and Chillon, and Vevai [*sic*] – classic ground, peopled with tender and glorious imaginations of the past and present’ (*HSWT*, p. v). The ‘glorious’ imagination of the present is again a reference to Byron and, when coupled with the hints in the letter, it invites the reader to identify him as Shelley’s travelling companion.

In an article on Shelley’s Lac Léman letter in *History*, Robert Brinkley suggests that ‘the Preface [to *History*] implicitly offers the Lake Geneva letter as a context for poetry Byron had just published’.³⁰ In other words, Shelley is reasserting the shared dynamic of the travel and writing experience by deliberately positioning his letter as an accompaniment, or alternative, to Byron’s poetic representation in *Childe Harold III*. According to Brinkley, Shelley’s ultimate aim is to present ‘Byron’s poetry as an interpretative setting for “Mont Blanc”’ by pitting his insistence ‘on the power of an individual creative mind’

³⁰ Brinkley, ‘Documenting Revision’, 74.

against Byron's pantheistic emphasis on the relation of the individual imagination to the whole: 'I live not in myself, but I become/ Portion of that around me' (III. 72. 680-81).³¹ It may be the case that Shelley's structuring of the volume is driven by a desire to offer a new poetical model in 'Mont Blanc' through an indirect comparison with Byron's poetics, but it seems equally likely that he was taking advantage of Byron's popularity in an attempt to secure a readership not only for *History*, but for one of his major poems and for *Frankenstein*, which was due for publication in 1818. Whatever the reason, both the composition and publication contexts reflect the shared nature of the original experience.

Sharing 'Mont Blanc': Letter Writing and the Poetics of Place

In the final section of this chapter I want to turn to consider the shared dynamics of composition and publication in relation to 'Mont Blanc' by exploring the relationship between that poetic text and the 22nd July letter to Peacock which was written at the same time as the poem and published immediately before it in *History*. Existing criticism on 'Mont Blanc' tends to focus on discrete poetic interpretation and, as a result, key textual issues raised by the simultaneous writing of the letter and the poem have been neglected.³² The aim here is to redress that balance by centring on the letter and thinking

³¹ Brinkley, 'Documenting Revision', 82, 78-9.

³² The only critic to have considered the letter in relation to the composition of 'Mont Blanc' is Robert Brinkley. He uses examples from the correspondence to support a broader argument about the composition of the poem whereas I am primarily interested in the function of the letter. Robert Brinkley, 'Spaces Between Words: Writing *Mont Blanc*', in *Romantic Revisions*, ed. by Robert Brinkley and Keith Hanley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 243-267. For other excellent interpretations of 'Mont Blanc' itself see Earl Wasserman, *Shelley: A Critical Reading* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971); Michael O'Neill, *The Human Mind's Imaginings: Conflict and Achievement in Shelley's Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989); Frances Ferguson, 'Shelley's "Mont Blanc": What the Mountain Said', in *Shelley*, ed. by Michael O'Neill (London: Longman, 1993), pp. 202-214; and Jonathan Wordsworth, 'The Secret Strength of Things', *The Wordsworth Circle*, 18 (1997), 99-107.

about its connection with 'Mont Blanc'. How is the letter functioning in relation to the poem and what part does it play in the creative process of 'Mont Blanc'? In addressing these questions what I will show is that, just as for the other texts in *History*, the composition of 'Mont Blanc' relies on a shared and intertextual representation of the actual experience of place; a sharing which is then further replicated in the nature and situation of its first publication.

An obvious starting point for this discussion is the order of composition of the poem and the letter, which will clarify the relationship between these two texts at the time of writing.³³ Both poem and letter were begun during Shelley's seven-day tour of Chamonix with Mary and Claire. The party followed a well-established tourist route travelling from Geneva to St Martin on Sunday 21st July; tracing the banks of the Arve to Servoz and crossing the Bridge of the Arve on 22nd July; visiting the Glacier des Bossons on 23rd July; the Mer de Glace on 25th July; and returning via St Martin to Geneva by 27th July. It was from the bridge, also known as Pont Pellisier, that Shelley caught his first inspiring glimpse of Mont Blanc and probably began writing the opening lines of the poem. As Michael Erkelenz suggests in his introduction to the *Geneva Notebook* facsimile, 'since Shelley's first title of the poem was 'At Pont Pellisier', we can reasonably assume that he gave immediate impression to his inspiration. The draft begins in pencil, a fact which suggests outdoor composition'.³⁴

³³ Although the compositional account that follows merits further study, it is given here only to identify the cross-over between the writing of the letter and 'Mont Blanc'.

³⁴ Michael Erkelenz (ed.), *The Bodleian Shelley Manuscripts: The Geneva Notebook of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, vol. 11 (New York: Garland, 1992), p. xxv. The first draft manuscript of 'Mont Blanc' is contained in the notebook Shelley adds. e.16 held at the Bodleian Library. Following my examination of the 'Mont Blanc' MS, I support Erkelenz's view that the poem was most likely begun on 22nd July on the bridge.

Following this first bout of composition, Shelley deliberately alternated between pencil and ink throughout the draft manuscript. These shifts from pencil to ink and ink to pencil suggest that the poem was drafted in six separate compositional sittings (fig. 5.2). The first four of these can be dated between 22nd-24th July, although, with the exception of the opening lines, it is not possible to state with any certainty on which dates each of the other sets of lines were written. The fifth sitting must have taken place either on the 25th July or after that date because it contains images of the Mer de Glace, visited by Shelley on that day. Similarly, the sixth and longest compositional sitting, during which the last half of the poem was composed, must have occurred after Shelley's visit to the Mer de Glace because it also contains lines on the glacier. As Erkelenz notes, it is probable that this 'second half of the poem, which appears to have been written in one sitting, dates either from the Shelley's second stay at St Martin on the twenty-sixth, or from the period after their return to Geneva on the twenty-seventh' (p. xxv). Given the amount of text in this part of the poem it seems highly likely that it was written once Shelley was back in Geneva.

