

The Family, the Child, and the Memorial

Godwin and STC take the private and make it public. Both search themselves and their families for meditations on childhood, parenthood, and education (or influence), which are released into the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century literary and intellectual marketplace, and contribute to the ongoing cultural construction of the child. Their children, who are ‘made public’ through this process, respond in kind. I want to begin, therefore, by placing both the act of ‘writing back’ as an auto/biographical form, and the particular constructions the four children are writing back to, within their proper cultural and literary contexts. Godwin and STC’s work belongs to late eighteenth-century and Romantic discourses of nature and education which were both culturally very powerful and far less sharply delineated than criticism has always allowed. The ways in which both authors imagined their own intellectual and personal afterlives, and the ways in which their children chose to memorialise them, meanwhile, must be read through shifting early nineteenth-century theories of literary fame that sought to define the proper relationship between the private and the public individual. Between Godwin and STC’s writing of their children and themselves, and Hartley, Sara, Shelley, and Godwin Jr’s writing back to and re-writing of their fathers, lies a temporal and ethical shift towards a later Romanticism that is sceptical of these discourses of nature and culture in various ways, and sceptical of the possibilities of regeneration and influence that the parent generation seems to promise.

This chapter has two aims, therefore. The first is to locate Godwin and STC within discourses of childhood and society which, according to the remarkably tenacious ‘fantasy versus reason’ reading of the period, are sharply divided along a line separating an Enlightenment-based understanding of the supremacy of culture over a natural state from a Romantic commitment to nature and the child’s inherent prelapsarian ideality. While I do want to preserve the important sense that STC and Godwin’s treatments of childhood and education arise out of discourses which largely have different preoccupations, I wish to avoid the critical polarities which still shape much children’s literature scholarship. These view Romantic authors’ investment in fairy-tale, isolated absorption in rural nature, and distaste for the socially oriented and explicitly ‘improving’ educational literature of the Dissenting tradition either as a narrative of the triumph of the imagination, or as a conservative, socially repressive, and disengaged ideology.¹ However, although the discourses which Godwin and STC write out of are nominally separated by apparently antagonistic commitments to nurture and nature respectively, the rational, endlessly educable Enlightenment family and individual are undermined by the surfacing of natural instincts and emotions. At the same time, texts which invent the transcendent and innocent child in nature are unable to suppress the traces of its cultural construction and the complex, knowing adult investment in it.

My second goal is to situate STC and Godwin’s ideas about the value and aims of biography in relation both to each other and to a later nineteenth-century perception of biography as a valuable form of disruption or argument. STC, like Wordsworth, believed ideal biography is panegyric or epitaphic, celebrating the great man rather than enquiring too deeply into his inner life, as attention to his ‘Prefatory Observation on Modern Biography’ (1810) and Wordsworth’s *Essays upon Epitaphs* (1810) and ‘Letter to a Friend of Robert Burns’ (1816) demonstrates. Godwin, on the other hand, found in biography the perfect agent of individual education and social transformation. *His Memoirs of the Author of A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1798) argues that the lives of the ‘eminent deceased’ can inspire and instruct, a function which he hoped his own life would achieve, while in the ‘Preface’ to the *Life of Chaucer* (1804) he suggests that the lives of individuals act as foci to the otherwise overwhelming march of historical events. Shelley’s memorialisations of her father are resistant to the instructive value of his life even as they celebrate it, while both Hartley and Sara

use biography and editing to fragment rather than shore up the smooth edifice of the memorial—and to covertly tell their own autobiographies. The final section of the chapter, therefore, situates the children's deconstructive memorial turn among similarly destabilising work by their contemporaries Hazlitt, De Quincey, and Carlyle. In such company, it becomes clear that auto/biography is for this generation a way to question the legacy of STC and Godwin's generation, even as they arguably contribute to building its memorial.

WILLIAM GODWIN AND THE RATIONAL FAMILY

In the eighteenth century, as Julie Davidson observes, the belief that almost any living thing over which man had dominion could be cultivated, shaped, trained, bred, or otherwise instructed into a more suitable state of being was a powerful one.² In a century that saw an explosion in conduct and self-improvement literature, breeding manuals, gardening guides, and educational treatises, the family became a significant site of investment for a new faith in reason and improvement. Like one's gardens, livestock, or even one's own self, father, mother, and children were not understood as fixed by nature but rather as entities which could and should be bettered through careful breeding, training, and discipline. John Locke's conception of the infant mind as 'white paper' sums up the belief, at once optimistic, anxious, and politically radical, that nature was a clean slate for the improvement or ruination of culture.³

Belonging to, and forming, a family was therefore a matter of careful choices and well-regulated behaviour: Locke argued that parental power, like that of monarchs, 'so little belongs to the father by any peculiar right of nature, but only as he is guardian of his children', while Jean-Jacques Rousseau argued that a family whose members did not behave correctly towards one another was no more than 'a society of secret enemies'.⁴ It is the belief that a child's character could be shaped by the parents' state of mind at the moment of conception which Laurence Sterne is mocking when Tristram Shandy plaintively wishes that 'either my mother or my father, or indeed both of them, as they were in duty both equally bound to it, had minded what they were about when they begot me'.⁵ *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (1759–67) testifies to the extent of the period's scientific, improving, and educational obsessions surrounding family matters, satirising them through the conceit of a family so profoundly and irreparably disordered that it resists narration. And

yet Sterne's mockery suggests that, for all this enthusiasm for education and environment, the unruly fixities of heritability remain a concern, and like Davidson, my very brief journey through eighteenth-century literature of the family and education finds that nature is always 'tugging at nurture'.⁶

William Godwin has a strong claim as the thinker who most completely and optimistically expresses the eighteenth-century intellectual faith in improvement. This optimism finds its most radical and famous expression in *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793), in which he states that 'perfectibility is one of the most unequivocal characteristics of the human species, so that the political, as well as the intellectual state of man, may be presumed to be in a course of progressive improvement'.⁷ Writing towards and across the close of the eighteenth century, Godwin's belief in humanity's individual and collective capacity for endless improvement, and his pedagogical texts and experiments, represent the culmination of Enlightenment certainties about human educability, shared by his politically progressive, reforming, religiously Dissenting circle.⁸ However, in tracing the origins of their shared commitment to forming the rational individual and the rational family, I want to suggest that this is also a history of anxiety about nature and blood, and about whether, as Tristram Shandy seems to say, humanity's capacity to be cultured is little more than a comforting fiction in the face of rampant biological forces. The debate about nature and culture which defined the period is perhaps best exemplified by Godwin's paradoxical observation that 'perfectability', as an 'unequivocal characteristic', is inherent (*PPW* III: 11).

The importance of Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693) and Rousseau's *Emile; or, On Education* (1762) to eighteenth-century pedagogy and theories of childhood development has been emphasised enough to not require restating at length here.⁹ Despite Rousseau's opening proclamation that '[e]verything is good as it leaves the hands of the Author of all things; everything degenerates in the hands of man' (a statement of great importance for later, Romantic constructions of childhood), *Emile*, like *Thoughts*, assumes the child can and should be educated up from the state of 'natural man', in Rousseau's formulation, or 'white paper, or wax, to be moulded and fashioned as one pleases', in Locke's.¹⁰ The influence both of the methodologies proposed by each, and their underlying assumptions that the good citizen is made, rather than born, can be seen across almost all pedagogical

literature of the late eighteenth century, from Anna Letitia Barbauld's *Hymns in Prose for Children* (1778–79), Thomas Day's *History of Sandford and Merton* (1783–89) and Mary Wollstonecraft's *Original Stories from Real Life* (1788), to Barbauld and John Aikin's *Evenings at Home* (1792–96) and Maria Edgeworth's *Practical Education* (1798). Godwin's *Political Justice* talks of the mind as 'a soil prepared for culture, and as yet uninfested with weeds' (*PPW* III: 16). Rather than rehearsing the by now standard account of Locke and Rousseau's influence, I am instead going to follow the fortunes of a single metaphor across the eighteenth century, one that seems to me particularly useful for thinking about the often contradictory ways Godwin conceives of parental duties: that of the mechanised or clockwork family.

In *Two Treatises of Government* (1690) Locke argues that the power of a sovereign over his people, like that of the parents over the child, is not a natural right, but a contractual one depending upon existing needs and the exercise of duty. Sir Isaac Newton had recently shown that the universe was not a divine mystery but was subject to fixed laws operating in relationship with one another. Locke names this the 'clockwork universe', and in *Thoughts* he praises Newton for providing 'true and certain knowledge [...] of this stupendous machine'.¹¹ *Two Treatises* reads parent and child roles as contingent, rather than inherent, locked in an inter-dependent relationship that echoes Newton's clockwork universe. If a father

quits his care of [his children], he loses his power over them, which goes along with their nourishment and education, to which it is inseparably annexed; and it belongs as much to the foster-father of an exposed child, as to the natural father of another. So little power does the bare act of begetting give a man over his issue; if all his care ends there, and this be all the title he hath to the name and authority of a father.¹²

Parental authority resides in appropriately parental behaviour. A foster-father who carries out the essential duties of 'nourishment and education' has a claim to fatherhood which the biological father who 'quits his care of [his children]' loses; by extension, the child who fails in their 'perpetual obligation to honour their parents' and submit to merited parental authority forfeits their right to that nourishment and education.¹³ Rather than a natural unit governed by natural right and the claims of blood, the family is a group bound by the observation of reciprocal rights and duties.

Locke's impact as an educational theorist was not limited to radical reformers, and the clockwork family appears regularly across eighteenth-century literature. Pamela, the eponymous heroine of Samuel Richardson's successful novel, subjects *Thoughts* to a lengthy review in the revised and enlarged second edition, and the novel reproduces substantial excerpts. *Pamela* (1741) also describes the family in terms that suggest familiarity with the *Two Treatises'* account of the rationally structured family. When Miss Danford writes to her mother describing Pamela's exemplary household, she recalls how in this 'family of love' all are brought together twice every Sunday, and that this regular (and regulated) meeting makes it 'a heaven of a house: and being wound up thus constantly once a week, at least, like a good eight-day clock, no piece of machinery that was ever made is so regular and so uniform as this family is'.¹⁴ Like all mechanisms, this clockwork family is logically assembled rather than naturally arising, and requires regular maintenance if it is not to break down.

