

Abolition

There were two Abolitionist Acts, one to abolish the slave trade, the other to abolish slavery. The first was the Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade that was passed in Parliament in 1807; the second was the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833. The Act of 1807 was ineffective in stopping the slave trade even to British colonies, for many rogue British ships continued transporting slaves for high profits. If they were pursued by a ship from the Royal Navy, they could hoist a foreign flag and declare themselves independent of British jurisdiction, or they could dump their human cargo overboard. Ships from other nations were still engaged in slave transport. A quarter of a century later, the Emancipation Movement brought about the Act of 1833, which would have been more effective if it had had fewer clauses of exception. The plantation owner would argue want of housing or other essentials for the care of a slave if liberated. The largest exception went to the East India Company, which was also the largest house of foreign trade and major source of British revenue. The East India Company was allowed to keep slaves for another 10 years, until 1843. It was not just the plantation owners but the British economy as a whole that was dependent on slave labor.

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Although distinguished from those who had been abducted in Africa and sold into slavery in the colonies, an estimated 1400 black people were held in servitude in England until 1772. William Murray, Earl of Mansfield, presided over the case of James Somerset, a slave owned by Charles Stewart, an American customs officer, who had arrived in England on business. Somerset ran away, but was recaptured and bound as a slave to be sent to Jamaica. When he was brought to trial, Granville Sharp and a number of other abolitionists attended the case, determined to secure a judgment that would abolish slavery. Observing that no law of England approved slavery, Mansfield ruled that Somerset must be discharged. While the Somerset case confirmed that it was illegal to hold slaves in England, Mansfield's judgment was by no means an end to slavery (Heward 1979: 139–140).

Slavery was justified by claims that the Africans were sub-human, uneducable, incapable of functioning on their own. Against this greed-motivated hypocrisy, the persistent efforts of a few dedicated leaders gradually made progress. Thomas Clarkson, an influential abolitionist, wrote on the injustice of slavery in 1785 as a student at Cambridge, and subsequently published his *Essay on the Impolicy of the African Slave Trade* (1788). He went aboard an African trading ship, *The Lively*. Not a slave ship, it carried African carvings and other artifacts. The craftsmanship made it obvious that the claims of the slave traders were false; these were an intelligent and artistic people. Clarkson collected and began exhibiting more examples of their art. He filled his work with evidence of their creative skills, and with accounts of the cruelty to which they were subjected. From the sailors he interviewed, Clarkson published *An Essay on the Slave Trade* (1789), based on the narrative of a sailor who had served aboard a slave ship.

To overcome the lies that had been circulated to justify enslavement of captive Africans, Clarkson's strategy was to emphasize their intelligence and expose the cruelty of their treatment. During the 20 years in which the Abolitionists labored to halt the slave trade, other authors joined the campaign. Beilby Porteus, Bishop of London, lent evangelical authority to the movement. The abolitionist presence in Parliament was provided by William Wilberforce, who commenced his long political career when elected Member of Parliament at the age of 21. Their company was joined by Hannah More, a remarkably successful moral teacher and philanthropist. Her poem, *Slavery* (1788), described a captive separated from her children and enchained as a slave, treated as less than human simply because of her skin color. Robert Southey,

in "The Sailor, Who Had Served In The Slave Trade"(1799), tells of the moral anguish of a sailor from a slave ship who had been forced by his captain to flog a woman who subsequently dies from her wounds.

Returning from France at the end of November 1792, Wordsworth found that concern in England over the slave trade almost rivaled interest in the Revolution:

When to my native land,
After a whole year's absence, I returned,
I found the air yet busy with the stir
Of a contention which had been raised up
Against the traffickers in Negro blood,
An effort which, though baffled, nevertheless
Had called back old forgotten principles
Dismissed from service, had diffused some truths,
And more of virtuous feeling, through the heart
Of the English people.

(Prelude, X, 203–228)

Wordsworth, whose mother was a Cookson, remained close friends with the Cooksons of Kendal and joined their effort in gathering local signatures for the national Petition for the Abolition of the Slave Trade to be submitted to Parliament. Early in 1806 he requested that Elizabeth Cookson send a sheet of parchment for the signatures, so that his petition "might be forwarded at the same time" as Thomas's petition from Kendal. When the Abolition Act was passed, Wordsworth wrote a sonnet, "On the final passing of the Bill for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, March, 1807," praising Clarkson for his success after two decades of gathering the necessary support: "Clarkson! it was an obstinate Hill to climb: / How toilsome, nay how dire it was." The Act of 1807 was also an occasion for another sonnet, in which Wordsworth reflected on the fate of Toussaint L'Overture, "the most unhappy man of men!" After the Haitian Revolution (1794–1797), L'Overture organized a constitutional government (1801). He was betrayed by Napoleon, who sent his troops to seize control of the island. L'Overture was arrested and shipped to France where he died in prison (April 7, 1803). "Take comfort," Wordsworth wrote, "Thou hast left behind / Powers that will work for thee."