Later on the day that Shelley wrote the opening lines of 'Mont Blanc', he also began the letter to Peacock which covers the period from 21st-27th July. Shelley had initially recorded his response to the journey to St Martin on 21st July in the shared *Journal*. On the evening of 22nd July Shelley started the letter to Peacock with a shortened version of this account before going on to write a new and detailed description of that day's ascent to Chamonix. He did not add anything to the letter on 23rd July, probably on account of the sight-seeing that he was doing, but on 24th July, when he was confined at the inn

Figure 5.2: ‘Mont Blanc’ Order of First Draft Composition

Probable Date	Probable Location	MS composition	Equivalent lines in final version
22 nd July	Pont Pellisier	Pencil composition of initial title and opening lines of the poem from ‘At Pont Pellisier’ to ‘no other sound cd tame’ (p. 7, line 2 - p. 4, line 20)	1-20: ‘The everlasting universe of things’ to ‘Thy giant brood of pines around thee clinging’ 21-4: Children of an elder time’ to ‘an old and solemn harmony’ 31 ‘A loud lone sound no other sound can tame’
22 nd -24 th July	Chamonix	Ink composition from ‘Children of elder time’ to ‘Ravine of Arve-- [? some] thy’ (p. 11, lines 3-31). In some instances the inked lines replace the existing pencil text below.	21-4 (revision): Children of an elder time’ to ‘an old and solemn harmony’ 30-34: ‘The caverns echoing to the Arve’s commotion’ to ‘Dizzy Ravine!’
22 nd -24 th July	Chamonix	Pencil revision from ‘Thou art Pervaded’ to the erasure of ‘thy’ (p. 11, lines 25-30); Pencil composition from ‘when I gaze on thee’ to ‘the [?] busy] s’ (p. 11, line 29-p. 13, line 36) Pencil composition from ‘Thy/ine earthly rainbow’ to ‘in its own eternity’ (p. 11, lines 32-49)	32-34 (revision): ‘Thou art pervaded with that ceaseless motion’ to ‘Dizzy Ravine’. Including completion of line 34 ‘and when I gaze on thee’ 35-47: ‘I seem as in a trance sublime and strange’ to ‘Some phantom, some faint image’ 25-9: ‘Thine earthly rainbows’ to ‘Wraps all in its own deep eternity’.

22 nd -24 th July	Chamonix	Ink revision to the title of the poem "The Scene at the extremity of the vale of Servoz" (p. 7, lines 1-3) Ink revision: Shelley erases the line 'troop of untold thoughts' and replaces it with 'legion of wild', he also adds 'Near' and erases the word 'likeness' (p. 13, lines, 13, 19, and 28) Ink composition from 'the breast' to 'with aspiration' p. 13, line 29-p. 15, line 5	41-46 (minor revision): 'One legion of wild thoughts' to 'some shade of thee' 47-57: 'till the breast' to 'For the very spirit fails'
25 th July or after this date	Montanvers/Inn at St Martin	Pencil revision to 'for the very mind is faint/With aspiration' (p. 15, line 9) Pencil composition from 'for the very spirit fails' to 'how hideously they overhang the vale' (p. 15, lines 9-21)	57 (revision): 'For the very spirit fails' 58-63: 'Driven like a homeless cloud' to 'Pile around it ice and rock'
Post-25 th July	Inn at St Martin/Geneva	Ink revision to 'how hideously they overhang the Vale!' (p. 15, lines 20-21) Ink composition from 'vast chasms between' to 'silence and solitude were vacancy' (p. 17, line 1-p. 29, line 3)	63 (revision): 'broad vales between' 64-144: 'Of frozen floods, unfathomable deeps' to 'Silence and solitude were vacancy?'

The order of composition given here is my own. All MS page and line references in the table are taken from the facsimile

because of heavy rain, he added a long entry covering both days. For the remainder of the letter, Shelley composed entries for the 25th, 26th and 27th July on a daily basis.

The most interesting aspects of this compositional account, in terms of the creative dynamic between the letter and the poem, are the periods of writing that concern 22nd July, and 25th July onwards. In the first instance, the opening entries in the letter are written *after* the opening lines of 'Mont Blanc' are drafted on a bridge over the Arve. In the second, the letter is being composed *before* the later sections of 'Mont Blanc' and the poem begins to rely more heavily on the prose account of the scenery. In the section that follows, I will discuss examples from each of these periods of writing.

Epistolarity and Poetics

It is necessary to situate the discussion that follows within a brief consideration of the letter form and the role of the addressee because this is crucial to the engagement with place that Shelley articulates in the letter text. As I suggested in Chapter One on Thomas Gray's correspondence, Altman argues that the 'epistolary situation' is dependent on a reciprocal relationship between the 'I' and 'You' of the letter-writing utterance. A vital part of this relationship is that the intended addressee determines the tone and content of a letter.³⁵ This awareness of addressee consciousness at the time of writing is important and, as Altman notes, 'as a document addressed to another, the letter reflects the need for an audience, an audience that may suddenly expand when that document is [...] shared or

³⁵ Altman, *Epistolarity: Approaches to a Form*, p.117. All subsequent references to this text will be given parenthetically.

published' (pp. 186-7). The writing of a letter, then, is driven by a desire to communicate with a specific and receptive correspondent. Moreover, through its active address to a reader, the letter anticipates an audience, making it a useful interim space for experimenting with ideas that the writer might wish to make available to a broader readership.

As a fellow author with an interest in travel and poetry, it is Peacock who performs the role of the ideal correspondent for Shelley's travel letters (in much the same way that Richard West and Thomas Wharton did for Gray), not only during the 1816 summer in Switzerland but throughout Shelley's later residence in Italy. As discussed earlier in the chapter, Shelley had already sent Peacock his lengthy epistolary account of the boat tour around Lac Léman with Lord Byron at the end of July – a version of which is published as 'Letter III' in *History*. The Chamonix letter, which followed in August, provided a further account of Shelley's Swiss excursions. From the beginning of this letter, Shelley demonstrates an explicit awareness of his addressee:

I do not err in conceiving that you are interested in details of all that is majestic or beautiful in nature—But how shall I describe to you the scenes by which I am now surrounded.—To exhaust epithets which express the astonishment & the admiration—the very excess of satisfied expectation, where expectation scarcely acknowledged any boundary—is this to impress upon your mind the images which fill mine now, even until it overflows? I too have read before now the raptures of travellers. I will be warned by their example. I will simply detail to you, all that I can relate, or all that if related I could enable you to conceive of what we have done or seen. (*LPBS*, I, p. 495).