Locke's idea of the family as a regulated and rational entity, as we will see, reappears throughout Dissenting texts. It also turns up, in comically distorted form, in *Tristram Shandy*, in which Locke's ordered family is transformed into a literal (and unsuccessful) combination of clockwork and sex. Tristram is memorably conceived out of sync with the mechanical order his father has attempted to impose on the business of reproduction. Having 'made it a rule for many years of his life' to wind up the clock on the last Sunday of every month, his father has also 'gradually brought some other little family concerns to the same period in order [...] to get them all out of the way at once', with the result that 'my poor mother could never hear the said clock being wound up but the thoughts of some other things unavoidably popped into her head—*et vice versa*'. Travel disrupts the regular schedule, and as a result Tristram's conception, and consequently his life and character, is marred by his mother asking at the crucial moment, '*Pray, my dear [...] have you not forgot to wind up the clock?*' It is the 'sagacious Locke' who is called on to affirm that such 'strange combination of ideas [...] have produced more wry actions than all other sources of prejudice whatsoever'.¹⁵ There is a direct joke about Lockean associationism here (which, as Ian Ross observes, the structure of the novel effectively parodies), but also about the foolishness of attempting to regulate such an unruly organism as the family.¹⁶ Shandy senior's attempt to write a 'Trista-pedia' or educational tract for his son is another joke at the expense of rational education: it

grows exponentially in size but fails to keep pace with Tristram himself, so that 'every day another page or two became of no consequence'.¹⁷

Locke's other famous interpreter is Rousseau, but the ideal family envisioned by Rousseau in *Emile* is (like his ideal education) both natural and unself-conscious, and highly circumscribed and constructed, reflecting some of the inherent contradictions which Sterne finds so ripe for mockery. Where Tristram's family demonstrates the futility of attempting to constrain nature, in *Emile* the family achieves an ideal natural state *through* constraint. The Lockean family contract in *Emile* arises from natural impulses but, like Locke, for Rousseau the family is a unit sustained by mutually reinforcing behavioural codes: we must learn to behave as nature intends. Breastfeeding is perhaps the most notorious example in *Emile*. This is 'natural', but a practice which women must be re-taught since it is unfashionable. For Rousseau, the security of the entire family unit depends upon mothers being inculcated with the correct maternal habits:

Do you wish to bring everyone back to his first duties? Begin with mothers [...] Everything begins with this first depravity [i.e. not breastfeeding]. The whole moral order degenerates; naturalness is extinguished in all hearts; home life takes on a less lively aspect; the touching spectacle of a family aborning no longer attaches husbands, no longer imposes respect on outsiders; the mother whose children one does not see is less respected. One does not reside in one's family; habit does not strengthen the blood ties. There are no longer fathers, mothers, children, brothers, or sisters.¹⁸

The ideal family, in which each member behaves as nature intends (the 'blood ties'), in fact ceases to exist if its members do not adopt the correct habits. 'Habit' was a slippery term for Enlightenment thought, sitting awkwardly at the interstice of 'nature' and 'culture', as Locke acknowledges: what the child must 'receive from education [...] must be something put into him betimes; habits woven into the very principles of his nature'.¹⁹ Rousseau, setting out to disprove that 'nature, we are told, is only habit', claims that habit nonetheless partakes of both nature and culture, since habits disappear and 'the natural returns' once external constraints are removed. But in the example above, it is habit which trains the family into acting according to nature, and he can only conclude rather circularly that 'nature' should mean 'habits conformable to nature'.²⁰

Likewise, although Emile's education has 'the very same [goal] as that of nature', achieving those ends requires man's intervention. The aristocratic children in Paris who learn 'an impertinent and foppish air' from parading in fashionable public gardens are contrasted with Emile, who will grow up in a rural village and will behave as a child should, the 'hillock on which the local children gather to play' as natural as the Luxembourg and the Tuileries are artificial. From the famous dictate that 'Emile will hardly know what a book is' to his rustic dress and simple dinner, oppositions are set up between a highly artificial childhood and the free and natural one Emile enjoys. But as both Barbauld and Godwin later observed, Emile lives in a scene as staged as anything in Paris; his tutor's machinations include the whole village cast, whose purpose is to 'show themselves to the disciple as the master would want them really to be'.²¹ In *The Enquirer* Godwin writes that '[Rousseau's] whole system of education is a series of tricks, a puppet-show exhibition, of which the master holds the wires, and the scholar is never to suspect in what manner they are moved', while Barbauld objects in her 1798 essay 'What is Education' that his theories are 'mimic experiments of education' in which 'there is always something which distinguishes them from reality' (PPWV: 126).²²

Both Barbauld and Godwin find Rousseau's simulation and mimicry problematic because it destabilises the relationship between what is natural and what is artificial through deception, even while *Emile* seeks to distinguish between nature and culture. Barbauld cautions parents against 'surround[ing] [the child] with an artificial world [...] In your world they are brought up much better than they could be under any plan of factitious education'.²³ Emile is the son of a nobleman, so his rustic education is meaningless to his station in life, but also implicit in Barbauld's essay is the charge that Rousseau creates a fake environment in order to falsify a more 'natural' way of living. The natural and the artificial are upended by *Emile's* 'puppet-show'; the fashionable children of Paris in fact live more authentically. Rousseau proposes that nature is the 'original dispositions' before they are 'constrained by habits'. His ideal education intervenes at this point, before culture and society impose their habits (understood as distinct from the habits education seeks to inculcate), with 'nature's call to human life'.²⁴ Barbauld and Godwin suggest that this is possible only via a highly orchestrated illusion of the natural. As Chap. 5 will discuss, Godwin's understanding of himself as a parent who theorises but cannot 'practise' seems to jump off from Rousseau's ambivalent theorisation of 'habit' as something at once natural and

imposed from without, and in her fiction Shelley finds in the unstable relationship between ‘practice’ and ‘habit’ a productive vein for further complicating her father’s concerns about the possibility of distinguishing between nature and culture.

Barbauld’s own children’s literature, including her *Hymns in Prose for Children* and, with her brother John Aikin, *Evenings at Home*, testifies to the difficulty of maintaining such distinctions and, as with that of Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft, to the instinctive and the natural battles with the rational and the cultured in her work. ‘Hymn VIII’ of the *Hymns in Prose* explains what a family is by describing a rural scene which emphasises the relationships and exchange of labour binding the individual members:

The mother is spinning at the door; the young children sport before her on the grass; the elder ones learn to labour, and are obedient; the father worketh to provide them food [...] his children run to meet him when he cometh home, and his wife prepareth the wholesome meal.

The father, the mother, and the children, make a family; the father is master thereof. If the family be numerous and the grounds large, there are servants to help to do the work: all these dwell in one house; they kneel together beneath one roof; they eat of the same bread; they kneel down together and praise God every night and every morning with one voice; they are very closely united, and are dearer to each other than any strangers.²⁵

This family is made up of those who share a roof, bread, and prayer, and includes servants, a description which emphasises the bonds of shared labour and belief above blood relations. The different contributions each member makes to the family’s prosperity are reflected in the spaces they occupy: the mother, who spins and cooks, is at the threshold to the family home; the father, who provides the food, is in the field; and the children, running to meet him or playing and learning on the green before the house, represent through their mediating position the family links they strengthen as they shuttle back and forth between sites of home, work, and the multi-purpose green. Although the country setting, the corn and the apples the father harvests and gathers, and the grass by the front door suggest a natural, divine ‘rightness’ to the family, they are arranged in a pattern in which, like clockwork, each member contributes to a greater whole.

Barbauld's family arises out of reciprocal affective and economic ties. It is self-made but not nuclear, and seems just at the crux of many of the changes in make-up and meaning which Naomi Tadmor, Ruth Perry, Christopher Flint, and others have argued the eighteenth-century family underwent as a result of economic, social, and ideological pressures.²⁶ Despite the focus on shared experiences and the unifying structure of the house itself, however, blood still matters to the rational family. In 'The Native Village', from *Evenings at Home*, another would-be family cannot meet the standard because they are not biologically related. Harford, the child of a wealthy family, is orphaned as a young boy, his siblings dispersed, and he is raised by 'the poor people who nursed me', who, he recalls, 'maintained me as a child of their own', 'put me in a day school, clothed me decently', 'kept me from vice' and, when Harford is old enough, saw him off to sea with 'tenderness' which was, 'if possible, beyond that of the kindest parents'. In short, they fulfil Locke's criteria of parenthood. He returns to his home village after a fifteen-year absence to repay the 'obligations' he owes them, in due course saves the old couple from the workhouse, and the tale ends joyfully.²⁷

Despite acknowledging that he has been treated as their own child, however, Harford is clear they are not his parents—although they recall how he used to call them 'daddy and mammy'. They are, variously, 'the good people', 'the honest couple', 'my dearest best benefactors', and 'my dear old friends', and the prior claims of blood and birth, despite his neglect by his own relatives, are accepted both by Harford and, less absolutely, by the couple. Their decision to have him educated is due to their recognition that he must have the 'advantages more suited to [his] birth', while his motivation to go to sea is in part the news that 'a distant relation of our family was a captain of a man of war'.²⁸ Harford's rescue of the couple is represented as a repayment of 'the great debt of kindness' rather than a familial duty. While 'Hymn VIII', like many rational children's texts, describes family relationships as social and the family itself as a self-chosen group, 'The Native Village', its emphasis on birth clear in the title, suggests that nonetheless the rational, middle-class family must share blood. When the family is entirely founded on shared social or educational commitments, as Wollstonecraft's *Original Stories* suggests, the strains on the structure begin to show. In Chaps. 5 and 6, I explore how Shelley and Godwin Jr. pick away at the self-selected family of step and surrogate members which their father imagined and attempted to create in practice, uncovering exactly these biological tensions.

The History of Sandford and Merton, *Original Stories* and *Rural Walks* all describe how the self-selected family and the circumscribed bounds of the small village provide the ideal social arrangement for educating the rational child, and suggest that parenting depends not on blood relations but on the ability to be the ideal teacher and role model. In *Sandford and Merton*, the spoiled Tommy Merton and the hardworking and intelligent Harry Sandford are ceded up by their parents to the care of the curate Mr. Barlow whereby, through Harry's example and Mr. Barlow's instruction, Tommy becomes a model of Dissenting values. In Charlotte Smith's *Rural Walks*, a mother and her two daughters are joined by her selfish and uneducated niece, who again is transformed by the instruction of her aunt and the examples provided by the villagers and the local lord. And in *Original Stories*, two sisters are sent by their father to be brought up by all-round paragon Mrs. Mason in another idealised country village in which all the instructively named inhabitants, from 'poor crazy Robin' to 'Lady Sly' and 'Mrs. Trueman', have a role to play in the girls' education. These families arise out of educational needs rather than biological relationships. Their sense of purpose and functionality recalls again the Lockean family which runs better than 'any piece of machinery' and, like Emile's tutor who 'inherit[s] all [the parents'] rights', parent and teacher roles are combined in one ideal household head.²⁹ The lack of biological ties means, however, that the narratives' close must see the unrelated individuals restored to their kin: the truly constructed family is only ever temporary.