The act abolishing the slave trade had no sooner passed (1807) than agitation for the abolition of slavery commenced. As a record of the 20-year

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endeavor, Clarkson wrote a *History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade* (1808). In reviewing Clarkson's book, Coleridge predicted the need for extensive re-education (see **Sympathy**). The theater had already served as an effective platform to win public sympathy with such plays as George Colman's *Inkle and Yarico* (Haymarket, August 4, 1787) and *Obi; or, Three Finger'd Jack* (Haymarket, July 2, 1800); and John Cartwright Cross's *King Caesar; or, The Negro Slaves* (Royal Circus, September 16, 1801). The endeavor was continued with *Kaloc; or, The Slave Pirate* (Sadler's Wells, August 9, 1813), an aquatic melodrama that traces a captive's escape from slavery and subsequent maritime adventures. Written by the prolific playwright Charles Dibdin, Jr., *Kaloc* was performed at Sadler's Wells until the emancipation. Thomas Morton's *The Slave* (Covent Garden, November 12, 1816) and the anonymous dramatic indictment, *The African; or, Slave Trade Cruelty* (Coburg, January 6, 1823) furthered the effort to gain public support for the abolition of slavery.

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Under increasing pressure to end slavery, plantation owners protested that without slave labor the sugar plantations could not operate. The sugar boycott in England did little to hamper their prosperity, a fact that prompted Maria Edgeworth to ridicule the effort in 1789. Because sugar cane remained the major crop sustaining the plantation owners, replacing slaves with paid laborers meant a radical shift in the economy. Amelia Opie's anti-slavery poem, "The Black Man's Lament; or How To Make Sugar" (1826), relates the life of a slave in a narrative originally intended for children. In a simple style that attracted a wider readership, Opie describes the hunt of the slave traders, their capture of an African, his voyage in chains on a crowded slave ship, and his arrival in the West Indies where he is forced to labor among the sharp leaves of the sugar plants.

Thomas De Quincey, writing for a Tory readership in his two-part essay, "West India Property" (June 14 and 28, 1828), responded to charges that the plantation owners were resisting and forestalling all efforts at change. His sympathies were with the slave holders rather than with the slaves. Upholding the argument of the colonists concerning loss of income and property, he advocated a gradual process of liberation. On the one hand, De Quincey argued that "the moral improvement of the negroes is in the highest degree satisfactory"; on the other, he suggested that the process of re-education still had a long way to go. Hampering Christian teaching were the persisting masquerade rituals of Obeah men calling on the dead.

When Parliament finally passed an act abolishing slavery throughout the British Empire, it was compromised by notable exceptions in order to protect the economy of Britain's largest investments. Slavery was allowed to continue in "Territories in the Possession of the East India Company," the "Island of Ceylon," and "the Island of Saint Helena." These exceptions were not eliminated until 1843.

REFORM, REVOLUTION, SYMPATHY

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Allegory

For Coleridge, and for many of his contemporaries, allegory was a method of critical analysis as well as a mode of narrative. Along with metaphor, metonymy, symbol, synecdoche, and many more figures of rhetoric, allegory involves verbal substitutions, so that one thing is said but another thing is intended. Metaphor is basically a one-off substitution, although authors are fond of developing a cluster of related metaphors, as Shakespeare does in Sonnet 18, "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day" and in Sonnet 73, "That time of year thou mayest in me behold." The substitutions of allegory are more elaborate and complex because they become engaged in narrative action, typically aided by the trope of *prosopopeia*, personifying emotions, beliefs, values, and institutions, and converting a mental setting into an external, physical landscape. This play of personification can take place in little, as when Iago tells Roderigo, "Our bodies are our gardens, to which our wills are gardeners" (*Othello*, I.iii.322–331), or when Jacques muses that "All the world's a stage" (*As You Like It*, II.vii.138–166). Allegory can also be extended to an epic as grandly imposing as Spenser's *Faerie Queene*.

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Coleridge several times defined allegory in contrast to symbol, and he also introduced the term "tautegorical" to designate self-referentiality in contrast to the alterity of the allegorical, which deflected reference to something existing parallel to itself. Rather than deflecting meaning, the symbol refracts or mediates meaning in and through itself. At the opening of his *Genealogy of the Romantic Symbol* (2007), Nicholas Halmi offers two familiar examples of the Romantic symbol: the albatross of Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and the blue blossom of Novalis's *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*. Halmi immediately adds that these are not the sort of symbols that he is concerned with in his book. He addresses, instead, the symbol as a theoretical construct, a hypothesis of mental process. As I see it, Blake comes closer to Halmi's sense of the Romantic symbol in his instructions on how "To see a World in a Grain of Sand" ("Auguries of Innocence"). As in the parallel contrasts of imagination and fancy, genius and talent, imitation and copy, Coleridge ranked symbol and allegory as the greater and lesser:

Now an allegory is but a translation of abstract notions into a picture-language, which is itself nothing but an abstraction from objects of the senses; the principal being more worthless even than its phantom proxy, both alike unsubstantial, and the former shapeless to boot. On the other hand a symbol ... is characterized by

a translucence of the special in the individual, or of the general in the special, or of the universal in the general; above all by the translucence of the eternal through and in the temporal. It always partakes of the reality which it renders intelligible; and while it enunciates the whole, abides itself as a living part in that unity of which it is the representative. The other are but empty echoes which the fancy arbitrarily associates with apparitions of matter, less beautiful but not less shadowy than the sloping orchard or hill-side pasture seen in the transparent lake below. (*Lay Sermons*, 30–31)

Halmi observes that “the Romantic valorisation of the symbol at the expense of allegory” persisted until it was challenged by Walter Benjamin (1928).