Shelley immediately engages Peacock by stating his intention to satisfy his correspondent's interest in the natural world and, later in the passage, by referring to Peacock's awareness of other examples of travel writing: 'I *too* have read before now the

raptures of travellers'. This highly self-conscious address to the reader expresses concern about how the experience of place can be communicated without resorting to the clichés of travel literature; while the use of the rhetorical question implies that the language of 'astonishment' is insufficient to 'impress' upon the mind of Peacock the images that are dominating the mind of the letter writer. Shelley's doubts about the limitations of language, which are expressed again in the final lines of the extract, register an anxiety about composing an account that will accurately capture the essence of the experience for Peacock – and anticipate a core concern in 'Mont Blanc'. In the end, Shelley states that he will 'simply detail' any aspect of his engagement with the landscape that he can convey effectively to his correspondent, emphasising the extent to which an awareness of his addressee will be at the centre of his writing process. This positions the letter not as a straightforwardly descriptive piece of prose but as a space for exploring how to textualise a direct encounter with place for a reader who has not experienced it first hand.

In the letter entry for 22nd July, Shelley attempts to articulate for Peacock the physical and imaginative effect of his first glimpse of the Mont Blanc chain:

I never knew I never imagined what mountains were before. The immensity of these aerial summits excited, when they suddenly burst upon the sight, a sentiment of extatic [*sic*] wonder, not unallied to madness—And remember this was all one scene. It all pressed home to our regard & to our imagination. (*LPBS*, I, p. 497)

The opening comment – 'I never knew I never imagined what mountains were before' – establishes two primary modes of responding to the landscape. There is the knowledge brought about by a sensory experience of the mountains in the form of a 'sudden burst upon the sight' and the internalisation of that experience in the imagination: 'a sentiment

is the same as that established later that evening in the passage quoted above from the letter (*LPBS*, p. 497). The correspondence, then, is engaging with the complex issues of representation that Shelley is also addressing in the opening of 'Mont Blanc'. This thematic cross-over suggests that the letter is acting as a mediating space where Shelley can reflect on, and explore more explicitly, the imaginative processes of the poem.

Issues of representation are also directly raised again in the entry for 22nd July in another, more complex, replaying of the place-mind dynamic from the opening of the poem:

The ravine, clothed with gigantic pines and black with the depth below.—so deep that the very roaring of the untameable Arve which rolled through it could not be heard above—was close to our very footsteps. All was as much our own as if we had been the creators of such impressions in the minds of others, as now occupied our own.—Nature was the poet whose harmony held our spirits more breathless than that of the divinest. (*LPBS*, I. p. 497)

There is a transition from the visual to the imaginative here as the description of the ravine gives way to an attempt to articulate the psychological impression that it creates. However, Shelley is not only engaging with the process of landscape description but also with his ideas about a place-specific poetics. What Shelley seems to be saying in the final, difficult, sentences of this extract is that the scene is as much a part of his being as if *he* were able to author such an image in *someone else's* mind as had been placed in *his* mind by Nature: 'All was as much our own as if we had been the creators of such impressions in the minds of others, as now occupied our own'. This is an odd way to describe an intense response because he immediately externalises his imaginative possession of the scene. In this double process of receiving and transmitting, Shelley sets up a tripartite

³⁸ Angela Leighton, *Shelley and the Sublime: An Interpretation of the Major Poems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 63.

dynamic between Nature as the originating ‘poet’ of the scene; himself (implicitly) as another poet who will receive the images from Nature and communicate them to the reader; and a receptive reader who will receive those images ready-formed by him – there is an echo here of the rhetorical question that Shelley asks Peacock at the beginning of the letter: ‘is this to impress upon your mind the images which fill mine now’. Although Shelley appears to set up a direct analogy between Nature and the poet, the comparison is ultimately misleading because whereas the poet perceives and creates external objects in an act of representation; Nature, as both the creator and the entity created, *is* what it represents. The analogy arguably symbolises Shelley’s (unachievable) desire for pure representation; for a “living” poetry that is as immediate as the experience and which is able to overcome the linguistic limitations of the medium.³⁹

It is precisely this kind of poetry that Shelley explores in the amalgamation of the mind and the external world at the beginning of ‘Mont Blanc’, which demonstrates that the correspondence is in dialogue with the poem; giving a complex prose account of what Shelley was trying to achieve in the opening lines of the draft manuscript. The letter is actively engaging with the process of creating poetry, not just in terms of what Shelley has already composed but also in relation to what he still has to write. By working through core issues about the nature of poetic representation, specifically in relation to the landscape, Shelley moves toward outlining an ideal poetics of place in which the imagination and Nature exist as one in a suspended state. What is particularly interesting about this poetics is that it is shared *three times* over. The direct encounter with the scene

³⁹ I would like to thank Sally Bushell for her insightful comments on my interpretation of this passage from the letter.

is presented in social rather than individual terms – ‘All was as much *our own*’ – and also described in the letter for Peacock. Then, the projection of that experience is explicitly positioned as a creative engagement with multiple ‘others’. Just as the content of the letter anticipates poetry (and implicitly ‘Mont Blanc’) as a shared experience, so too does its form which addresses a recipient whom Shelley has primed from the beginning of the epistle to be receptive to his ideas about the textual representation of landscape.

Intertextual Composition

From 25th July onwards that portion of the letter, which is written before the second half of the poem, actively contributes to the composition of ‘Mont Blanc’. After Shelley’s visit to the Mer de Glace on 25th July the poem is haunted by recurring images of glacial landscapes reworked from the prose account. The presence of so many descriptions of glaciers in the letter is again for Peacock’s benefit as Shelley’s brief discussion of the theories of the natural historian Comte de Buffon shows⁴⁰:

I will not pursue Buffons [*sic*] sublime but gloomy theory, that this earth which we inhabit will at some future period be changed into a mass of frost. Do you who assert the supremacy of Ahriman [Ahrimanes] imagine him throned among these desolating snows, among these palaces of death & frost. (LPBS, I, p. 499)

Shelley’s fascination with glacial theory presupposes a knowledgeable and interested audience in Peacock – the inference in the rhetorical question is that he is familiar with the theory and will agree with Shelley’s opinion. This scientific reflection on the glaciers