Original Stories, though strongly influenced by *Emile*, is nevertheless more circumspect in imagining what relation the ordered village bears to the real world beyond and, although ostensibly a narrative about the value of cultivating a rational mind, is similarly cautious about the interchangeability of reason and emotion, or of social and natural relations. The text's guiding principle is 'to cure those faults by reason, which ought never to have taken root in the infant mind' and, as Godwin advocates but does not actually practise in *The Enquirer*, to confirm the conclusions of reason through practical experience. Thus, when Mrs. Mason's two charges, Caroline and Mary, express abhorrence for insects, they receive a rational discourse on the part all animals play in the ecosystem, and the consequent moral imperative to treat living creatures well, and are then presented with the opportunity to save a nest of larks whose parents have just been shot. Reason is carefully backed up by experience, and Mrs. Mason's praise is for their rational actions rather than

their kindness: 'you have done good this morning, you have acted like rational creatures'. At the narrative's end, in summing up the improvements in the two girls, the narrator notes that 'Mary's judgment grew every day clearer; or, more properly speaking, she acquired experience; and her lively feelings fixed the conclusions of reason in her mind.'³⁰

Despite this faith in the instructive powers of reason, however, the narrative registers the same impulses to seek out shared blood. The girls' experiences are, like Emile's, entirely mediated by Mrs. Mason and the narrative closes with the suggestion that adult life will not be so neat. The girls are summoned to town to live with their father and 'I tremble for you, my dear girls, for you must now practice by yourselves', says Mrs. Mason. Mary and Caroline's continued, correct moral growth is less certain when the circumscribed setting of the village is exchanged for the ambiguity of the city, and rational family ties exchanged for blood ones. When the three visit the village green for a moonlit dance, the emotion of this elemental scene overwhelms Mrs. Mason, who reveals her bitter grief for a dead husband and children, and dismisses Mary and Caroline, her surrogate daughters suddenly inadequate alternatives. The unreasoned instincts of the biological family are never far beneath their reasoned domestic arrangement, and although Mrs. Mason suggests that active benevolent involvement in her society provides emotional relief, the compensations seem limited: 'I am weaned from the world, but not disgusted; for I can still do good'. Social relations and the consolations of the rational mind are, Mrs. Mason's 'placid' grief suggests, ultimately insufficient recompense for ties of blood and the natural family.³¹

Despite their commitments to rational, purposeful and improvable family relationships and to the educable child and parent, 'natural' instincts prove irrepressible in the eighteenth-century educational text. 'Hymn VI' of Barbauld's *Hymns in Prose* is addressed to a 'child of reason' who is able to go abroad in the world and observe and report on the beauty of the fields and flowers and forests, but, unable to notice that 'God was amongst the fields' or 'his voice sounded in the murmur of the water', cannot see that 'there are greater things than these'. The powers of reason see the world as myriad individual elements ('Hymn IX' asks the child to 'try if you can count the blades of grass in the field') and are inadequate to experience the union of God in nature that transcends particularising attempts at understanding.³²

In an over-cited letter to STC, Charles Lamb damned Barbauld's works as 'insignificant and vapid' narrative 'in the *shape of knowledge*'.³³

In fact, it has long been recognised, as McCarthy and Kraft, and P. M. Zall point out, that the pantheistic leanings of the *Hymns* and their syncretic, loving pedagogy had a direct influence on later Romantic understandings of childhood, from Blake's *Songs of Innocence* to the 'Immortality Ode' and 'Frost at Midnight'.³⁴ Barbauld's *Hymns* mark most clearly the extent to which the rational pedagogical tradition conceals an appeal to nature and blood. The orderly family of 'Hymn VIII' might function according to a system of labour and love, but the 'child of reason' will ultimately find that they cannot rationalise why their mother loves them, or why the recognisably 'Romantic' rural world they inhabit is a source of such wonder and spiritual sustenance. Other iterations of the rational family, as we have seen, are less obviously but no less seriously open to the importance of disorderly and uncontrollable blood ties. It is these tentative acknowledgements that kinship feelings might be naturally given to some degree which become gradually noticeable in Godwin's educational writing and are elevated by his children above the rational ties of socially constructed affection.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE AND THE ROMANTIC CHILD

Considered in one way, to speak about the Romantic child is to refer to a figure that is so familiar as to warrant fully Mitzi Myers' sardonic observation that, among its unchanging attributes of imagination, freedom, and solitude in nature, 'we can all fill in the remaining blanks'.³⁵ This is the child who comes 'trailing clouds of glory' in the 'Immortality Ode', who Barbara Garlitz claimed completely redefined attitudes to childhood for a century.³⁶ It is a totemic child who is still invoked, even if in protest, by Romanticists and children's literature critics alike as a shorthand for a specific, 'masculinist high Romantic discourse of childhood' in which the (mostly) male child is set up as an emotional and imaginative repository to be drawn on for inspiration and consolation by the (always) male poet: poetic genius, STC said, is 'to carry on the feelings of childhood into the powers of manhood'.³⁷ It is a figure culturally powerful enough that it still shapes our conceptions of contemporary childhood, and, as Ann Weir da Rowland observes, 'despite the acknowledged importance of Locke and the significant social and economic changes that were already in place, the child that is "discovered" or "invented" in the eighteenth century is most often referred to as the "Romantic child"'.³⁸

As Myers' apt use of 'blanks' suggests, it is also a curiously empty term, a one-size-fits-all cipher invented by twentieth-century critics to signify, as Judith Plotz notes, Victorian constructions of childhood themselves derived from limited readings of the exclusively male Romantic authors and in particular Wordsworth, STC, Lamb, and Blake.³⁹ In the hands of children's literature scholars such as Geoffrey Summerfield, Mary Jackson and, earlier in the century, F. J. Harvey Darton, Percy Muir, and Mary Thwaite, the Romantic child represented the triumph of 'fantasy over reason' or 'a revulsion among those of enlightened artistic and literary predilections against an airless, inhumanly narrow view of the child's mind'.⁴⁰ To later critics such as Myers, Plotz, Andrew O'Malley, and Alan Richardson, who are influenced by the social and political perspectives of feminist criticism and new historicism, citing the Romantic discourse of childhood is one way of referring to a reactionary conservatism which uses the state of childhood to retreat to 'a conservative fantasy of an idyllic past' rather than engage with the ambivalence and complexity of a socially and industrially developing society.⁴¹ This discourse sets up the prelapsarian, atemporal child as a problematic object of adult desire and salvation.

Although, as Richardson argues, 'there was no one dominant "Romantic" image of the child' and, as Plotz says, literary history 'makes nonsense of a single Romantic type of child', the 'Romantic child' is still invoked as a singular figure whose meaning fluctuates with the critical climate.⁴² The specific co-ordinates we use to define a Romantic child remain the same, but the reading of them shifts across a critical divide: is the child absorbed in nature or socially isolated? Free from didactic education or disempowered and ignorant? Spontaneous and imaginative or self-absorbed and irresponsible? I do not want to dispense entirely with the qualities which criticism has taught us to recognise as those of Romantic children, nor to insist that there is no archetypal element to how the child is written (in part because what Hartley and Sara write back against so strongly is the feeling of being reduced to ciphers). However, I think many of the texts where the Romantic child is supposed to be located are already engaged with the problems which criticism has read into them. While Richardson and Heather Glen have shown how Blake's *Songs of Innocence* enacts some of the tensions implicit in the innocent child in nature, less attention has been paid to the stability or coherence of the children who appear in other Romantic texts.⁴³ A notable exception is David B. Ruderman, who observes that

the Romantic child is a being split between standing 'for the particular and the universal', for itself only and yet for all children, and lastly 'for the aesthetic object or poem itself'.⁴⁴ Like Ruderman, I find it productive to attend to moments where this discourse appears to strain to hold itself together.

Doing so reveals that Wordsworth, STC, and Lamb's constructions of childhood are already questioning their own terms, dramatising the ways in which the ideal child of nature is overwritten by the linguistic, physical, and spatial constraints which manifest its cultural production. It allows us to see more clearly the fetishising gaze of Lamb's Elia, or how in 'We Are Seven' and the Boy of Winander episode, the child's grave symbolises their production as literary figure. Over the next two chapters, I will consider how Hartley and Sara are doubly created by STC, as both biological children, and as textual ideals which meet his authorial and parental needs. Although I insist it is crucial that the exchanges between Hartley and STC (or Sara and his absence) be treated as the outcroppings of a specific parent-child relational psychology, attention to the tensions inherent in the Romantic discourse of childhood shows how this dialectic was enabled by a particular cultural climate.

Alan Richardson has observed that 'Wordsworthian children of nature [...] must die so early' because, 'rooted in a transcendental nature rather than culturally produced', they are left 'unsocialised and frozen in a state of eternal innocence'.⁴⁵ In fact, they are aligned with death *because* they are culturally produced. Richardson means that Wordsworth's children always appear isolated from society and cultural structures. While this is true, however, they are also written into view, produced by the poet-figure, whose self-conscious presence in the poem reminds us that we can only ever approach a child in a Wordsworth poem through the poet's mediating art. It is their production as aesthetic ideal that the unavoidable death of the child in nature overwrites. Lucy's fate, to be 'Rolled round in earth's diurnal course | With rocks and stones and trees', is that of all immortal Wordsworthian children, bodily interment and disintegration not just the price of transcendent immateriality, but the sign of this exchange between art and death ('A Slumber did my Spirit Seal', 7–8). The poet's privilege of guaranteeing the child an eternal existence is enabled by a literal reabsorption into the local place which makes clear the child-figure's role as a piece in the artistic pattern of the whole poem.

The 'little cottage girl' of 'We Are Seven' is a good example. She is an archetypal innocently wild child, what Jonathan Wordsworth calls a

'child-borderer', her pagan, inclusive wisdom contrasting with the arid, categorising knowledge of her would-be catechist.⁴⁶ Richardson contends that "'her utter inability to admit" the notion of death validat[es] the poet's own childhood intimations of immortality', but it is better to say that her notions of death and life are simply incomprehensible to the speaker, and it is her holistic perception rather than that of the increasingly frustrated speaker which we are invited to value: as Wordsworth says, 'she is imaginatively right in her refusal to accept an adult view of death'.⁴⁷ But although the poem celebrates her superior 'border vision' and her graceful evasion of his attempt to impose atomising norms, it also reveals that she is nonetheless trapped in the life and death half-way space of the graveyard. Refusing her interrogator's suggestions that 'ye are only five', the cottage girl knows she is one of seven, even though 'Two of us at Conway dwell, | And two are gone to sea' and 'Two of us in the church-yard lie' (36, 19–21). That they are dead is unimportant to her; what matters is that 'their graves are green, they may be seen' (37). Her relationship to her siblings is mediated through proximity: the graves are 'Twelve steps or more from my mother's door, | And they are side by side' (39–40). The closeness of the graves, which she can see and touch, is reflected in a comparably close bond. The older siblings at sea and in Conway merit no more than a mention; far more important than any boundaries between life and death to the girl is the fact that she shares the same enclosed green space with her brother and sister. Her whole daily existence, in fact, seems to circulate around the gravesite: it is a place for working ('My stockings there I often knit'), eating ('I [...] eat my supper there') and leisure ('together round her grave we played') where she can continuously renew ties of kinship (41, 48, 55).