That pattern of subordination might be avoided if allegory, too, were examined not as phenomenon (Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*; Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*) but as method or process (Philo’s exegesis of Genesis; Schleiermacher’s hermeneutic analysis of Luke). Allegory as a mode of narrative engages strategies of disguising by substitution; allegorical interpretation reverses the process and seeks to reveal what had been masked or disguised. Having insisted that the processes of allegory were different from those of symbol, Coleridge disassembled what had previously been a rhetorical collaboration. Tracing that collaboration in *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode* (1964), Angus Fletcher argues that allegory incorporates symbolic process rather than collapsing allegory and symbol as one and the same. Coleridge, too, acknowledged a coexistence of the two, declaring that “the advantage of symbolic writing over allegory” is “that it presumes no disjunction of Faculty” but allows “simple *predominatiorn*” (*Lectures on Literature*, 2:418). “Disjunction of Faculty” would occur if analytical reason had to intervene to decipher the workings of the imagination. Fletcher observes that Coleridge sometimes demotes allegory to the operations of fancy, but other times grants it the cooperative interaction with imagination:

we shall not err ... if we define allegorical composition as the employment of one set of agents and images with actions and accompaniments correspondent, so as to convey, while in disguise, either moral qualities or conceptions of the mind that are not in themselves objects of the Senses, or other images, agents, actions, fortunes, and circumstances, so that the difference is everywhere presented to the eye or imagination, while the Likeness is suggested to the mind; and this connectedly, so that the Parts combine to form a consistent Whole. (*Lectures*, 2:99–100)

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Noting that the Greek, *allo agoran*, means “to talk of one thing, but so as purposely to convey another,” Coleridge observed that the literal derivation would include irony and a host of other tropes. A more accurate definition would specify attention to both parts of the duality, engaging reason and imagination simultaneously. Thus understood, allegory would avoid disjuncture or interruption by allowing a reader’s attention to both the costumed performers and their mediated meanings.

Following the Enlightenment and the efforts of the Higher Criticism, it became increasingly common to read Scripture as one would read a secular text. It remained common practice in the sermon or homily for the priest to elucidate the biblical text with an allegorical interpretation as a practical application of the biblical passage to everyday life. Friedrich Schleiermacher argued on behalf of a general hermeneutics applicable to all texts, including the Bible. Opposing factions pitted explicit against implicit interpretation. The argument against allegorical interpretation was that it imposed on biblical literature a meaning that the original did not convey. The argument against literal interpretation was that biblical passages defied credulity, for example the passages in Genesis that assert the creation took place during six successive days of 24 hours, and that Methuselah lived to an age of “nine hundred sixty and nine years.”

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In transforming improbability into probability, historical readings were in themselves allegorical substitutions. Reading the Gospel of Luke as the master text of the Synoptic Gospels, Schleiermacher performs a subtle allegorical substitution of an imagined narrative for the actual biblical text. Coleridge himself writes on the boundary between allegorical and hermeneutic readings in editing and adapting Richard Leighton’s exegesis of the Acts of the Apostles and the epistles of Peter as the Aphorisms of *Aids to Reflection*. Allegorical criticism persists. Cleanth Brooks, for example, explicates allegorically by converting poetry into “parables about the nature of poetry” (1947). Northrop Frye, in his *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), observed that stealthy allegorizing occurs in all literary analysis. The reliance on paraphrase involves an allegorization of literary texts, and the processes of substitution are more prominent in psychoanalytical, Marxist, or mythic criticism.

The prevalence of allegory in Romantic poetry has been well documented by Theresa Kelley. Often the allegory is so well integrated into the narrative that it scarcely obtrudes. An example in Wordsworth’s *The Prelude* is the dream of being lost in a desert waste, encountering a man mounted on a dromedary and

bearing a stone and shell (V, 71–114). Shelley is forthright in his use of allegory in *Mask of Anarchy*, subtler in *Prometheus Unbound*, and he appropriates many of the traditional conventions of allegorical narrative in *Triumph of Life*. Coleridge, despite his denigration of allegory, thought well enough of his own “Allegoric Vision” to republish it again and again.

HIGHER CRITICISM, MYTHOPOEIA, PATHETIC FALLACY, SYMBOL

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Typically depicting an aged gentleman so fascinated with his antique artifacts that he fails to notice his young wife in the embrace of her lover, Thomas Rowlandson, George Cruikshank, James Gillray, and other caricaturists found an easy target for their satirical jests in the activities of antiquarians and the Antiquarian Society of London. Being so captivated with the past that one neglected the present was subjected to ridicule and laughter. The term was used in a pejorative sense to refer to a collector of broken bits and pieces of unidentified origin, or with a fantasized historical provenance (e.g., the belt buckle of Ethelred the Unready). Scorn directed toward the follies of antiquarians and their curio cabinets also came from other antiquarians who endeavored to transform the hobby into a more focused and historically grounded discipline.

Horace Walpole, known for his Gothic residence at Strawberry Hill and his Gothic novel *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), was an antiquarian who loathed the dilettante collectors and insisted that the study of cultural relics should be aesthetically informed. A more specialized antiquarianism was fostered by the Society of Antiquaries, established in 1717, chartered by George II in 1751, and granted apartments in Somerset House in 1780. The Society had specialized meetings in geographical and historical fields. Among the more prominent were those representing ancient Egypt, Roman Britain, and classical Greece. In spite of increasing specialization, there were shared interests among collectors of paintings, books, coins. The cultural contribution of the antiquarians was in the establishment of ordered collections that were transferred from private to public exhibitions and ultimately to large metropolitan museums.