⁴⁰ George Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon (1707-1788) is famous for the 44 volume work *Histoire Naturelle, Générale et Particulière*, which was first published in Paris between 1749 and 1804. *Histoire Naturelle* was widely read by Buffon’s contemporaries. In the letter, Shelley is referring to ‘La Théorie de la Terre’ (1749), which is the first volume of *Histoire Naturelle* (LPBS, p. 499n).

is in keeping with Shelley's topographical descriptions of these natural phenomenon in the letter. Yet, in a translation of ideas across different forms, the epistolary descriptions also directly influence the images in the poem. Among these images is the first appearance in the draft of the mountain that will eventually give the poem its title:

*Far far above piercing the infinite sky
still, snowy & serene
Mont Blanc appears, & all its subject mount
every pyramid
below and all around
Its subject mountains their unearthly forms
Pile round it, ice & rock-- how hideously
They overhang the Vale! (BSM, p. 15)*

The inspiration for these lines is a prose entry from 25th July in the letter to Peacock:

On all sides precipitous mountains the abodes of unrelenting frost surround this vale. Their sides are banked up with ice & snow broken & heaped up & exhibiting terrific chasms. The summits are sharp & naked pinnacles whose overhanging steepness will not even permit snow to rest there. They pierce the clouds like things not belonging to this earth. (*LPBS*, I, p. 500)

In the draft of the poem, the mountain simile in the final line of the letter is broken down so that the summits that ‘pierce the clouds’ are reconfigured as Mont Blanc ‘*piercing the infinite sky*’; while the Alpine peaks surrounding it become ‘*unearthly forms*’ rather than ‘things not belonging to this earth’. What is striking about these changes is that the expression in the letter makes use of a poetic device, while the poem offers these reworked phrases as more direct descriptions of the landscape. It is in the letter that Shelley first articulates his experience of the landscape in prose before reworking and adopting certain aspects of it in ‘Mont Blanc’.

The role of the letter as a translating medium for 'Mont Blanc' can be further illustrated with another glacial passage from the second half of the manuscript:

~~vast chasms between~~
~~[? Waves]~~
~~vast chasms between~~
broad vales

Of ~~rifted ice~~

Of frozen waves , [] / unfathomable deeps--
spread

Blue as the overhanging Heaven, that ~~spread wind~~
wind

comp accumulated
And ~~spread~~ among the/e ste[]/eps

by/by
peopled with the w/storms alone

[] / A ~~lifeless desert~~/desart ~~solitude how hideously~~
~~Save~~

~~Column & pinnacle & pyramid~~
~~And Now clothed in beams~~

~~lee~~ Frost here makes mockery of human pow (BSM, p. 17)

The strikingly visceral detail of these lines can again be traced back to Shelley's letter account of the Mer de Glace:

The vale itself is filled with a mass of undulating ice, & has an ascent sufficiently gradual even to the remotest abysses of these horrible deserts [...] It exhibits an appearance as if frost had suddenly bound up the waves & whir[l]pools of a mighty torrent. We walked to some distance upon its surface,—the waves are elevated about 12 or 15 feet from the surface of the mass which is intersected with long gaps of unfathomable depth, the ice of whose sides is more beautifully azure than the sky. (LPBS, I, p. 500)

There is an inversion of similes here which works across the two texts. In the letter, Shelley's experience of walking upon the surface of the glacier results in a simile that seems strangely detached from the physicality of that experience: 'as if frost had suddenly bound up the waves'. In the poem, however, that description is turned into a more self-assured assertion that the 'broad vales' are literally 'Of frozen waves', as the uncertainty registered in the prose is replaced by poetic conviction in the image. Conversely, the

direct comment in the letter that the ‘unfathomable depth’ of the ice ‘is more beautifully azure than the sky’ is softened in the poem to ‘unfathomable deeps / Blue as the overhanging heaven’. These subtle changes show that the letter has a dual intertextual function in relation to the poem: it enables Shelley either to tone down or to emphasise the poetics of an already-expressed impression of the landscape.

Examining the relationship between the letter and ‘Mont Blanc’ reveals that Shelley’s epistolary prose plays a vital role in the composition of the poem. As a space where Shelley can develop his ideas about the poetics of place for a like-minded addressee, the letter anticipates a receptive audience for the complex issues of representation that he also explores in ‘Mont Blanc’. More directly, the intertextual model of composition, whereby material from the letter is translated into ‘Mont Blanc’, has the effect of implicitly writing a reader into the poem. It is Peacock who performs the crucial function of Shelley’s ideal projected reader for ‘Mont Blanc’, which means that inherent in the text right from the early stage of its development is the desire for an audience who will share in, and appreciate, Shelley’s poetic response to the landscape.

Publishing ‘Mont Blanc’

An awareness of readership also seems to explain why Shelley decides to publish the letter immediately preceding the poem in *History*. As Donald Reiman notes in *Shelley and his Circle*:

The successful poetry of Shelley and the Romantics has been best described as a poetry of “progressive revelation” or shared discovery, a poetry that recreates the poet’s situations and

emotional states so that the reader enters into his experience and with him earns the right to the emotions expressed therein. "Mont Blanc" is a poem with an abrupt beginning that [...] requires such a context of experience to involve the reader in the poet's emotion. (SC 571, p.43)

The 'context of experience' to which Reiman is referring here is the letter to Peacock and he is surely right to suggest that it functions almost as an extended preface to 'Mont Blanc' emotionally and physically locating what feels like an otherwise dislocated (and dislocating) poetic opening. As I have been suggesting, the emphasis on 'shared discovery' is inherent in the letter and the poem from the start – neither are meant as an isolated encounter with the Alps – and in the published work that emphasis is repeated as the reader imaginatively journeys with Shelley through the Vale of Chamouni in the letter, experiencing with him the powerful sublimity that stimulates the writing of 'Mont Blanc'. In *History*, the page between the letter and the poem contains the title 'Lines Written in the Vale of Chamouni [*sic*]' (HSWT, p. 173) which, as well as alluding to Samuel Taylor Coleridge's 'Hymn before Sun-rise, in the Vale of Chamouny [*sic*]' (1802),⁴¹ directly connects the epistolary scenes of the tour to the composition of the poem that follows in the volume.