It is useful to keep in mind that the churchyard has a specific function for Wordsworth which is at once affective, social, and moral. In 'Essay upon Epitaphs, I', he states his preference for the country churchyard cemetery as the ideal burial site, because 'a parish-church, in the stillness of the country, is a visible centre of a community of the living and the dead, a point to which are habitually referred the nearest concerns of both'.⁴⁸ As Michele Turner Sharp notes, Wordsworth wants the dead ideally placed at the nexus of the natural, the communal and the spiritual, and just as the cottage girl views her immediate family as those who sit within the same churchyard boundary, he elides the difference between the living and the dead to imagine a community of both who are united in their shared use and habitation of a single green space.⁴⁹

While the parishioners of the 'Essay' must confront their own mortality and be 'profitably chastised by the sight of the graves of kindred and friends', the cottage girl refuses to acknowledge any difference between herself and her siblings, so draws no chastising lessons from their graves.⁵⁰ Her worldview is not temporal but spatial, and while this enables her to sustain important familial relationships which are not hampered by death but enabled by physical proximity, the poem's focus on her local position allows us to see the way in which she is entrapped in the green and appealing graveyard.

The cottage girl has a 'rustic, woodland air' and is 'wildly clad'; her eyes are 'fair, and very fair': all the tells of the Wordsworthian child (9–11). But she is more a wood sprite or a fairy (which the repetition of 'fair, and very fair' seems to urge) than human girl, and she haunts her siblings' graves with a closeness that suggests she is unable to leave the churchyard. Her whole day is spent in communion with her dead brother and sister, from knitting her stockings and hemming her 'kerchief, to 'after sunset' when she eats her supper beside their graves, and she is strangely concerned that her interlocutor should understand her precise spatial relationship to the graves (45). There are the 'twelve steps or more' from her 'mother's door', her daily steps measuring out a path—or umbilical cord—linking birth and death. She also recalls how when her sister Jane died 'all the summer dry, | Together round her grave we played' (39, 54–55). She repeatedly stresses that she is 'there' where they are:

My stocking there I often knit,
 My 'kerchief there I hem;
 And there upon the ground I sit—
 I sit and sing to them.
 (41–44)

The repetition of 'there', in tandem with the chanting, regular, ballad rhyme, builds to 'there upon the ground'. 'There' is the ground where their bodies are interred; the repetition of 'I sit' emphasises her physical grounding, that her siblings' bones and her own body touch the same soil. Enclosed within the green place which holds their bodies, the cottage girl sings to her siblings, either believing or choosing to imagine that they hear her. Their communication, like her apparent inability or unwillingness to leave the graveyard, is another signal that this girl is at

least in one sense already a ghost or spirit of the place, and that for her to join John and Jane in a third little grave would be only the gentlest of changes. The account her interlocutor makes her tell is that of her future death registered in the present as her daily oscillation between mother's home and siblings' graves; even as she evades his attempt to impose his rational schema, his interrogation produces her as the deathly Romantic child.

A similar sense of entrapment shadows the Boy of Winander in Book V of *The Prelude*, another Romantic child. Unlike the cottage girl, the Boy has already paid the price of being a transcendent child and has been 'taken from his Mates, and died | In childhood, ere he was full ten years old' (V: 414–15). He has wandered much further afield than she has; but like the cottage girl he is ostensibly a child of nature, and has a privileged relationship with his environment: the 'Cliffs | And Islands of Winander' know him well, and the owls of the vale are 'Responsive to his call' (V: 389–90, 401). In death, the Boy assumes a highly localised aspect, like the cottage girl embodied in a specific plot of encircled land, and in a similar, though less obvious way to 'We Are Seven', the poem works against itself to reveal the authorial procedures which interpret him as an idealised child. He lies buried in another churchyard, in a 'silent neighbourhood of graves' (V: 428). The 'Churchyard hangs | Upon a Slope above the Village School', from where the churchyard inhabitants can hear the 'gladsome sounds' 'from the rural School ascending' (V: 417–18, 429, 430). Reading 'The Winander Boy', Paul de Man hones in on this strange, vertigo-inducing use of the verb 'hangs': 'it is as if all the solidity of earth were pulled away from under our feet'.⁵¹ The hanging churchyard and the boy who 'hung | Listening' belong to a dizzyingly inverted world which is restored to steadiness, de Man says, through the solid reflection offered by the 'steady Lake'. In *The Prelude*, however, the churchyard (and the boy who is now part of the churchyard) is also stabilised and tethered to the 'green hill' by the 'ascending' voices of the schoolchildren, their 'gladsome sounds' linking the precariously positioned community of the dead with that of the living (V: 413; 406–7; 426). Like the little cottage girl and her siblings, the churchyard and the school are in a mutually dependent positional relationship. The 'Village School' and the 'Village Church' are all that seem to exist in this community, and the only movement possible is the shuttling back and forth between the institutions of childhood and death (V: 424). The 'race of real children' who inhabit the 'Vale' where the

Boy was born are likewise locked in binary motion, ‘bandied up and down by love and hate’ (V: 436, 438). The vale itself encircles these two poles and the movement between them, further confirming the Boy’s position within a system of exchange that does not look beyond itself.

Envisioning a final resting place that is circumscribed and particular, the text also curtails the Boy’s living relationship with nature, which extends far beyond what he can see: his evenings at the lake shore in the company of the owls have ‘carried far into his heart the voice | Of mountain torrents’, above and beyond the hills which edge the ‘glimmering Lake’ (V: 408–9, 394). But as de Man comments, there is ‘strain’ in what initially appears a straightforward scene of Romantic naturalism, this apparently expansive vision resolving into the same closed binary relationship as the school and the churchyard.⁵² The Boy’s ‘mimic hootings’ to the owls are met with responsive calls, but their ‘long halloos, and screams, and echoes loud | Redoubled and redoubled’, and when they are silent

the visible scene
Would enter unawares into his mind
With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
Its woods, and that uncertain Heaven.
(V: 398, 402–3, 409–12)

This is a curious moment. His ‘mimic hootings’ elicit not communication but intermingled and indistinguishable ‘screams, and echoes’. The redundancy of ‘Redoubled and redoubled’ replicates the collapse of call and response into meaningless, compressed echo. When this cacophony of voice and echo falls silent, what rushes into fill the space left is another strange repetition, or echo: the ‘visible scene’ before the Boy enters his mind. Its ‘solemn imagery’ suggests that this is something more than a refocusing of attention, that the scene which has entered ‘unawares’ into his mind, although identical to the ‘visible’ one he looks on, is nonetheless a separate image, and has something of the flattened quality of a painting: from the stimuli before him he can produce only further echoes or replicas. The Boy of Winander is, like the cottage girl, imaginatively, and actually, stuck. Both children are confined physically and mentally to the graveyard, a place at once aligned with nature, through the green grass and the natural cycles of decay and new life, and the man-made,

and both poems limit the actual or figurative movement permissible to the back and forth—the return—or the circular (‘round her grave we played’).

What we get in these poems are images of idealised childhood which depend very obviously upon their death, but perhaps less obviously upon a system of regulation and a form of aesthetic production in which the adult narrator, whether interrogating the cottage girl or standing the oddly precise ‘a half hour’ at the Boy’s grave, imposes meaning upon their position and movements, and sets up the child in such a way that they either speak or enact precisely what it is that the speaker wishes them to be: the Romantic child in nature. ‘We Are Seven’ and the Boy of Winander episode both dramatise apparently natural scenes which under the rhetorical pressure of repetition reveal their inner mechanics, and the authorial investment which produces these scenes.

This aesthetic and psychic investment, and the way in which it reifies the child into stylised object, is the subject of Charles Lamb’s essay ‘The Praise of Chimney-Sweepers’. It is narrated by Lamb’s invention Elia, who mimics the kind of narrator who gazes on the Boy’s grave. Donelle Ruwe argues that Charles and Mary Lamb’s children’s verses critique a Romantic ‘privile[ging of] aesthetics over social concerns’, and this essay functions in a similar way.⁵³ The sweeps have no voice of their own but are instead arranged in a series of humorous, artful tableaux by Elia, who is intent on reading them as mythic creatures at all costs. Thus the dark and life-threatening climbs up the chimneys become ‘aerial ascents’, as though rising through air, and the successful sweep’s ‘shout of discovered daylight’ is accompanied by the sight of him waving ‘the brandished weapon of his art victorious like some flag waved over a conquered citadel’. Under Elia’s determinedly unseeing gaze, the city and its inhabitants exist for the sweeps only as the setting for their make-believe and as entertainment, as when he slips over and is pointed out by a sweep who laughs until he cries ‘for the exquisiteness of the fun’.⁵⁴

This playground scene, which also has something of the carnivalesque inversion of high and low about it, is strained, however, by the horrific reality of the sweeps’ lives which Elia cannot entirely suppress, and which seeps into the text despite his obliviousness. The sweeps’ laughter dissolves into tears, and even in reimagining their labour into a game of adventure, he refers obliquely to the horrors associated with the trade, recalling that ‘I seem to remember having been told, that a bad sweep was once left in a stack with his brush, to indicate which way the wind blew’.⁵⁵ Plotz argues that the layers of distancing (‘I seem to remember

having been told'; 'was once left') evidence Lamb's interest in fetishising the sweeps' essential child-nature at the expense of their social reality; I would suggest rather that this is Elia's aim, and that at various specific points in the essay the gap between Lamb and his narrator becomes especially clear.⁵⁶ This is one such point: Elia defers the reality of a child's body in a chimney to a mythical past with the fairy-tale 'once' but his anecdote displays its own rhetorical effects. There are two different kinds of time working against each other, the endless circularity of 'once upon a time' and the actual years that have passed since a sweep was stuck in a chimney and was 'left', his body presumably unable to be recovered safely. In fairy-tale time the sweep is still there, trapped forever in a fairy-tale—appropriate punishment with his brush, but in 'real' time what must now be 'left' of the sweep is bones. Elia claims that he is 'obdurate to the seductiveness of [...] fine teeth', since

the fine gentleman, or fine lady, who show me their teeth, show me bones. Yet I must confess, that from the mouth of a true sweep a display [...] of these white and shining ossifications, strikes me as an agreeable anomaly [...] It is, as when

A sable cloud
Turns forth her silver lining on the night. (255)