Antiquarians took a special interest in the excavation of Roman fortifications and recovery of Roman artifacts. The idea of the Roman occupation

evolved in the historical and antiquarian disciplines, but was furthered in literature and poetry. A mythic identity was constructed on the origins of the kingdom. The Arthurian legend preoccupied the imagination of Sir Richard Blackmore, who wrote the epic "King Arthur" (1697), which combined myth with historical facts. For him, the coins and Roman ruins verified the presence of a once prominent civilization fallen into shambles: "Where famous Pontis stood an ancient town, / By roman coins and checker'd pavements known." Seventy years later, Thomas Warton addressed the intermingling of legend and history: "But the matter of the whole is so much of the same sort, and the heroes and adventures of one story are so mutually and perpetually blended with those of one another, that no real unity of distinction is preserved." Historical discipline became more central to archaeology, and coins were prized for identifying dates and rulers.

Less magnificent than the ruins which would influence trends in neoclassical architecture, the numismatic interest in Roman coins was deemed a folly. Robert Fergusson expressed scorn for the petty relic fascination; he questioned the validity of the history constructed by Blackmore and Warton and currently insinuated in the plays of mythic history in the theaters of London. Fergusson's satiric verse, specifically the burlesque poem "The Canongate Play-house in ruins," ironizes theatrical histories. Should some future antiquarian excavate these ruins, the uncovered props would take on exactly the same value as the antique coins. "While many a kingly diadem, I ween, Lies useless here intomb'd, with heaps of coin stamp'd in theatric mint: offenceless gold!" Antique coinage, in Fergusson's estimation, is as useless and as worthless as any prop on the stage.

In his satirical poem "The Relic, or the Antiquary and the Patriot," Thomas Ingoldsby continued to chide antiquarians as "Rubbish Hunters." Playing off the theatrical artifice, as in Fergusson's satire, Ingoldsby implies a disingenuous charlatanry of the antiquary "who'll lecture / An hour by the clock on some old pot or pan, / Proving its lid the absolute shield of Hector" (23–25). Not only is Ingoldsby's antiquarian a loquacious bore, he is also a cheat. His Roman coins are only "so called" and his ancient inscriptions may be "old (or new)" (26–32).

Antiquarians are represented as benighted fools in poetry, novels, and comedies. In *The Spiritual Quixote* (1773), Richard Graves observes the peculiarities which he finds most curious (vol. 1, book IV, chap. V). The protagonist, Wildgoose, has arrived at a recently constructed country house

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that architecturally mimics a Gothic ruin. Graves's character draws attention to the theatricality of erecting a mock historical structure to satisfy the fashionable taste for Gothic architecture. The absurd idea of "building a ruin" is akin to the construction of a Gothic setting in the theater, an artificial environment that conveys the thematic characteristics sufficient to conjure the make-believe past. The modern dweller in such a counterfeit structure can fantasize about former times as an actor playing a part. In this situation artifacts or replicas become props. More than perpetrating a myth, the owner indulges in a mock history. At this juncture Wildgoose is joined by the "Stranger, of a peculiar Character," an antiquary. One might anticipate that the antiquary would be tolerant of this reconstruction of the past. His response, however, is the opposite: "I don't at all approve of these deceptions: which must necessarily mislead future antiquaries, and introduce great confusion into the English history." This was, of course, the confusion also predicted by Fergusson in "The Canongate Play-house in ruins." Graves's antiquarian is obsessed with the historical past, but he insists that past is genuine. He has taken the road to Cirencester "to enquire after some of those Roman coins which are found there in great abundance," and he shows a few that he has collected. Wildgoose observes "that the study of Medals was a curious study; but he could never be convinced of the utility of it." The question of utility is debated by the two characters, each questioning what is being sought or achieved by an interest in antiquity. Graves offers a tolerant reconciliation, allowing the antiquarian an admirable defense of his fascination in accord with rationalist aesthetics.

William Hazlitt ridiculed the frequent reference to classical and antique iconography in the periodical press (1823). Mention of Roman coins, he observed, was always coupled to a political agenda. Classical and antiquarian knowledge had thus become necessary for political discourse and political advancement: "A Whig or Tory *tirade* on a political question, the abuse of a public character, now stands side by side in a fashionable Review, with a disquisition on ancient coins, or is introduced right in the middle of an analysis of the principles of taste."

Oldbuck, in Sir Walter Scott's *The Antiquary* (1816), is an amateur historian, archaeologist, and collector of items of dubious antiquity. He is the inadvertent guide and unreliable commentator on the setting which has all the Gothic trappings of family secrets, hidden treasure, and a nocturnal procession to a ruined

abbey. In his surreal fragment, "Thomas the Rhymer," Scott conjures with the folk prophet, Thomas of Erceldoun, called "the Rhymer" because of the chiming language of his prophecies. The fragment does not take a hostile approach against Roman coinage, nor even cast doubt on its value. But its provenance becomes mysterious and haunting. Roman coins seem to be a sinister currency. A shrewd horse trader, Canobie Dick endeavors to sell his animals on the moors late night. A mysterious figure bargains for the horses and pays in gold. "All that puzzled Dick in the transaction was, that the gold which he received was in unicorns, bonnet-pieces, and other ancient coins, which would have been invaluable to collectors, but were rather troublesome in modern currency." This druidic figure out of the night represents the shadows of the past. The ancient coins, seemingly newly minted, would date the mysterious figure as belonging to the time of the Roman occupation. He is by no means hostile or wicked, instead more closely related to the country folk, a native connected with the land.