The letter, then, stands as evidence of a geographically inspired and located poetic process. Shelley is effectively authenticating the act of writing 'Mont Blanc' for the reader by demonstrating, in a similar way to Byron in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage I-III*,

⁴¹ Coleridge's 'Hymn' was published in the eleventh issue of *The Friend* (26th October 1809). Charles Robinson has proven that Shelley was a regular reader of Coleridge's periodical and he suggests that 'Shelley or Byron carried a copy of the periodical to Geneva and that Shelley read Coleridge's *Hymn Before Sunrise* immediately before he wrote *Mont Blanc*' (*Shelley and Byron: The Snake and Eagle Wreathed in Fight*, p. 36). Unlike Shelley, however, Coleridge did not actually visit Chamouni but wrote 'Hymn' after a divine experience on the top of Scafell Pike in the Lake District. For a detailed comparison of 'Mont Blanc' and 'Hymn' see Sally West, *Coleridge and Shelley: Textual Engagement* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 73-98.

that he has been to the place that has inspired the text and written on the spot. As the 'Preface' to *History* makes clear 'Mont Blanc' was 'composed under the immediate impression of the deep and powerful objects which it attempts to describe' (*HSWT*, p. vi). The change of the title in the manuscript from 'At Pont Pellisier' to 'The scene of Pont Pellisier at the extremity of the valley of the vale of the Servoz' (*BSM*, p. 7) reflects Shelley's desire to identify accurately the physical locus of his inspiration. The final double title in *History* – 'Mont Blanc: Lines Written in the Vale of Chamouni' – opens up the geographical range of the experience so that it connects, more directly, with the tour described in the letter. As Robert Brinkley notes, 'Mont Blanc' is '*not* all one scene but a sequence of images, a revision of different experiences and impressions over a period of days'.⁴² The final title of the poem is indicative of this scenic diversity and further authenticates Shelley's composition of the poem.

In the light of Shelley's desire to present 'Mont Blanc' as arising from an actual experience of place and to contextualise the poem in that way for the reader, there is a clear rationale for publishing the letter and the poem together. This does not, however, fully explain Shelley's reasons for first publishing 'Mont Blanc' at the end of a travel volume – he could, after all, just have published the poem with the letter. Reiman suggests that *History* may 'have been intended by Shelley (with or without Mary's knowledge) as another of his ideological Trojan horses'. According to Reiman, 'because Shelley had learned the hard way [...] that employing clear and candid descriptive titles was not, necessarily, the best method of disseminating his ideas' he had taken to publishing poems in pamphlets where 'readers of the whole would be gradually exposed

⁴² Brinkley, 'Spaces Between Words', p. 245.

to subversively radical doctrine' (SC 571, pp. 41-42). There are radical ideas in 'Mont Blanc' – particularly Shelley's insistence on locating an alternative non-religious power in nature – and the poem does contain a revolutionary message in the section where the mountain has 'a voice [...] to repeal / Large codes of fraud and woe' (*HSWT*, p. 179).

Yet it is important to also consider the travelogue as a genre that has a potentially functional as well as textual purpose. The first edition of *History* was pocket-sized so it could be carried on the person of anyone wishing to take the same tour as the Shelleys, and twice in the volume there are references to other texts that have inspired acts of literary tourism. As I mentioned earlier, the 'Preface' alludes to Byron's Rhine stanzas in *Childe Harold III*; while Byron and Shelley's own tour of scenes from Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Heloise* explicitly records a literary tourist expedition. It could be, then, that Shelley is implicitly attempting to establish the Vale of Chamonix, and Mont Blanc, as a site for his *own* brand of literary tourism. If this is the case, his poetics are even more radical than Reiman suggests because they indicate that his ultimate aim may be for the poem to be read on location and for readers to identify with its rhetoric by engaging with the place first hand. This tactic is subversive and takes the notion of a poetry of 'shared discovery' to its extreme. For Shelley, travel is a shared experience, as is the process of writing, so it is understandable that this should follow through to an ambition for a like-minded readership for his poetry who can imaginatively or physically follow in his footsteps.

In terms of reader-reception, in the *Blackwood's* review of *History*, 'Mont Blanc' only merits a cursory mention at the end of the piece. The reviewer suggests that although

‘there is a grandeur both of thought and expression’ – which are ‘indubitable indications of a truly poetical mind’ – the poem is ‘rather too ambitious’ for its context (p. 416). However, if we consider that an active dynamic of shared experience is integral to the coming-into-being of ‘Mont Blanc’ it makes sense that Shelley should publish it in a collaborative volume; a volume which is co-authored and co-edited, and structured around the interaction of multiple generic forms produced out of differently shared acts of writing and travel. To put it another way, the first publication context of ‘Mont Blanc’ is not an anomaly but is absolutely key to understanding the whole nature of the text.

Re-evaluating History

History continues to be marginalised by critics arguably because it destabilises, what Jack Stillinger has termed, the Romantic ‘myth of the solitary genius’. According to Stillinger ‘where others besides the nominal author have a share in the creation of a text, we usually ignore that share or else call it a corruption and try to get rid of it’. Yet as he goes on to suggest, ‘the reality of what authors actually do and how works are actually produced is often – perhaps usually – much more complex than our theories and practices allow.’⁴³ In the case of *History* there seems to be an anxiety that acknowledging the facts of production might deal a fatal blow to the perception of Mary as the creatively autonomous female author of *Frankenstein* and Shelley as the solitary genius who writes ‘Mont Blanc’. Indeed *History* does call those perceptions into question because it shows that different forms of shared writing are not only integral to the development of that text, but also to some of the Shelleys’ other major works.

⁴³ Stillinger, *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius*, p. vi.