Reading a smile as an exposed skeleton suggests that he is both fascinated with and disturbed by bodily interiority, but the sweep's teeth, in Elia's imagination, form only a pleasing black-and-white arrangement. The pleasure he draws from their 'shining ossifications' highlights, like the sweep in the chimney stack, the dehumanising aestheticisation which defines his attraction to them: it is an 'agreeable anomaly', we might suppose, because a sweep, unlike a 'fine gentleman, or fine lady', is not for Elia properly a human.⁵⁷

Elia tells us he likes 'to meet a sweep', not 'a grown sweeper—old chimney sweepers are by no means attractive'; but rather a child sweep, whose diminutive size appeals to him aesthetically. But these are 'small gentry' and, although cute, are not children. His attempts at imagining them into a Romantic transcendence fail markedly when it comes to naming the sweeps 'children'. The child as he imagines it has no place in the city; such children as do wander the streets must therefore be

something else: adults or animals, masquerading as children. Elia calls the sweeps many things: 'sable phenomenon', 'tender novices, blooming through their first negritude', 'dim specks—poor blots—innocent blacknesses' but he quite pointedly does not name them 'children'. Their voices are 'professional'; they cannot be children because they have to endure what children should not endure and what Elia tries to gloss as a playground is their workplace (and frequently their grave).⁵⁸

In another of the essay's pressure points, the gulf between Elia's attempts to view the sweeps as picturesque urban scamps and the physical reality of the chimney sweeps' diseased and battered bodies opens up vertiginously when his meditation upon their love of sassafras tea turns suddenly, and apparently naturally, to the dissected body of a sweep. Describing how they lean over the hot cauldron of tea like 'domestic animals—cats', he wonders whether they like the tea so much because it provides a 'palliative' for 'the fuliginous concretions, which are sometimes found (in dissections) to adhere to the roof of the mouth'.⁵⁹ There is a highly abstracted quality to this: although it's clear that the dissections are of dead sweeps with mouth cancer, Elia does not seem quite able to say this, instead retreating behind the impersonal language of the medical professional, where 'dissections' and 'the roof of the mouth' require no referents. His sudden transition from tea to dissection alerts us to how thoroughly the embodiment of the transcendental child is ostensibly resisted (think of 'Wordsworth's 'To H. C., Six Years Old', where he is so insubstantial that in his boat he rather 'brood[s] on air than on an earthly stream') and draws attention to the conflict between the real child, living embodied and harmed in time, and the ideal child of the adult imagination who exists atemporally and suffers no physical degradation (6).

The essay works to draw attention to Elia's unwillingness to acknowledge properly that the children (whom he cannot bring himself to call children) of his aesthetic fantasy are living real, harmful lives quite other than the one he imaginatively imposes on them in a more forceful way than 'We Are Seven' or the Boy of Winander episode. In Elia, Lamb has created a narrator whose strained attempts at essentialising the sweeps dramatise and call into question what Plotz calls the 'Romantic recoil from the actual child in history'.⁶⁰ The little cottage girl and the Boy are not, as the sweeps are, 'real' children who have been overwritten by adult needs which demand that children not visibly suffer. Their positions are more ambiguous: created by the poem's speakers as the kind

of child which meets their needs, Wordsworth's children also have an unquestionably sustaining relationship with their local landscape which is not the result of an Elian reinterpretation, but is a genuine expression of their psychic freedom. It requires more work to get down to the bones, the substance of these ideal children, since their deaths, like their present and future graves, appear at first a part of their Romantic ideality. But just like the sweep whose bones are transformed by Elia into a whole child, trapped forever in a chimney, the bodies of the Boy and the little girl bear signs that they have been inscribed into art. As we will see in the following chapter, this relationship between author and textual invention is complicated by the relationship between father and child; the collapse of literary and parental production inherent in STCs poetry will require Freud's insights to properly unpack. However, the ways in which Romantic constructions of childhood depend upon producing the child in this way are central to understanding how and why STC writes his own son (and doesn't write his daughter), and how and from what Hartley and Sara write their way out.

'MARBLE MONUMENTS' AND PUBLIC AUTOPSIES: DEBATES IN EARLY NINETEENTH-CENTURY BIOGRAPHY

Hartley, Sara, and Shelley were all expected, and all attempted, to carry out what Godwin called the 'duty incumbent on survivors' of memorialising and rehabilitating their fathers.⁶¹ Godwin himself performed this duty for his wife and for his son, Godwin Jr. If the goal of family biography is, as Juliette Atkinson maintains, 'to pay tribute to a beloved relative' or to 'publicize the achievements of an individual in order to increase the status of surviving family members', then the three children either failed, or succeeded only on very ambiguous terms.⁶² Hartley failed to produce a biographical essay on STC after his death, leaving only a fragmentary draft that ended abruptly with the suggestive promise that 'much could I say of him as a father'.⁶³ Shelley too left an incomplete and ambivalent manuscript biography, while her brief 'Memoir of Godwin' appended to the 1831 edition of *Caleb Williams* lauds her father in language that simultaneously casts doubt on his literary influence. Even Sara, who as STC's editor succeeded in posthumously reframing him as the respectable Tory religious philosopher, recreated her father in the introduction to the 1847 *Biographia Literaria* as a

problematically embodied man whose mind and literary output was at the mercy of his diseased body.

Both Godwin and STC were in need of public rehabilitation; Godwin suffered so great a fall into obscurity that Percy Shelley was famously astonished to hear in 1811 that the author of *Political Justice* still lived, while STC's reputation had been seriously damaged by De Quincey, Joseph Cottle, and Thomas Allsop's revelations in the 1830s about his domestic situation and substance abuse.⁶⁴ In each of the children's attempts to write appropriately restorative memoirs, however, they deconstruct and rewrite rather than rehabilitate. Unlike later Victorian biographers of Romantic subjects, whom Atkinson maintains 'envisioned biography as a genre that can heal rifts', Sara, Hartley, and Shelley instead used biography as an interrogative form to open up spaces between parents and children, and to indicate generational shifts.⁶⁵ This refusal, or renegotiation, of filial duty needs to be read in the context of the literary moment of the 1820s and 1830s, in which Godwin and STC's immediate successors engaged in similarly searching attempts to dissect and to judge the nature and value of their literary inheritance. Richard Cronin says that, struggling to manage competing demands of truth and decency and unsure about whose voice to speak in, early Victorian biographers 'had problems with Romantic memorials', producing hybrid, novelistic, evasive texts which 'become memorials to their own omissions'.⁶⁶ Certainly, in a genre that could include Scott's nine-volume *Life of Napoleon* (1825) and Allsop's chatty, indiscreet *Letters, Conversations and Recollections of S. T. Coleridge* (1836) there is a sense that the formal demands of life-writing were up for debate. 'Memorials to their own omissions' is a very good description for the intensely personal, autobiographical side of much of the period's biographical writing, but rather than consciously evade, these texts turned an almost forensic eye upon their Romantic subjects, and in doing so they articulate one of the gaps which separates the two generations.

At the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, biography held a large and rapidly expanding share of the market for literature.⁶⁷ In a period STC called 'emphatically the age of personality', readers' hunger for details of the private lives of public men and women was also met by a burgeoning periodical press which introduced the shorter, hybrid forms of the literary biographical sketch and the critical review alongside the established book-length biography, as David Higgins has demonstrated (CCW IV: 286).⁶⁸ David Higgins and Julian North both

comment on a visible divide between a strong interest in biography as self-revelation, and an equally strong move to ‘define [biography] at this period as a transgressive publication of domestic privacies’.⁶⁹ William Hazlitt exemplified the former when he argued in an 1820 review that literary biography gratified a valid intellectual ‘curiosity’ to ‘see how poets and philosophers “live, converse and behave”, like other men’.⁷⁰ STC, on the other hand, wrote in *The Friend* in 1810 that such texts brought ‘the spirit of vulgar scandal and personal inquietude [...] into the closet and the library’ (CCW IV: 286).

The division which North and Higgins uncover was worked out in public discourse through the metaphor of the body or the monument, and the anatomist or the sculptor, in a debate which asked whether biography should ‘dissect’ the life and lay all bare, or build up, alongside the subject’s works, a celebratory and unifying monument. For the older generation, it was a form of memorial, confirming and celebrating its subject’s worth; for the younger, it was a mode which allowed for questioning and destabilisation of the legacies of the parent generation. For Godwin, the power of the dissecting biography to show the worth of the ‘illustrious dead’ and pass on the lessons they had to tell was greater than even the subject’s own works, but he still understood such biographies as celebratory memorials.⁷¹ His memoir of Wollstonecraft exemplifies this—and famously misjudged the public mood. STC, like Wordsworth, believed that biography’s highest aim should be to emulate the ‘Marble Monument’, taking its cues from the respectful conventions of eulogy and epitaph (CCW IV: 286). All three authors had good reason to suspect (or, in Godwin’s case, to hope) that they would themselves become biographical subjects, and in the texts I am going to consider—Godwin’s *Memoirs of the Author of A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* and ‘Preface’ to the *Life of Chaucer*, Wordsworth’s *Essays upon Epitaphs* (1810) and ‘Letter to a Friend of Robert Burns’, and STC’s ‘Sketches and Fragments of the Life and Character of the Late Admiral Sir Alexander Ball’ and ‘Prefatory Observation on Modern Biography’ (1810)—each reflects on the forms and purpose of biography in ways which make clear they are also thinking about their own legacies.

Their children’s generation were less certain they would receive their own biographical treatments, but were, as North, Higgins, and Cronin have observed, responsible for initiating processes of evaluation and canonisation. In the hands of Hazlitt, De Quincey and, later in the period, Thomas Carlyle, biographical writing became a mode with which to

express ambivalence about the literary legacies of those they looked back to, and to interrogate what, if anything, they had inherited. The lives of ‘great men’ might, as Carlyle believed, teach lasting lessons of ‘deep impressive significance’ to the age but, as he argued in a review of Lockhart’s *Life of Burns*, their works are by comparison mere ‘fragments’.⁷² The focus on the material, and often ailing, body of the poet in De Quincey’s ‘Recollections of the Lake Poets’ (1834–41) and Hazlitt’s ‘Essay on Spence’s *Anecdotes*’ (1820) shows how ‘literary lives’ could also destabilise such narratives of inheritance. Hartley, Sara, and Shelley’s equally ambivalent, questioning memorialisations of their fathers should be read through the same moment, as they sought to anatomise rather than eulogise, exchanging the expected monolithic monument for marble fragments.