This sense of the coins belonging to the folk also appears in the poetry of John Clare. A self-educated farm laborer, Clare developed his own poetic skill and rustic style. In his poem "Cauper Green," Clare describes an agricultural landscape shaped long ago, which has been worked year after year throughout the centuries. Laborers like himself have felt, generations before him, the same connection to the land. The land itself is a history book and tells of the previous empires that dominated it. Yet in each succession, the empire ultimately depends on people like him, who provide the labor and defend their king, not for political gain but to protect their land and rights. As he tills the land he unearths a burial ground, full of "Antique coins of varied kind" (130–136). To Clare they are less important as symbols of the power of previous kingdoms, and more important as part of the land upon which common people work, and on which they died in struggles to protect it.

One purpose of coinage was its ability to convey a political and social message and project power and wealth. A coin influences or inspires a local populace, elevating the status of whichever deity, emblem, or individual is imprinted onto the flans. A coin is imbued with symbolic value, rendering it more than an ornate bit of precious metal. Like Shelley's *Ozymandias*, the representation is only effective so long as there is power to back it up. Once an empire falls, as Gibbon taught that they must, what is left is detritus. An antiquarian's research to articulate the lineage behind the object led to curious accounts. In the literature of the period, the coins were made to serve several political factions.

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Ridiculed by the satirists, they were nevertheless a significant part of the fascination with the past pervasive in the period.

FOLKLORE, GOTHIC, MEDIEVALISM, RUINS

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Art for Art's Sake

In spite of its prominence in the Aestheticism of France and England, the concept of *l'art pour l'art*, with its presumed freedom from moral, political, or religious purpose, actually had its origin in Germany. It is nevertheless usually cited as a term that came into usage with Gautier and Baudelaire, imported into England by Pater, and widely affirmed in the decadence of the *fin de siècle*. Crucial to the concept is its resistance to, or defiance of, social values. In the 1890s, "art for art's sake" offended Victorian morality. A century earlier, amid repressive censorship throughout Europe during the 1790s, the aesthetics of "disinterestedness" and the self-determination of art were argued in the writing of Kant, Schiller, and Schelling. The first recorded use of the phrase "l'art pour l'art" was in a conversation between a Frenchman and an

Englishman in Weimar, Germany. The circumstances of their encounter must be told, because it was largely through their circle of influence that the concept of *l'art pour l'art* was disseminated.

The date was February 10, 1804. The Englishman was Henry Crabb Robinson, whose parents were Dissenters and who was therefore denied an education in the public schools or the universities of England. In his determination to acquire a university education, Robinson traveled to Germany in 1800, where in the course of the next five years he met with Goethe, Schiller, and Herder, and at the University of Jena studied philosophy under Schelling. The Frenchman was Benjamin Constant, who, in 1803, left France in exile with Germaine de Staël after both of them had incurred the disfavor of Napoleon. In January 1804, Constant and de Staël settled in Weimar, where they met Robinson. Because both Constant and Robinson kept written accounts of their meetings and conversations, it is possible to document, at least in part, their discussion of the aesthetics of Kant, Schiller, and Schelling.

After a conversation with Schiller, Constant recorded that, in contrast with that of France, the fugitive poetry of Germany was a totally different genre, with a totally different depth. He goes on directly to recount his conversation with Robinson, whom he describes as a student of Schelling's work on Kantian aesthetics. Constant gives a synopsis of his "very clever notions" ("idées très énergiques"): "Art for art's sake, with no purpose, for any purpose perverts art. But art achieves a purpose which is not its own." Because Robinson spoke French to Constant, the phrase *l'art pour l'art* may have been coined by either of them. Analogous to Kant's *Ding an sich*, Schelling had posited *Kunst an sich*.

During the eighteenth century aesthetics had not become an impregnable fortress of reason. Quite the contrary: the efforts of Baumgarten and Kant were addressed against the rationalist philosophy of Leibniz and Wolff who had relegated aesthetics to the delusory response of the lower faculties – sensations, emotions, fantasy, and the image-engendering processes of the mind most predominant in slumber. These lower faculties, they argued, were also stimulated by the work of art. To the degree that emotion and imagination are excited, to that same degree the control of reason slips into abeyance. The efforts of Baumgarten were to reaffirm the reason in the act of aesthetic judgment. The aesthetic response, for Baumgarten, was nevertheless still a matter of the unruly lower faculties.

In order to redefine the relationship of reason and imagination, Kant attempts to circumvent the lower faculties. Imagination, as *Einbildungskraft*,

has its domain in reason. Reason has, as well, its practical and empirical interests. But the imagination may be engaged purely for the purpose of pleasure. This is a pleasure which is derived from intellectual interest, to be distinguished from that sort of pleasure aroused by sensation and feeling. In all acts of aesthetic judgment, reason acts independently of sensual response. Kant asks, then, how a beautiful murder, rape, sickness, or death might be possible (*Critique of Judgment*, §48). What in nature would be ugly or displeasing can be contemplated as beautiful in art. Whereas Rubens' *Rape of the Daughters of Leucippus* (1619) or David's *Death of Marat* (1793) might succeed in aestheticizing violence, other images may reflect such a strong sense of the original ugliness, Kant acknowledges, that they would excite disgust and thus destroy any possibility of aesthetic satisfaction.

Those who have recognized the relationship of "art for art's sake" to Kantian "disinterestedness" have found it necessary to conclude that the dissemination of the term involved a distortion or misunderstanding of Kant's aesthetics (Bell-Villada 1996; Egan 1924; Wilcox 1953). Both Constant and Robinson, however, call attention to Schiller and Schelling, who provide the more pertinent transformation of Kantian "disinterestedness." In the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant argued that judging art required a state of mind in which no biases are present, so that no beliefs (personal, political, religious) should impose on the aesthetic experience. Such beliefs hinder the experience of art as art. A disinterested judgment is a judgment free of all inclinations that would disrupt the aesthetic experience.