To begin with, the collaborative dynamic of the *Journal* and Mary's selective use of her elopement tour text in *History* shows how she defers to Shelley's accounts of the landscape in the published work. Shelley's function in that context also echoes the creative dynamic between him and Mary during the composition of *Frankenstein*. As Charles Robinson notes in his introduction to *The Original Frankenstein*:

Mary appears to have sought Percy's editorial advice after she completed individual chapters or sections of her novel [...] If Mary submitted chapters to Percy as she completed them, then it follows that she would have learned from his editorial changes and advice as she continued to draft her novel.⁴⁴

The textual evidence in the *Frankenstein* drafts indicates that Mary looked to Shelley to aid her growth as a writer – as Robinson observes over the course of the composition of the novel *she does* change her writing habits in line with Shelley's corrections (p. 26). It may be the case, then, that rather than Shelley's editorial role reflecting a gender and literary hierarchy, Mary sought help from him as a means of retaining the collaborative relationship that symbolised so much during the writing of the elopement *Journal*. Taking this further, we might speculate that Mary's posthumous editing of Shelley is an attempt to recover the collaborative partnership that began with the *Journal* and characterised the happiest years of their relationship. As Susan Wolfson observes, Mary's 'tourist notes also involve a private circuit of significance for the editor: she attempts to refresh interest

⁴⁴ Charles E. Robinson, 'Introduction', in *The Original Frankenstein*, ed. by Charles E. Robinson (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2008), pp. 16-37 (p. 25). All subsequent references to this introduction will be given parenthetically.

in Shelley's poetry by means of the very genre in which they had collaborated for her earliest publication, *History of a Six Weeks' Tour*.⁴⁵

In terms of Shelley, his engagement with Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Heloise* foreshadows the impact that past associations with place will have on his later writings. For example, Shelley composes his tragedy *The Cenci* (1819) after reading a manuscript of the Cenci family history at Rome.⁴⁶ Similarly, the presence of Byron during the Lac Léman boat tour, and Shelley's manipulation of his connection with the famous poet in *History*, also marks the beginning of a literary relationship that will continue to influence Shelley's ideas – and which will itself become a stimulus for poetry in 'Julian and Maddalo' (1819).⁴⁷ However, perhaps the most significant thing that *History* reveals about Shelley's poetics is the importance of audience at both the composition and publication stage. In terms of 'Mont Blanc', while the words on the manuscript page remain the product solely of Shelley's imagination, it is necessary to recognise that, for him, composition is not an entirely self-contained act because it relies on the projected presence of a like-minded and receptive reader. As Shelley puts it in the 'Preface' to *Prometheus Unbound* (1820), 'my purpose has hitherto been simply to familiarise the highly refined imagination of the more select classes of poetical readers with beautiful idealisms of moral excellence'.⁴⁸

I want to end by suggesting that *History* effectively supports one of the core arguments of this thesis because it illustrates that considering the textuality of works that are composed

⁴⁵ Susan Wolfson, 'Editorial Privilege: Mary Shelley and Percy Shelley's Audiences', in *The Other Mary Shelley: Beyond Frankenstein*, ed. by Audrey Fisch, Anne Mellor and Esther Schor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) pp. 39-72 (p. 56).

⁴⁶ Shelley, 'The Cenci', *SPP*, pp. 138-202.

⁴⁷ Shelley, 'Julian and Maddalo', *SPP*, pp. 119-135.

⁴⁸ Shelley, 'Prometheus Unbound', *SPP*, pp. 202-286 (p. 209).

during, or emerge out of, the context of travel can fundamentally alter our perception of those texts and their writers. Just as the chapters on Gray, Wollstonecraft and Byron have revealed the important function that travel plays in the development of a selection of their private and public works; this chapter has shown that the Shelleys' travels not only determine what they write but *how* they write. Journeying lays the foundations for a shared creative practice that, with varying levels of intensity, will continue to influence the Shelleys' literary output for the duration of their writing lives.

Conclusion

The core aim of this thesis has been to undertake a rigorous study of textuality and travel by considering the impact that different acts of journeying have on the textual process. Rather than approaching the letters, journals and poems that have been analysed here as generic examples of travel writing – an approach which would necessarily impose artificial limitations on textual interpretation – travel has been understood instead as a physical and imaginative context which directly influences the composition, editing and publication stages of textual development. While most literary critics have, as Peter Shillingsburg notes, ‘frequently taken the text for granted’, it is the complexities of textual composition and multiple versions of texts which, from the outset, have been at the centre of this thesis.¹

Adopting an approach which recognises the effect that the facts of production have on textual identity and meaning has yielded some interesting observations about well-known writers and the texts that they have produced in the context of journeying. To begin with, examining the compositional process has revealed that writers often record their initial responses to travel in a base text – usually, but not always, a journal – which is then used as a source of material for their other private and public travel writings. Thomas Gray keeps his Lake District *Journal* in a notebook before transcribing it into letters; the evidence suggests that Mary Wollstonecraft kept an interim text of *Letters Written During A Short Residence*, and Percy and Mary Shelley both used material from their shared

¹ Peter Shillingsburg, *Resisting Texts: Authority and Subversion in Constructions of Meaning* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1997), p. 37.

Journal in familiar letters and public works. Although Byron does not follow this pattern in *Childe Harold III* – because his creative process is driven by a desire to spontaneously record his poetic engagement with travel – later in the summer of 1816 he does use material from the ‘Alpine Journal’ when writing *Manfred*.²

In addition, by addressing authorial issues of form and textual status it has become apparent that the composition of the travel experience is explicitly determined by four main factors: (1) *why* the author is writing (to communicate with a like-minded companion, to transform the self, to come to terms with exile); (2) *who* the author is writing for (the self, an intimate addressee, a public reader); (3) the *form(s)* in which, or across which, s/he is writing (in a journal, in a letter, in a poem); and (4) *how* s/he is writing (on the move, episodically, retrospectively). This four point approach provides a useful theoretical framework for considering *all* authorial versions of travel texts; and over the course of this study it has revealed unexpected similarities between very different writings.

As I suggested in the Introduction, modes of, and motives for, travel diversify across the Eighteenth Century and Romantic period. While the individual texts do reflect that diversification, all of the featured case studies also show writers who playfully (and often self-consciously) transgress private and public or generic boundaries in their travel writings. Thomas Gray writes poems in his travel letters, Mary Wollstonecraft deliberately manipulates her private correspondence in her public epistolary work, Lord Byron enacts performances of the self in his private correspondence and then experiments

² ‘Alpine Journal’, *BLJ*, V, pp. 96-105; ‘Manfred’, *BCPW*, IV, pp. 51-102.

with them in his poetry, and Percy and Mary Shelley flaunt generic conventions by intertextually sharing material across a variety of textual forms. Carl Thompson has already identified the Romantics' 'profound fascination with the idea and theme of travel'.³ It may be the case that part of that fascination stems not only from the crossing of geographical boundaries and the physical freedoms of travel, but also from the way that they translate into subversive textual freedoms. In other words, travel is a creatively liberating, as well as a physically liberating, force.