Shelley’s unfinished memoir of her father Godwin records that

as a child, I have heard him say, that he was often influenced by the reflection ‘How would such or such an act look in the history of my life?’—This might be called mere vanity, had not his aspirations been of the finest and loftiest nature. (*SLL* IV: 4)

Godwin’s lofty aspirations were that his posthumous example, properly explained and truthfully represented, could sustain and instruct the coming generation. As Pamela Clemit and Gina Walker observe, he believed that biography or ‘individual history’ could be the agent of social reform by ‘demonstrating how social forces act on [historical individuals] and how they, in turn, had an impact on society’.⁷³ The lives of influential men and women, he wrote in ‘Of History and Romance’, are not just ‘the most fruitful source of activity and motive’, inspiring fresh social endeavour, but the only way to fully understand history: ‘laying aside the generalities of historical abstraction, we must mark the operation of human passions [...] It is thus, and thus only, that we shall be enabled to add, to the knowledge of the past, a sagacity that can penetrate into the depths of futurity’ (*PPW* V: 292). His extraordinary *Essay on Sepulchres* (1809) takes this idea of the instructive life furthest, imagining an England constituted of white crosses marking the graves of the nation’s best and brightest, in which the living can ‘commune with the intellectual vitality of the dead’, drawing instruction and inspiration from physical proximity to their bodies.⁷⁴ Such ‘benefactor[s] of mankind’ have both a ‘liberal passion for fame’, Godwin maintained in the *Memoirs*,

and a tendency to be misrepresented, words which though ostensibly about Wollstonecraft apply equally to Godwin himself. 'It seldom happens that [a person of eminent merit] passes through life, without being the subject of thoughtless calumny, or malignant misrepresentation,' he notes, and the first task of the 'survivors' is to offer a corrective account through the public attestation of 'virtues which discover themselves principally in personal intercourse', thus ensuring that the instructive potential of the eminent life is not wasted.⁷⁵

The influential man or woman could therefore have no expectation of posthumous privacy; benefactors of mankind must give up their whole lives for consumption by the 'public at large'.⁷⁶ The standard of disclosure is high: 'I am not contented to observe such a man upon the public stage, I would follow him into his closet', Godwin says in 'Of History and Romance' (*PPW* IV: 295). Angela Monsam suggests we read the *Memoirs* as a hybrid biography/autopsy report, noting that 'both Godwin's *Memoirs* and the dissection report function to dispel suspicion regarding an uncommon subject, with a didactic purpose in mind'.⁷⁷ Wordsworth and STC repeatedly refer to the anatomising tendency of biography in order to make their concerns clear; both require that eminent bodies are left whole. For Godwin, however, as Monsam argues, the extreme candour of the dissection is both instructive to the public and does right by the dissected.

Godwin's conviction that the biographer's first role is to set the record straight derives from his belief not only that the truth alone is morally acceptable, but also that witnessing the correction of misrepresentations was itself satisfying and instructive, and that the reader's vicarious experience of

the justice which is thus done to the illustrious dead, converts into the fairest source of animation and encouragement to those who would follow them in the same career. The human species at large is interested in this justice, as it teaches them to place their respect and affection, upon those qualities which best deserve to be esteemed and loved.

Biography demands such a high standard of honesty for Godwin not only because the revelation of truth teaches moral lessons but because so too does the life of the subject. The *Memoirs* assert that 'there are not many individuals with whose character the public welfare and improvement are more intimately connected, than the author of *A Vindication*

of the Rights of Woman'.⁷⁸ Although he refers to Wollstonecraft as the author of the *Vindication*, it is her 'character' which, properly disseminated, has the potential for general public improvement. Her life as much as, or perhaps more than, her work has the educative potential. In the preface to his *Life of Chaucer* (1804), Godwin further develops this idea of the instructive life, considering the instructive potential of a 'popular work' of biography, designed to be read widely. His aim is a 'work of a new species': a form of history which, rather than the 'antiquities' which 'imbue the soul with lifeless dejection', would 'carry the workings of fancy and the spirit of philosophy into the investigation of ages past' and enable the reader to 'feel for the instant as if he had lived with Chaucer'. The individual life, he believes, could secure the reader's emotional and imaginative investment in 'a science; which is perhaps beyond all others fraught with wisdom, moral instruction and intellectual improvement'. As with Wollstonecraft, it is Chaucer's life, not his works, which might achieve this focus:

the person of Chaucer may in this view be considered as the central figure in a miscellaneous painting giving unity and individual application to the otherwise disjointed particulars with which the canvas is diversified.⁷⁹

His belief in the educational potential of biography, and the private disclosure it demands, places Godwin in the eighteenth-century biographical tradition summed up by Samuel Johnson, who wrote in 1750 that, when executed in accordance with Plutarch's instruction to include the 'harmful, shameful and unjust things' as well as the 'fine, just and useful things',

no species of writing seems more worthy of cultivation than biography, since none can be more delightful or useful, none can more certainly enchain the heart by irresistible interest, or more widely diffuse instruction to every diversity of condition.⁸⁰

Godwin also has his own successors, in particular Carlyle, who argues that 'Universal History' is nothing less than 'the History of the Great Men who have worked here' and taking the instructive life to its logical conclusion, asserts the primacy of the biographer's art above that of his subject.⁸¹ Likewise, Thomas Moore's *Life of Byron* (1830–31) and Hazlitt's 'Essay on Spence's *Anecdotes*' both claim that, without

attention to the life lived, works of literature will resist full interpretation. However, the revelatory practices of Johnson, his own biographers, notably Boswell and Hester Lynch Piozzi, and Godwin, were also increasingly condemned towards the turn of the century. For Wordsworth and STC, leaders of this condemnation, biographical ‘truth’ was of a different order, and the memorials it should construct were panegyric rather than educative.

In the twenty-first number of *The Friend* (25 January 1810), STC opened his ‘Sketches and Fragments of the Life and Character of the Late Admiral Sir Alexander Ball’ with a ‘Prefatory Observation on Modern Biography’ in which he announces how, as he writes the ‘Sketches’ he will ‘recollect the Form and Character of Sir Alexander Ball himself, to represent to my own feelings the inward contempt, with which he would have abstracted his mind from worthless anecdotes and petty personalities’. Contemporary biography according to him is mere celebrity gossip, a mixture of ‘the silliest anecdotes’ and ‘vulgar scandal’. STC’s own sketch will adhere to ‘the spirit of genuine Biography’, which is ‘in nothing more conspicuous, than in the firmness with which it withstands the cravings of worthless curiosity, as distinguished from the thirst after useful knowledge’. Although STC defines ‘the great end of Biography’ as essentially instructive, the guiding image of the essay is the memorial, and its lesson is the synthesised, sympathetic ‘comprehensive Truth’ of commemoration (CCWIV: 286–7).

STC announces his intention to write Sir Alexander’s life in a previous number of *The Friend*, in which he mourns the ‘sad Event which compels me to weave on a Cypress branch, those sprays of Laurel, which I had destined for his Bust not his Monument!’ and decides that ‘my funeral Eulogy of Sir Alexander Ball, must therefore be a narrative of his Life’ (CCW IV: 255). In the ‘Observation on Biography’ he observes that

to scribble Trifles on even the perishable glass of an Inn window, is the mark of an Idler; but to engrave them on the Marble Monument, sacred to the memory of the departed Great, is something worse than idleness. (CCWIV: 286)

The essays compare biography to eulogy, a monument, a bust, and a laurel wreath, forms of public tribute for both the living and the dead. Life and death are indistinct categories: the ‘Life’ will act as eulogy and STC’s

'sprays of Laurel' will do as well for Sir Alexander's monument as his bust. Whether the subject is living or dead, to be deserving of biography is to be deserving of the uncritical celebration of public virtues, and STC's refusal to distinguish between life and death is the logical conclusion of a biographic mode which rejects any discriminatory acts.

Wordsworth's 'Letter to a Friend of Robert Burns' similarly refuses distinctions: in this case, between the life and the works. The letter begins as advice to Gilbert Burns on how to refute claims made in Dr. James Currie's *Works of Robert Burns; with an Account of his Life and a Criticism on his Writings* (1800), but Wordsworth concludes that literary biography serves no purpose beyond prying interest since

our business is with their books,—to understand and enjoy them. And, of poets more especially, it is true—that, if their works be good, they contain within themselves all that is necessary to their being comprehended and relished. (*WMWp.* 668)

'All that is necessary' is within the works; anything else is redundant. Rather than constructing a meaningful narrative about his subject, Dr. Currie has produced only superfluous 'information [...] rendered unsatisfactory and inefficacious through the absence of [...] reserve' (*WMWp.* 666). For both Wordsworth and STC, and unlike Godwin, there is something innately suspicious about information and fact; both are antagonistic to the true representation of a person's life. 'How great a thing the possession of any one simple Truth is, and how mean a thing a mere Fact is', STC says (*CCW IV*: 286). Truth lies in unity, as opposed to the dissecting tendency of individual facts. Facts are meaningful only in the 'light of some comprehensive Truth' to Coleridge, while to Wordsworth the publication of private material such as the letters Dr. Currie has published is permissible only if 'it were in the power of the biographer to relate [...] the *whole* truth'—'[b]ut in no case is this possible' (*CCW IV*: 286; 'Letter to a Friend', 664). Truth about the dead can only be spoken by close friends and kin, since unacquainted writers only seek 'publicly to anatomize' rather than to understand unity, but the truth they should speak is, as Wordsworth says in his 'Essay upon Epitaphs, I', 'truth hallowed by love'.⁸²

In the 'Essay upon Epitaphs, I', first published in *The Friend* in 1810, Wordsworth expresses a similar belief in the redundancy of biography:

the mighty benefactors of mankind [...] do not stand in need of biographic sketches [on their monuments], nor of delineations of character to individualise them. This is already done by their Works, in the memories of men.⁸³

Although concerned primarily with memorials to unknown individuals, rather than those of whom a biography would be justified in Wordsworth's terms, the essay shares the same conviction as the 'Observation on Biography' that biography and memorial are interchangeable forms subject to the same unifying, commemorative standards of truth.⁸⁴ As biography ought to be, the epitaph is a private encomium for the public gaze: written by familiars, 'the Stranger is introduced by it's [*sic*] meditation to the company of a friend'.⁸⁵

These are biographies governed by love and admiration, since epitaphs are the only kinds of biography that friends and family should write, and consequently 'the Writer of an Epitaph is not an Anatomist who dissects the internal frame of the mind' ('anatomizing', as we have seen, is the preserve of the hack biographer). Rather, the author is something like the ideal, but non-existent, biographer of the 'Letter' who can tell the '*whole* truth', and

his delineation, we must remember, is performed by the side of the grave [...] of one whom he loves and admires. The character of a deceased friend or beloved kinsman is not seen, no—nor ought to be seen, otherwise than as a tree through a tender haze or a luminous mist, that spiritualises and beautifies it, that takes away, indeed, but only to the end that the parts which are not abstracted may appear more dignified and lovely; may impress and affect more. Shall we say, then, that this is not truth, not a faithful image; and that accordingly the purposes of commemoration cannot be answered?—It is truth, and of the highest order! [...] It is truth hallowed by love.⁸⁶