It was not Constant but de Staël who was responsible for the proliferation of the ideas about the self-determined purposiveness of art and its necessary freedom from political and moral constraint. In *De l'Allemagne*, de Staël, without repeating Constant's phrase, insists upon the inherent, rather than the imposed, "purpose" in the a priori aesthetics of Kant, as well as in Schelling's notion of art as synthesis of mind and matter. But the conversation between Constant and Robinson had been a starting place, and they had also spoken of art with no purpose, art that nevertheless achieves a purpose not its own ("Mais l'art atteint au but qu'il n'a pas"). As can be seen from similar formulations in Robinson's letters, as well as in his notes on Schelling's lecture series "Philosophie der Kunst," these are the very words he would have used in attempting to explain in French Kant's insistence that art achieves purposiveness without a purpose ("Zweckmäßigkeit ohne Zweck").

EROTICISM, IMAGINATION, NEGATIVE CAPABILITY, SUBLIME

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Associationism

In the *Phaedo* (73d–74a) Plato recounted the modes of association through which memory operates. In *De Memoria* (Ch. 2) Aristotle formulated the "laws of association." Both affirmed that a present experience may stir a remembered experience by similarity, by contrariety, and by contiguity. The phrase "association of ideas" was first used by John Locke in *An Essay on Understanding* (4th edition 1699; dated 1700). For Locke, the mind could easily deceive itself, or be prompted by the suggestions of others, to make erroneous associations, thus engendering "wrong and unnatural combinations of ideas." Acknowledging that the "association of ideas" is indeed an instinctive habit of mind, Locke warns that it is fallible and easily misleads.

In the *Treatise of Human Nature* (1730; 3rd vol. 1740), David Hume follows Lockean empiricism in affirming that impressions and experiences are received through the senses and stored in the mind, but he saw no reason for

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dismissing the laws of association just because the memory could occasionally be tricked. Hume proposed instead a more rigorous attention to association as necessary to all human thought. He introduced a major change in the Aristotelian formulation. Association by sameness or difference, Hume observed, involved but one comparative act; similarity and contrariety therefore together constituted but one mode of association. Impressions that were normally experienced in spatial contiguity, such as bowl and spoon, constituted a second mode. The third, not explicitly recognized under Aristotle's laws, dealt with impressions experienced in temporal contiguity, such as a rock tossed into a pond and its splash. Ideas of causal connection result from associating an antecedent with a consequent.

The associationism of Hume is epistemological. The psychological formulation is found in David Hartley's *Observations on Man* (1749). Hartley, too, agrees with Locke that the mind at birth is a *tabula rasa*. All states of consciousness are awakened by simple sensations, and psychological growth is the continuous accrual and retention of sense experiences. The faculty of memory is excited by and operates in conjunction with the emotions and reason. Hartley finds in the associational process the grounds for all voluntary action as well as for seemingly spontaneous and involuntary action.

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If associationism provides a valid explanation of the processes that underlie thought, memory, and behavior, then utilizing the laws of association ought to provide for the most effective and persuasive discourse. Following an associationist epistemology and psychology, an associationist rhetoric was introduced by Joseph Priestley in his *Course of Lectures on Oratory and Criticism* (1777). His twofold purpose, Priestley declared, was to illustrate the association of ideas in rhetoric and to relate "the influence of Oratory, and the striking effect of Excellencies in Composition, upon the genuine principles of human nature" (i-iii).

In the Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), Wordsworth described the endeavor "as an experiment" in how far pleasure may be imparted "by fitting to metrical arrangement a selection of the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation." That experiment begins with the premise "that by the act of writing in verse an Author makes a formal engagement that he will gratify certain known habits of association." Further, the poet must "make these incidents and situations interesting by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature: chiefly, as far as regards the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement." He must also avoid

expressions so overused by bad poets, that it becomes "scarcely possible by any art of association to overpower." The poet must also be wary that writing in meter does not lead him into "other artificial distinctions of style with which meter is usually accompanied, and that, by such deviation, more will be lost from the shock which will thereby be given to the Reader's associations than will be counterbalanced by any pleasure which he can derive from the general power of numbers." Because "the music of harmonious metrical language" may in itself arouse "the blind association of pleasure," the poet should strive to combine "language closely resembling that of real life" with "the circumstance of metre, differing from it so widely." The combination of strange and familiar associations "make up a complex feeling of delight, which is of the most important use in tempering the painful feeling always found intermingled with powerful descriptions of the deeper passions." One remaining concern is that the poet may inadvertently trigger unwanted associations, or no associations at all: "my associations must have sometimes been particular instead of general, and that, consequently, giving to things a false importance, I may have sometimes written upon unworthy subjects."

In tracing his own philosophical development in the *Biographia Literaria* (1817), Coleridge devoted chapters 5, 6, and 7 to associationism, a doctrine he once endorsed but had since rejected. Originally attracted by the psychological reflections that Hartley's *Observations* had prompted in other commentators, Coleridge became increasingly disaffected, not simply because the tubes and vibratiuncles of Hartleian physiology had been proven wrong, but because his system made no allowance for the function of the will, and because his version of "the one law" of contemporaneity was mechanical and reductive. "The objects of any two ideas need not have co-existed in the same sensation in order to become mutually associable." As Coleridge goes on to explain, "the same result will follow when only one of the two ideas has been represented by the senses and the other by the memory." Indeed, as occurs in language, no physical object need be present to stimulate abundant associations.