Indeed, as this thesis has shown, travel can also play a vital role in contributing to creative development. The Latin poetic epistles that Gray sends to West from the Grand Tour pave the way for his transition into English verse; Byron's episodic composition of *Childe Harold III* in exile anticipates the poetic mode of *Don Juan*; Mary Shelley hones her skills as a writer by collaborating with Shelley during travel; and Shelley begins to move toward articulating an ideal poetics of place when he is in Switzerland. Eric Leed suggests that 'the social transformations of travel are closely connected to the origins of identity, [to] the ways in which a person's selves are defined and made visible'.⁴ What this study has found is that those individuals whose identities are bound up with an awareness of their vocation as authors do often confront their creative self or selves in the texts that they write during periods of journeying. The last two chapters in particular have recontextualised *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage III*, *Frankenstein* and 'Mont Blanc' by revealing how Byron, Mary and Shelley wrote during formative episodes in their literary careers; episodes during which they were also travelling. Moreover, the first chapter on

³ Thompson, *The Suffering Traveller*, p. 6.

⁴ Leed, *The Mind of the Traveller*, p. 263.

Gray and the final chapter on the Shelleys both demonstrate how important critically neglected writings – Gray’s Latin poems, *History of a Six Weeks’ Tour* – are in shedding light on the actual working practices of some of our most well-known authors.

Beyond the compositional context, editing and publication have also been shown to

significantly alter the writer’s original textual engagement with travel or, to put it another way, the facts of production continue to affect textual identity and meaning after travel is over. As this thesis has demonstrated in the chapters on Gray’s *Journal*, Wollstonecraft’s *Letters Written During A Short Residence*, and *History of a Six Weeks’ Tour*, published versions of travel texts, whether authorised or unauthorised, can offer radically different perspectives on the travel experience to those given in the authorial source materials. Indeed the complexities of the published texts that have been discussed here suggest a need for more effective critical editions, which would enable readers to take the history of the text into account at the analytical stage. Editions of this kind might also encourage travel writing critics to move away from a single (published) text model of interpretation.

Although the focus on textuality has usefully opened up critical thinking about the impact of travel on the textual process, the detailed attention to textual analysis does have its limitations. For practical reasons, this study has not been able to engage with enough texts to identify historical trends or shifts in the textuality of eighteenth-century and Romantic travel writings – nor has this been its aim. So while my work here does suggest that

Grand and Picturesque Tour texts can be just as unconventional as their Romantic counterparts,

it may well be the case that Gray’s travel discourses are not representative examples of those types of writing. In fact, Gray’s poetry is often seen as anticipating Romanticism

and this might equally apply to the texts that he writes during his travels.⁵ Furthermore, while my choice of texts and writers has been deliberate, certain authors whose travel texts are of interest have not been included in this study. Most obviously, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William and Dorothy Wordsworth would make ideal future subjects for further investigating the textuality of Romantic travel accounts.

Putting these limitations aside, the findings of this thesis do point toward three main areas where there is still more work to be done. Firstly, the textuality of travel writing requires more critical attention generally, but it would be particularly interesting to open up thinking about textual process beyond the well-known authors that have been discussed in this study. Second, in the case of writers like Gray, Byron and the Shelleys, who continued to travel and to write for the duration of their lives, there is scope for thinking more broadly about how travel has shaped their creative development. Finally, there is also room for a study of textuality and travel across the whole of a writer's *oeuvre*.

⁵ Daniel White notes, for example, that 'Elegy Written in a Country Church Yard' is seen as representing the moment when 'lyric poetry began to take the poet's subjectivity for its subject'. Daniel White, 'Autobiography and Elegy: The Early Romantic Poetic Romantic Poetics of Thomas Gray and Charlotte Smith' in *Early Romantics: Perspectives in British Poetry from Pope to Wordsworth*, ed. by Thomas Woodman (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), pp. 57-69 (p. 57).

Appendix A: *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage III* Order of First Draft Composition

<i>MS B + MS M</i> Order of Composition	McGann Order of Composition <i>MS B + MS M</i> (<i>CPW</i> , pp. 297n-298n)
1-3	1-3
4	4-25
5	
6	
7	
8-12	
13-14	
15-17	
18-20	
21-25	
27-30	
26	27-30
31-32	26
34-39	31-32
40, 42-44	34-39
Drachenfels Lyric	40, 42-44
41	Drachenfels Lyric
45-46	41
47-48, 51	45-57
50, 49, 52	
53-55	
57, 56	
58-62	
63-66	58-62
68-71	63-66
72-74, 76	68-71
77	72-74, 76
110	77
78-81	110
	78-81
	67
75	75
82-87	82-87
89-91	89-91
105-109	105-109
111-112	111-112
115-118	115-118
92-97	McGann includes this last group of stanzas only as part of <i>MS BM</i> (the fair copy in the Scrope Davies Notebook). However, they are part of the first draft MS in the Murray Archive.
98	
113-114	
99-104	
33	

Rationale for the Sub-Division of Compositional Acts

Jerome McGann's excellent work on the composition of *Childe Harold III* both in *Fiery Dust* and *The Complete Poetical Works* provided a vital framework for my analysis of the first draft manuscript (*MS B* and *MS M*). However, before I outline the rationale for the difference between my sequence of first draft composition and that of McGann (given in the table), it is important to note that there are some discrepancies across *MS M*. These arise from differences between McGann's description of the first draft manuscript and my own examination of that manuscript in the Murray Archive at the National Library of Scotland.¹ To begin with, McGann designates stanza 67 as part of the first draft materials (*BCPW*, p. 297n) but this was not included in the manuscript bundle that I looked at and, as such, it is excluded from my order of first draft composition. In addition, first drafts of stanzas 92-97, 98, 113-114, 99-104 and 33 were all in the first draft manuscript at the National Library of Scotland but McGann groups them only as part of the fair copy in the Scrope Davies Notebook (*MS BM*) and not with the first draft (*BCPW*, p. 298n). The only stanza from *Childe Harold III* that is missing both from my own and McGann's account of *MS B* and *MS M* is 88, which was drafted in the fair copy notebook *MS BM*.