It is only through the avowedly subjective, totalising form of the epitaph that anything meaningful can be said; the beautifying 'mist' of personal love smoothes out complexity and contradiction to produce an image of the subject in which 'parts and proportions are brought into distinct view which before had only been imperfectly or unconsciously seen'.⁸⁷

In his posthumously published essay 'Some Thoughts on Biography' (1841), Thomas De Quincey defines English biography as unhelpfully polarised between 'the *éloge* in one extreme' and 'the libel in the

other'.⁸⁸ In doing so, he highlights that division which Higgins and North notice between STC's uncritical encomium and Godwin's inspirational memorial, and the much less reverent attitude of a later generation who turned an 'anatomising' gaze on the lives and works of their precursors. It is easy to imagine, reading the preface to the *Life of Chaucer*, or the 'Observations on Biography', the sort of memoirs Godwin and STC might have wanted or expected. They didn't get them, of course, and while this study is dedicated in part to exploring why their individual literary and biological relationships with their children made that so, Hartley's refusal to speak of his father, Sara's dispassionate catalogue of his bodily breakdowns, and Shelley's ambivalence about her father's continuing relevance should be understood in the context of this wider preoccupation. While De Quincey argues for a middle way free from the personal feelings associated with either extreme, it is the eulogistic that he singles out as an evasive biographical practice. He suggests that, while Wordsworth is right to 'privilege the epitaph as sacred to charity, and tabooed against the revelations of candour', the funeral service itself could 'advantageously be laid open to a far more liberal discussion of those personal or intellectual weaknesses which may have thwarted the influence of character otherwise eminently Christian' and contain 'the minutest circumstantiations of fact which can tend to any useful purpose of illustrating the character'.⁸⁹ The eulogy, which in 'Observation on Biography' is a safe metaphor for unthreatening memorialisation, becomes in De Quincey's hands a medium for the kind of examinations STC and Wordsworth most resist.

De Quincey of course had good professional reasons to defend 'the revelations of candour'. Southey is reported to have told Carlyle that he had told Hartley 'to take a strong cudgel, proceed straight to Edinburgh, and give De Quincey, publicly in the streets there, a sound beating' for his betrayal of 'the hospitable social hearth'.⁹⁰ Commercial motivations aside, however, De Quincey is also calling attention to a different understanding of how literary worth might be assessed, and where genius might reside. North notes that in 'Samuel Taylor Coleridge' De Quincey 'is setting up a distinction [...] between biography as conversation and as monument' in self-consciously explaining his decision to adopt an informal and epistolary style.⁹¹ This conversational tone is one manifestation of a literary biographical discourse that is interrogative and uncertain and which seeks to both make and break dialogues and debts of influence; another is the recurrent elevation of the life and the body of

the poet above the works, a gesture which even the more standard ‘lives and letters’ of this period made.

Thomas Moore justified his publication of Byron’s letters and journals in his *Life of Byron* by writing that ‘the literary and the personal character were so closely interwoven, that to have left his works without the instructive commentary which his *Life* and *Correspondence* afford, would have been equally an injustice both to himself and to the world’.⁹² There is a Godwinian echo to his claims that not only is literary genius at least partially dependent on the life for intelligibility and relevance, but that to withhold the ‘instructive commentary’ the life provides would be an ‘injustice’ to the dead man. Carlyle took this proposal one step further, arguing in a review of Lockhart’s *Life of Burns* (1828):

we cannot but think that the Life he willed, and was fated to lead among his fellow men, is both more interesting and instructive than any of his written works. These Poems are but like little rhymed fragments scattered here and there in the grand unrhymed Romance of his earthly existence.⁹³

Burns’ works are valuable as indices to his life, not the other way around; they are ‘fragments’ to the great ‘unrhymed’ whole. This is an interesting, and surely deliberate, inversion of Wordsworth’s ‘Letter to a Friend’, and not simply in Carlyle’s insistence that the life is ‘more interesting and instructive’ than the works. For Wordsworth, the true monument is the great poet’s works; biography’s main function is not to fracture or disfigure that monument with the kind of truth which is not ‘hallowed by love’. But here, the works are ‘little rhymed fragments scattered here and there’: the ‘whole’ has no prior existence. It is the biographer’s art which interprets and assembles these random pieces into a meaningful narrative.

Hazlitt’s 1820 review of Spence’s *Observations, Anecdotes, and Characters of Books and Men: Collected from Conversation* attempts to seriously scrutinise what lies behind the appetite (which he freely confesses to sharing) for not only literary lives and gossip but the artefacts connected with famous authors. ‘We like to visit the birth-place or burial-place of famous men’, he writes,

to mark down their birth-day, or the day on which they died. Cicero’s villa, the tomb of Virgil, the house in which Shakespeare was brought up, are objects of romantic interest, and of refined curiosity to the lovers of genius; and a poet’s lock of hair, a *fac-simile* of his handwriting, an

ink-stand, or a fragment of an old chair belonging to him, are treasured up as relics of literary devotion. These things are thus valued, as it were, only because they bring us into a sort of personal contact with such characters; vouch, as it were, for their reality, and convince us that they were living men, as well as mighty minds.

Hazlitt begins with the claim that the physical objects and places associated with authors are valued for their 'romantic interest' and that searching out such artefacts is an expression of 'literary devotion' that, as he says elsewhere in the review, 'has its origins in enthusiasm'. There is a bathetic echo of STC in his comparison of biography with the physical artefacts of literary fame: the monument has the same valency as the piece of broken chair or the inkwell, and the same sense of 'literary devotion' and 'refined curiosity' attends on the reported witticism as the panegyric. But this 'romantic interest' conceals, for Hazlitt, the literary anecdote's more serious purpose. It 'vouches' for the humanity of the author, proving that 'they were living men'. Biography allows the reader to

draw down genius from its air-built citadel in books and libraries; and make it our play-mate, and our companion. We see how poets and philosophers 'live, converse, and behave,' like other men. We reduce theory to practice; we translate words into things, and books into men.

Biography, in Hazlitt's account, is the means by which readers are not only companionate with authors but assure themselves that their literary idols are flesh and blood, that they are not just 'mighty minds'.⁹⁴

How to make 'words into things, and books into men' is 'the problem which the literary biographer undertakes to solve' and while their task is one of legacy-building, turning books and words, the permanent repositories of the author's reputation, back into perishable 'things' and 'men' suggests that biography could also undo that legacy. De Quincey's *Lake sketches* make plain the destabilising consequences of a biographical mode which seeks to account for the works in the life. His sketch of STC begins with their first meeting, at which he is overwhelmed by 'the sad spectacle of powers so majestic already besieged by decay', and ends with a refutation of STC's dogmatic Toryism by describing the poet's fragmented indecisive mind as 'too active, too restless, for any abiding feeling to lay hold of him'. De Quincey's dissection diagnoses him as a thinker of 'hair-splitting understanding': an endless sub-divider

who cannot synthesise. The article concludes that ‘posterity will wonder at the subverted idol, whose basis being hollow and unsound, will leave the worship of their fathers an enigma to their descendants’.⁹⁵ De Quincey is ostensibly referring to STC’s contemporary Goethe here, yet it is difficult not to interpret STC as the ‘subverted idol’ whose restless metaphysics had no foundation, and De Quincey as one of the new generation for whom this fallen illustrious man is ‘hollow and unsound’.

De Quincey’s other Lake reminiscences similarly undermine the influence and meaning of the lives he celebrates. The sketches of Southey, Wordsworth, and Charles Lloyd all end with death and the destruction of a charmed circle. ‘William Wordsworth’ ends not with the great poet’s works but with a lament that his sister did not become an author and a closing address to Dorothy that melancholically announces her irreversible mental breakdown: ‘Farewell, impassioned Dorothy! [...] it may sometimes cheer the gloom of your depression to be assured of never-failing remembrance, full of love and respectful pity.’ Similarly, ‘William Wordsworth and Robert Southey’ concludes with the death of Southey’s son Herbert, and with Southey telling De Quincey that ‘For *him*, in this world, he said, happiness there could be none, for his tenderest affections [...] were now buried in the grave with his youthful and too brilliant Herbert!’ His ‘Society of the Lakes—II’, meanwhile, is the narrative of Charles Lloyd’s descent into madness and incarceration, and closes on De Quincey standing on the banks of the Brathay, near the Lloyds’ home, ‘[m]using on that night in November, 1807, and then upon the wreck that had been wrought by a space of fifteen years’, hearing the river as a

requiem over departed happiness, and a protestation against the thought that so many excellent creatures [...] whom I have seen only to love in this life [...] can have appeared for no higher purpose or prospect than simply to point a moral, to cause a little joy and many tears, a few perishing moons of happiness and years of vain regret!⁹⁶

Reputation, legacy, and the capacity to influence the next generation are transitory, uncertain things in De Quincey’s contingent memorials. In each of these sketches, I think this ‘requiem over departed happiness’ registers not only the passing away of something fragile and unique which cannot be captured in the works which survive it, but the suggestion that, despite De Quincey’s protestations, the writers of the

Lake District circle do not necessarily deserve immortalisation as literary heroes, but rather that their worth should be evaluated against the amount of human joy and suffering they caused in their lifetimes. The models for memorial writing and for the biographer's relevance articulated by Carlyle, Hazlitt, and De Quincey provide a valuable framework for thinking about how Hartley, Sara, and Shelley approach their own memorialising tasks—and how that might depart from their fathers' expectations. Carlyle believed that the biographer is the supreme artist who alone can 'rightly decipher' and 'fill-up' the poet's 'ideal outline of himself which a man unconsciously shadows forth in his writings', and this model helps to read the three children's memorialising as strategies for reclaiming authority from fathers whose own writings had in a variety of actual and theoretical ways defined them.⁹⁷ Hazlitt and De Quincey's emphases on the life and body of the poet, and on the temporal limitations such physicality suggests, provide other ways in which to explore how memorial writing might question the possibility of posthumous legacy. Both STC and Godwin thought of biography as something that would confer literary immortality, through either the permanent and impermeable 'Marble Monument' or the 'justice' of the instructive autopsy. As we will see, however, Hartley, Sara, and Shelley's memorials do not function as their fathers wished, instead drawing on the critical possibilities opened up by new biographical forms in order to express profound uncertainty about the legacies they had inherited.