Thomas De Quincey repeatedly insisted that his literary criticism was built upon a foundation of psychology. He approaches Shakespeare as a playwright whose power derived from penetrating psychological insight into character. "On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth" he specifically designates as "psychological criticism," and his article on Shakespeare for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* is introduced as "psychological biography." The storm on the heath in *King Lear* (III.iv), De Quincey further asserts, demonstrates the

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psychological process that occurs “when these inert and sleeping forms *are* organized, when these possibilities *are* actualized as the conscious and living possession” of the mind.

The opening paragraph of “On Wordsworth’s Poetry” reasserts that a “good psychology” is the prerequisite for a sound “philosophic criticism.” De Quincey was the first to explicate Wordsworth’s poetry in terms of the “association of ideas.” In applying the associationist principles of emotion, perception, and language to the interpretation of Wordsworth’s poems, De Quincey was liberally nuanced rather than doctrinaire. He was concerned not merely with the functions and patterns of memory in the poetry, but also with Wordsworth’s attention to the data of the senses, and to the interconnection among images and feelings. As already observed, Wordsworth had invited an associationist reading of his poetry in his Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*. In asserting that poetry “takes its origin from emotions recollected in tranquillity,” Wordsworth grounded his poetic endeavor in the act of memory. The associative power of the memory enables the poet to reconstruct in the mind the object of contemplation; and through language not only in his own mind, but in the mind of the reader.

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“Whosoever looks searchingly into the characteristic genius of Wordsworth,” De Quincey declares, “will see that he does not willingly deal with a passion in its direct aspect, or presenting an unmodified contour, but in forms more complex and oblique, and when passing under the shadow of some secondary passion.” One image will trigger another through spontaneous habits of association: similitude or difference, spatial or temporal proximity. A remembrance triggered by an awareness of similitude or difference, for example, might occur on revisiting the River Wye and recollecting a previous visit, or an incident of extreme sadness might be recalled in the midst of an experience of pleasure. In “The Two April Mornings,” “The Fountain,” “We are Seven,” “Stray Pleasures,” and “Hart-Leap Well,” Wordsworth develops his poetic structure through the associationist concurrence of contrary emotions.

The associationist approach to Wordsworth’s poetry did not end with De Quincey. Arthur Beatty, in his monomaniacally brilliant *William Wordsworth: His Doctrine and Art in Their Historical Relations* (2nd ed., 1927), persuaded many scholars of his generation that Hartleian associationism was the essential tool for understanding Wordsworth’s poetry.

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Autobiography

Journals, diaries, notebooks, and letters are the most informal of the various modes of life-writing. Beginning in the seventeenth century, a collection of such informal papers was sometimes transformed into the memoir. Although recognized as a subcategory of autobiography, and usually characterized by authentic papers written in the first person, a memoir might be assembled and edited by a relative, friend, or enemy, and seldom surveys a life as a whole. Another related subcategory of autobiography is the confession, which may also offer a more narrow account of a life. Also written in the first person, a confession addresses some wayward or not generally known aspect of a personal career; it reveals personal events that usually relate to spiritual or moral development. An autobiography presumes to survey the author's life as a whole. A memoir presents remarkable or significant moments from a

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career. Memoirs, confessions, and autobiographies are also convenient ploys for lending apparent first-person authenticity to a work of fiction. Distinguishing between fiction and nonfiction is seldom if ever possible.

A combination of political and historical motives informed John Locke's edition of the *Memoirs Relating to the Life of Anthony First Earl of Shaftesbury*. A defense of family reputation motivated Anthony Hamilton to publish his edition of the *Memoirs of the life of Count de Gramont: containing in particular, the amorous intrigues of the court of England in the reign of Charles II*, but their persistent popularity through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries owed more to their salacious sensationalism than to their historical content. Sir Walter Scott contributed a biographical sketch on Gramont and the "Merry Monarch" and drew from the *Memoirs* in several of the Waverley novels, most notably in *Peveril of the Peak*. The Comte de Gramont arrived in England with the Restoration and quickly confirmed the notoriety for his flirtations and affairs that he had already established in France. One of the foremost beauties of the English court was Elizabeth Hamilton. Under pressure from her two brothers, the Comte married "la belle Hamilton." She was a woman of considerable wit, but her husband continued to pursue his libertine gallantries.

Memoirs had already exhibited a degree of naughtiness before the appearance of the *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (1748). John Cleland's "first person" account of the erotic adventures of his heroine, Fanny Hill, is sometimes identified as the first pornographic novel written and published in English. Harriette Wilson in her *Memoirs* (1825) provided the most persuasively nonfictional account of erotic adventures. Her career as courtesan, as she described it in scene after scene, consisted of sexual dalliances with the nobility. Naming the names, she gains credibility through personal details revealed in dialogue (see **Eroticism**).

The *Confessions* of St. Augustine provided a model for the *Confessions* of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. As in Augustine's *Confessions*, Rousseau provides a blend of autobiographical anecdotes and philosophical reflections, but he was not concerned with developing a narrative trajectory from sin to repentance. He focuses, rather, on the experiences that shaped his personality and ideas. Augustine had his concubine; Rousseau revealed a myriad of peccadilloes, from childhood memories of a servant who fondled his genitals to his teenaged pranks of pissing in a neighbor's kettle. Hiding in the shadows of a city street, he would jump out suddenly to expose himself to a female passer-by. Sometimes

spanked by his governess, Mademoiselle de Lambercier, he discovered such an intense sexual arousal that he sought to recreate the experience with several women during his adult years. Françoise de Warens would play his “maman,” and he would be her naughty child. Indulging another of his fantasies, Sophie d’Houdetot would come to his chambers dressed as a young man to be molested by “his” master.