Putting these material anomalies aside, the major difference between McGann's order of composition and my account stems from how we have divided individual compositional acts. As the following extract from the commentary to the *Complete Poetical Works*

¹ At the time when McGann was preparing his edition of Byron *MS M* was still kept at the Murray Archive at Albemarle Street in London. The manuscript has only recently been transferred to the National Library of Scotland. The differences between McGann's description of the manuscript and my own suggest that additional first draft stanzas may have been added to *MS M* since his work on the draft.

shows, McGann's grouping of stanzas from *MS M* is determined both by the date on which they were written and the numerical sequence of writing:

The composition sequence of *MS M* is as follows [...] Sts. 4-25, 27-30 (4 May); Sts. 26, 31-2, 34-9, 40, 42-4 (in that order: 5-10 May); Drachenfels lyric (11 May); 41, 45-57 (11-13 May); 58-62 (20-31 May); 63-6, 68-71 (26-31 May); 72-74, 76, 77, 110 (27-31 May); 78-81, 67, 75 (27 May-3 June); 82-7, 89-91, 105-9, 111-12 (4-8 June). (*BCPW*, p. 297n)

In addition to the dates, for the most part McGann has separated stanza groupings where there is a gap in the sequence of composition. For example, he divides the 4th May Waterloo stanzas into '4-25, 27-30' because 26 was not composed until a later date. Where there is separation between stanzas that do follow consecutively, for instance '34-9, 40', McGann uses the division to indicate composition on a different day within a range of dates. If composition of a stanza has occurred out of sequence, McGann only registers it if the inserted stanza (or stanzas) was written at a different time to the sequence where it belongs. Stanza 41, for instance, was composed between 11th-13th May, while the group 40, 42-4 was written between 5th-10th May. It is also for this reason that McGann groups 45-57 together when, as he has already shown in *Fiery Dust*, the stanzas were not composed in sequential order (pp. 308-309). In my order of composition, I have reinstated the original sequencing correctly provided by McGann in *Fiery Dust*.

McGann's order of composition effectively outlines the first draft sequence of Canto III. However, my interest is in the direct relationship between travel and Byron's creative process. As such, I am not just concerned with how many stanzas Byron wrote and on what dates, but also with how many *individual* compositional acts he participated in on a given day. Byron is a writer who clearly values the immediacy and spontaneity of the

poetic response; and whose composition of Canto III is driven by, what his publisher John Murray described as, ‘actual moments of instantaneous inspiration’.² It is important, then, for my compositional account of Canto III to identify each of Byron’s discrete compositional acts (as far as the material evidence allows) because this is the only way to understand the actual workings of his poetic response to his travels.

The part of *MS M* that most obviously raises the issue of multiple compositional acts is the 4th May section comprising of stanzas 4-25 and 27-30 – it is here where my account of composition differs most noticeably from McGann’s. We know from Polidori’s *Diary* that Byron wrote twenty-six stanzas on his 4th May visit to Waterloo – ‘My friend [Byron] has written twenty-six stanzas (?) to-day – some on Waterloo’³ – but it is unlikely that they were all composed in one sitting as Byron was engaged in various acts of sightseeing for the majority of the day. One of the major problems that a considerable amount of writing on location over the course of a single day creates is that it is difficult to clearly distinguish between discrete compositional acts. This is because material differences in handwriting, ink and style of entry on the page are likely to be more subtle than they would be after a break of several days. Nonetheless, as it is possible to see from the table, I have subdivided McGann’s larger compositional block of 4-25 to account for nine shorter bursts of writing, which can be supported with material evidence as follows:

² *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage III* MS, fol. 1^r.

³ *The Diary of Dr John William Polidori 1816*, p. 66. The question mark in the quote was inserted by the editor William Rossetti, who explains it as follows: ‘The entry, as written by Charlotte Polidori stands thus—“26 st.” which I apprehend can only mean “stanzas”’ (p. 67n).

- i) Stanza 4 is written in light ink and Byron's handwriting is fluid but not as neat as on the other pieces. This suggests he may have been writing in a hurry or on the move.
- ii) Stanza 5, although contained on the overleaf of 4, is composed in much darker ink and the handwriting is consistent and fairly neat. These changes to the ink and handwriting indicate that 4 and 5 were probably not composed at the same time.
- iii) Stanza 6 is drafted on a leaf, which also contains 13 and 14 written upside down on the overleaf. It is probably the case that Byron needed to use the free side of the leaf when he wrote 13 and 14 later in the day. Byron's handwriting in 6 is messier than in stanza 5 and there are a number of blots on the page, suggesting that composition may have been rushed. The ink is the same tone as that used to compose 5, so it is likely that 5 and 6 were written relatively close together but probably not at the same time.
- iv) Stanza 7 is written in darker ink and the handwriting is smaller and more untidy than 6, or 8-12, which suggests that it was probably composed independently.
- v) Stanzas 8-12 look to have been composed in the same sitting because the handwriting and ink is consistent across the two leaves that contain them.

vi) Stanzas 13-14 are written in the ink used for 8-12 but the handwriting is slightly larger indicating that they probably were not drafted at the same time.

vii) Stanzas 15-17 are all contained on the same leaf and are written in the ink used for 8-12 and 13-14. However, the cut of the pen appears to be sharper and the handwriting is neat, consistent and not as large as in 13-14, which suggests a different time of composition.

viii) The ink used to compose 18-20 appears to be different to that used for 15-17, the cut of the pen is thicker and Byron's handwriting contains more flourishes. Again, these differences suggest that 18-20 were written at a separate sitting from 15-17.

ix) Stanzas 21-25 seem to have been composed as a unit. The handwriting is messier than that in 18-20 and the stanzas appear to have been composed in a hurry because the writing is not straight on the page and the crossings out are more inaccurate.

Breaking down the sequence of composition in this way is always going to involve an element of speculation because subtle changes in the materiality of the manuscript could be red herrings. Yet it is important to try and distinguish between individual moments of writing, particularly in this section of the canto where Byron's poetic subjects range from the creative manifesto in stanza 6, to the reappearance in the poem of Harold, and finally

to the stanzas on Waterloo. Indeed adding the composition of 27-30 to the breakdown outlined above suggests that Byron may have engaged in as many as ten separate compositional acts over the course of that single day. This paints a picture of a poet who thrives on short bursts of imaginative activity: a picture that is consistent with the fragmentary composition of the canto as a whole.

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