NOTES

1. For examples of the first, see Geoffrey Summerfield, *Fantasy and Reason: Children's Literature in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Methuen, 1984), and Mary Jackson, *Engines of Instruction, Mischief and Magic: Children's Literature in England from its Beginnings to 1839* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989). For the second, see Alan Richardson, *Literature, Education and Romanticism: Reading as Social Practice, 1780–1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
2. Julie Davidson, *Breeding: A Partial History of the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 1.
3. John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, ed. John Williamson Adam (New York: Dover, 2007), 179.
4. John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Peter Laslett, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 310; Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile; or, On Education*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1979), 400.

5. Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, ed. Ian Campbell Ross (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 5.
6. Davidson, 1.
7. *Political and Philosophical Writings of William Godwin*, ed. Mark Philp and others (London: William Pickering, 1993), 3: 9. All subsequent references to this edition are given following quotations in the text.
8. While acknowledging the inseparable relationship between education and radicalism in this period, and indeed the ideological commitments suggested by most of the texts I consider, this study does not explicitly address Romantic-era politics.
9. Almost all works on children's literature or childhood mention the influence of Locke and Rousseau. Some recent examples include Richardson, *Literature, Education and Romanticism*; Deborah Thacker and Jean Webb, *Introducing Children's Literature: From Romanticism to Postmodernism* (New York: Routledge, 2002); Andrew O'Malley, *The Making of the Modern Child: Children's Literature and Childhood in the Late Eighteenth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Matthew Grenby and Andrea Immel, eds, *The Cambridge Companion to Children's Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); and Ann Weir, *Romanticism and Childhood: the Infantilization of British Literary Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
10. Rousseau, 37; Locke, *Thoughts Concerning Education*, 179.
11. Locke, *Thoughts Concerning Education*, 163. Newton's *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (1687) established the fundamental laws of motion which govern the universe. Locke and Newton were correspondents.
12. Locke, *Two Treatises*, 310.
13. Locke, *Two Treatises*, 311.
14. Samuel Richardson, *Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded* [...], (London: Harrison, 1785), 4: 482, 483.
15. Sterne, 8, 5, 9.
16. Ross (ed.), *Tristram Shandy*, note 5, 542.
17. Sterne, 300.
18. Rousseau, 46.
19. Locke, *Thoughts Concerning Education*, 34.
20. Rousseau, 39.
21. Rousseau, 38, 141n, 71, 116.
22. Anna Letitia Barbauld, *Selected Poetry and Prose*, ed. Williams McCarthy and Elizabeth Kraft (Peterborough, ON: Broadview, 2002), 324.
23. Barbauld, 330.
24. Rousseau, 39, 41.
25. Barbauld, 248.

26. Perry and Flint argue, although for different reasons, that eighteenth-century fiction's interest in 'family plots' evinces a cultural and socio-economic shift from parental or ancestral blood ties to conjugal ties being regarded as the definitive family relationship. In doing so, they resurrect the largely discredited work of social historians Lawrence Stone and Edward Shorter, arguing that whatever the data reveals about real domestic arrangements, eighteenth-century prose fiction's insistence on the importance of the nuclear family suggests a new cultural investment in this form. Tadmor argues that the same socio-economic shifts saw the eighteenth-century family shift from a unit defined by blood to one defined by broader kin ties of marriage, friendship, and business relationship. See Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in the Eighteenth Century: Household, Kinship, Patronage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Christopher Flint, *Family Fictions: Narrative and Domestic Relations in Britain 1688–1798* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998); and Ruth Perry, *Novel Relations: The Transformation of Kinship in English Literature and Culture 1748–1818* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
27. John Aikin, *Evenings at Home: or, The Juvenile Budget Opened [...] 6: 1793* (London: Johnson, 1792–96), 36–8.
28. Aikin, 44, 36–8.
29. Rousseau, p. 52.
30. *The Works of Mary Wollstonecraft*, ed. by Janet Todd, Marilyn Butler and others (London: Pickering, 1989), 4: 359, 370, 440.
31. Wollstonecraft, 449, 422.
32. Barbauld, 245, 250.
33. Charles Lamb, *Letters: to which are added those of his sister, Mary Lamb*, ed. E.V. Lucas, (London: Dent, 1935), 1: 326.
34. William McCarthy and Elizabeth Kraft (eds.), *Selected Poetry and Prose of Anna Letitia Barbauld*, 236; P.M. Zall, 'Wordsworth's "Ode" and Mrs. Barbauld's Hymns', *Wordsworth Circle* 1 (1970).
35. Mitzi Myers, 'Reading Children and Homeopathic Romanticism: Paradigm Lost, Revisionary Gleam, or "Plus Ça Change, Plus C'est La Même Chose"?'', *Literature and the Child: Romantic Continuations, Postmodern Contestations*, ed. James Holt McGavran (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999), 44.
36. Barbara Garlitz, 'The Immortality Ode: Its Cultural Progeny', *SEL* 6 (1966), 639–40; 'Immortality Ode', *The Major Work of William Wordsworth: Including The Prelude*, ed. Stephen Gill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), line 65. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text and refer to line numbers unless otherwise specified.

37. Myers, 44; *Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. James Engell and William Jackson Bate, vol. 7, *Biographia Literaria* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 59.
38. Ann Wierda Rowland, *Romanticism and Childhood: The Infantilisation of British Literary Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 8.
39. Plotz, *Vocation of Childhood*, 4.
40. Geoffrey Summerfield, *Fantasy and Reason: Children's Literature in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Methuen, 1984), 175; Jackson, 191.
41. O'Malley, 128.
42. Richardson, *Literature, Education, and Romanticism*, 9; Plotz, *Vocation of Childhood*, 7.
43. See Alan Richardson, 'Wordsworth, Blake and Catechistic Method', *ELH* 56 (1989); Heather Glen, *Vision and Disenchantment: Blake's Songs and Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
44. David B. Ruderman, 'Reforming the Space of the Child: Infancy and the Reception of Wordsworth's "Ode"', *Romanticism and Parenting: Image, Instruction and Ideology*, ed. Carolyn A. Weber (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholar Publishing, 2007), 108–9.
45. Richardson, 'Catechistic Method', 861.
46. Jonathan Wordsworth, *William Wordsworth: The Borders of Vision* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), 67.
47. Richardson, 'Catechistic method', 861; Wordsworth, 67.
48. William Wordsworth, *The Prose Works*, ed. W. J. B. Owen and J. W. Smyser, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), 2: 56.
49. Michele Turner Sharp, 'The Churchyard Among the Wordsworthian Mountains: Mapping the Common Ground of Death and Reconfiguring the Romantic Community', *ELH* 62 (1995), 391.
50. Wordsworth, *Prose Works*, 2: 55.
51. Paul de Man, 'Time and History in Wordsworth', *Diacritics* 17 (1987), 7.
52. Ibid.
53. Donelle Ruwe, 'Benevolent Mothers and Supervising Brothers: Ideology in the Children's Verses of Mary and Charles Lamb and Charlotte Smith', *Children's Literature* 25 (1997), 88.
54. Charles Lamb, 'The Praise of Chimney-Sweepers', *Essays of Elia* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2003), 250.
55. Lamb, 254.
56. Plotz, *Vocation of Childhood*, 94.
57. Lamb, 255.
58. Lamb, 249–50.

59. Lamb, 252.
60. Plotz, *Vocation of Childhood*, 95.
61. William Godwin, *Memoirs of the Author of A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, ed. Pamela Clemit and Gina Luria Walker (Peterborough, ON: Broadview, 2001), 43.
62. Juliette Atkinson, *Victorian Biography Reconsidered: A Study of Nineteenth-Century 'Hidden Lives'* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 5.
63. Hartley Coleridge, 'Coleridge the Poet', [1836?], Hartley Coleridge Collection, MS-0859, Harry Ransom Centre.
64. *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. Frederick L. Jones (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 2: 220.
65. Atkinson, 12.
66. Cronin, 15, 26.
67. David Higgins, *Romantic Genius and the Literary Magazine* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2005); Julian North, *The Domestication of Genius: Biography and the Romantic Poet* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).
68. See Chaps. 2 and 3 in Higgins for an account of the role literary periodicals and magazines played in creating and supplying demand for biographical information, gossip, and scandal in a variety of forms.
69. Higgins, 46; North, 23.
70. Hazlitt, *Complete Works*, 16: 152.
71. Godwin, *Memoirs*, 43.
72. [Thomas Carlyle], 'The Life of Robert Burns by J.G. Lockhart LLB', *The Edinburgh Review*, 1802–1929 48, no. 96 (December, 1828): 310; 290, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/6877423?accountid=13578>.
73. Pamela Clemit and Gina Luria Walker (eds.), introduction to *Memoirs*, 13.
74. Maureen McLane, *Romanticism and the Human Sciences: Poetry, Population, and the Discourse of the Species* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 177.
75. Godwin, *Memoirs*, 43.
76. Ibid.
77. Angela Monsam, 'Biography as Autopsy in William Godwin's *Memoirs of the Author of "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman"*', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 20 (2008), 120.
78. Godwin, *Memoirs*, 43.
79. William Godwin, *Life of Geoffrey Chaucer: The Early English Poet* [...] (London: Phillips, 1804), ix, vii.
80. Samuel Johnson, *The Rambler*, 12th edn (London: Longman, 1793), 2: 31.
81. Thomas Carlyle, 'Heroes, & Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History', *Sartor Resartus; On Heroes and Hero Worship*, ed. W. H. Hudson (London: Dent; Dutton: New York, 1908; repr. 1973), 239.
82. Wordsworth, *Prose Works*, 2: 58.

83. *Ibid.*, 2: 61.
84. Paul de Man writes on the *Essays* as instances of 'prosopopoeia', the autobiographical trope of making an absent or voiceless entity speak (Paul de Man, 'Autobiography as De-facement', *MLN* 94 (1979)). While agreeing with de Man's argument, it is interesting that Wordsworth notes he prefers the epitaphic mode in which 'the Survivors speak in their own Persons' to that in which the epitaph 'personate[s] the Deceased', because doing so 'excludes the fiction which is the ground-work of the other'.
85. Wordsworth, *Prose Works*, 2: 59.
86. *Ibid.*, 57–8.
87. *Ibid.*, 58.
88. Thomas De Quincey, 'Some Thoughts on Biography', *The Posthumous Works*, ed. Alexander H. Japp, vol. 1 (London: Heinemann, 1893), 103.
89. *Ibid.*, 104.
90. Cited in Higgins, 52.
91. North, 167.
92. Thomas Moore, *Life of Lord Byron: With His Letters and Journals*, 2nd edn (London: Murray, 1854), 1: x.
93. Carlyle, 'The Life of Robert Burns by J.G. Lockhart LLB', 290.
94. Hazlitt, *Complete Works*, 16: 152.
95. De Quincey, *Recollections*, 111.
96. *Ibid.*, 206, 235, 332–3.
97. [Thomas Carlyle], 'Wahrheit aus Jean Paul's Leben', *Foreign Review* 9 (January 1830), 4, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/2527156>.

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