Rousseau’s *Confessions* established a new mode of autobiography in which an author could write of childhood experience and personal feelings as shaping the character and accomplishments of adult life. Developing simultaneously, however, was contrasting manner of autobiography, following in the tradition of St. Augustine. This was the life record as a theodicy encouraged by the Pietists, and advocated by John Wesley and the Methodist movement as well as by Alexander Mack and the Brethren movement. A widely read example was Heinrich Jung-Stilling’s autobiography of his early years, which describe village and family life with vivid realism. Goethe arranged the publication of the first two volumes, *Heinrich Stillings Jugend* (1777; *Henry Stilling’s Youth*). Thirty years later a subsequent edition was augmented with his account of his later years, *Heinrich Stillings Leben* (1806). The combination of piety, simplicity, and lively description appealed to English readers in the translations by Samuel Jackson (1835 and 1836).

Already divided into fiction and nonfiction, into memoirs and confessions, the strategies of autobiographical inventions of the self underwent further hybridity in the Romantic period. The female life-story brought its own challenges: whether those of the very public life, as in the *Memoirs* of Mary Robinson, actress, playwright, one-time mistress of the youthful Prince Regent; or those of the very private Dorothy Wordsworth, whose *Grasmere Journal* was intended primarily for her brother’s reading. Elizabeth Billington, a well-known opera singer, attempted to impose a more demure modesty on her public career by feigning to write her *Memoirs* for the private audience of her mother. In the *Memoirs of Emma Courtney*, Mary Hays found a convenient fictional camouflage to disguise her own autobiographical revelations. Not necessarily the worst-case scenario for telling the female life-story, having a man assume that task inevitably alters what is told and how it is told, as in William Godwin’s *Memoirs of the Author of a Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1798).

Referring to the “sori and ana” of the popular press, De Quincey describes the easily assembled, not always accurate collection of anecdotes concerning

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a celebrity of the day. Like memoirs, these are first-person bits and pieces assembled by a third party; unlike memoirs, the collection makes no pretense of narrative continuity, and offers no more continuity than the subject's personality and wit. More authentic than most, *Sheridaniana* (1826) was compiled from Richard Brinsley Sheridan's own papers. One advantage of biography over autobiography lies in the escape from apparent self-aggrandizement. Wordsworth's reputation will forever be haunted by Keats's reference to the "egotistical sublime." Even though the unpublished *Prelude* could not have contributed to Keats's assessment, it became for subsequent generations the most obvious justification. Wordsworth's project for an "Autobiographical Poem" was more in the tradition of Augustine than of Rousseau. His education commenced under the tutelary guidance of nature, and gained a capacity to confront the poverty and hardships of London and the bloodshed of the French Revolution. Not as spiritual as Augustine's, yet more than "la vérité" claimed by Rousseau, Wordsworth traces the "The Growth of a Poet's Mind," and to his own satisfaction is able to affirm that the impaired imagination can be restored, even if the poem remains only the prelude to a larger, never completed project.

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One means of escaping the trap of self-aggrandizement is to give abundant praise to all the other figures in one's life: parents, friends, lovers, colleagues. In his *Autobiography*, the artist Benjamin Haydon certainly has opportunity to do this, but nevertheless remains persistently self-centered. Michael Kelly in his *Reminiscences* (1826) is sufficiently concerned with revealing behind-the-curtain secrets of the theater that narrating his own theatrical career becomes almost secondary. De Quincey in his *Confessions*, more in the tradition of Rousseau than of Augustine, insists that the opium is the true narrator. In his *Autobiographical Sketches*, however, he presents himself as the disaffected disciple of Wordsworth, who would never acknowledge his literary genius. William Hazlitt in his *Liber Amoris* is thoroughly in the Rousseauistic mode of scandalous self-revelations. Prompting his readers with recurrent hints to seek the author in the poetry, Byron too crafted, especially in *Childe Harold* and *Don Juan*, a literary character and narrative persona that had autobiographical valence.

Self-consciously crafted as his own counterpart to Wordsworth's "Growth of a Poet's Mind," Samuel Taylor Coleridge also presented the "growth of a mind" in his *Biographia Literaria; or Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions* (1815). The subtitle is revealing: in this "literary life," he gives emphasis to his readings, noting the periods of his development when as

a schoolboy he read Bowles's sonnets, found literary companionship with Southey and Wordsworth, delved into Aristotle, Hartleian associationism, Cartesian dualism, then Berkeley and Spinoza, then even more deeply into Kant, Fichte, and Schelling. Attention to himself comes in the form of critical "Opinions": his understanding of the imagination and "poetic power." In the second volume of this "literary life" Coleridge exercises his critical principles in his commentary on Shakespeare, Milton, and Wordsworth. The "Satyrane Letters" reprint his account of the trip in 1798–1799 to Germany.

Autobiography of the Romantic era encountered difficulties in exploring the depths of the self. As Kant asserted, the *Ding an sich* of the self remained as estranged as the *Ding an sich* of any other person. For De Quincey, opium dreams provided the most intimate insight. Wordsworth admitted that he could not separate "substance from shadow" when trying to explore his own mind and memories. For most autobiographers of the period the closest approach to their inner being came through the outer record of encounters. For Coleridge, the "literary life" was the life of books and ideas.

DIALECTICS, EROTICISM, RELIGION

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