The Place of Madness and Madness as Place in British Romantic Poetry

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Abstracts

This thesis examines representations of the madman in British Romantic poetry through a psychogeographical lens to argue that the poet strategically constructs madness as an unreachable place in order to secure his own role in society. In an age that privileges quantifiable labour and the tenets of Reason, the Romantic poet expresses anxiety that his more abstract, imaginative work will not be valued and his social position will thus be considered irrelevant or unproductive. The poet promotes himself as an eccentric, but not an outcast, by hierarchizing types of social exclusion, implicitly privileging his own work through his representations of the madman's existence as stagnant, nonproductive and ultimately destructive. Further, in depicting the place of madness itself as a realm only the poet can navigate, and from which he returns to reveal insights about his rational culture's psychology, the poet reaffirms his unique position as an intuitive truth-teller—and even a prophet—for his age.

Cette thèse examine, du point de vue psychogéographique, la représentation du fou dans la poésie romantique britannique pour soutenir que le poète édifie la folie de façon stratégique comme un endroit impossible à atteindre, sécurisant ainsi son rôle dans la société. Dans une époque qui privilégie le travail quantifiable et les principes de la raison, le poète romantique s'inquiète que ses oeuvres les plus abstraites et imaginatives ne seront pas valorisées et que sa position sociale sera par la même considérée dépourvue de pertinence et non productive. Le poète se fait donc valoir comme un original, sans toutefois être un paria, en hiérarchisant les types d'exclusion de sa société, en privilégiant implicitement son oeuvre par la représentation de l'existence du fou comme une existence stagnante, non productive et, à la limite, destructive. En outre, en illustrant la folie comme un endroit où seul le poète peut naviguer, et d'où il retourne pour révéler sa sagesse sur la psychologie de sa culture rationnelle, le poète réaffirme son unique position en tant que porteur de vérité et même en tant que prophète de son époque.

Acknowledgements

Introduction

In the Age of Enlightenment, Madness was a dark realm against which Reason defined itself and measured its progress. Michel Foucault claims that for this age, madness represents the *absence of an œuvre*, but it is also essential for delineating the œuvre itself, since

> it is the constitutive moment of an abolition, which founds the truth of the œuvre in time; it delineates the outer limit, the line of its collapse, its outline against the void…that whole space of physical suffering and terror that surrounds the void or rather coincides with it, that is the œuvre itself—a cliff-face over the abyss of the œuvre's absence. (*History of Madness*, 536-7)

In Foucault's metaphor there is only the œuvre and what is outside of the œuvre, the cliff-face of productivity that overlooks an abyss of nothingness. What, then, of the Romantic artist, who struggles to define his more abstract "work" in the dichotomous terms of Madness and Reason? The madman does not work, and the place of madness is fundamentally a no-man's-land. The threat of this place is therefore not the madman himself, for he is stagnant and ultimately self-destructive, but that anyone might be exiled to this nonproductive state and considered worthless. If the poet is considered peripheral to his society's functioning because his work is not as easily quantifiable as that of, say, the factory labourer, then he is at risk of being banished to the madman's nonproductive realm. The poet transforms the mad experience into literary representations he can market—not to prove that the madman is inherently useful to his society, but that his very existence reveals truths about its psyche. By representing himself as the one who can enter into this realm of nothingness and return to society as a capable producer of artistic works, the poet secures his place within the cultural imagination as a navigator of the nebulous realm of madness.

A vigorous critical tradition has encouraged a variety of approaches to understanding the complex intersection of madness, creativity and literature.

Critics have taken as their starting point discourses of madness and creativity (Rothenberg, Pine), writing and madness (Felman), genius and the imagination (Ludwig, Nettle, Boden) and historical classifications of madness (Feder). Literature-based approaches analyze the relationship between literature and medicine (Thiher), disease (Felluga) and the mad poet (MacLennan), while studies of the Romantic imagination focus on the period's complex philosophical and psychological conceptions of selfhood (Burwick, Woodman, Faflak). Building on this tradition, this thesis examines the place of madness and madness as place in British Romantic poetry. Similarly to Frederick Burwick, I argue that poetic "madness" is a state constructed by the writer and promoted, in particular, as the inspirational state of *furor poeticus*. Rather than focusing on the temporarily delirious poet's experiences, however, my analysis considers the power dynamic within the hierarchical relationship between the poet—presumed to be lucid and in control—and a separate mad subject whom he strategically isolates in a specific place. The poems are textual sites in which different types of madness are performed, and they reflect the broader societal conceptions of mental illness at the end of the eighteenth century. By reading these texts through a psychogeographical lens, I aim to produce an innovative reading of cultural anxieties about the place of insanity, as well as the poet's perception of his value to society at this particular historical moment.

Madness has a long tradition of being visualized as a place. In *History of Madness*, Foucault uses images of home and displacement, boundaries transgressed and maintained, and positive or negative spaces to describe how madness, for example, retreats "to outer limits barely accessible to discursive reasoning" (180); madness exists within "a void that isolates" (401) but is constantly "troubl[ing] the order of the social space" (62). In this analysis, "place" is employed as a term that encompasses several concepts, including literary representations of a geographical location, historical sites or institutions, and an individual's evaluation of his or her position in society. The metaphor of madness as place is enhanced when considered alongside Howard Stein's definition of psychogeography: "human beings tend to cast the identities of their 'who-ness'

with their emotion-laden 'where-ness,' thus merging 'who am I' with 'where am I,' binding self and place" (xii). Stein applies the term predominantly to the practice of groups forming an "us and them" identity in relation to outsiders, but the concept also augments observations on the insidious spaces of exclusion within group boundaries and the individual's psychological "dark" spaces, which are neither easily understood nor ignored. External societal pressures continuously condition our personal identities and reactions to the world, but this psychological influence also works conversely. If, as Stein argues, "[e]nvironment is heir to psyche" (15), a place is not merely a conglomeration of spaces and boundaries, but a phenomenon that is continuously transformed by the perceptions of those individuals who experience it. It thus follows that when an individual's sense of *place* continually shifts in relation to this rapidly evolving *space*, his core identity is potentially threatened. In the texts examined below, the reader encounters portrayals of madness that reflect a cultural anxiety over the dissolution of a unique selfhood, a fear that seems relevant to a society preoccupied with the anonymous productivity encouraged by the Industrial Revolution. The texts also reveal how the poet strategically represents madness as a nebulous geographical and social place in order to affirm his unique productive place in society.

These textual representations of the madman as a surrogate figure for unproductiveness provide valuable starting points for considering the poet's concern over his creative output as a historically specific anxiety. Raymond Williams observes that, as the patronage system waned and the idea of a "public" emerged at the end of the eighteenth century, the Romantic artist was increasingly seen as a "professional" man who had to interact with "the market" (32). The poet was forced to construct his works—as well as his own persona, which often promoted the individual "genius" as a man proficient in the business of ideas— into desirable commodities if he wished to gain cultural capital via writing.[1]

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[1] I use "cultural capital" throughout this thesis as Pierre Bourdieu defines it in "The Forms of Capital": "Cultural capital can exist in three forms: in the *embodied* state, i.e., in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; in the *objectified* state, in the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc.), which are the trace or realization of theories or critiques of these theories, problematics, etc.; and in the *institutionalized* state, a form

Williams argues that "[a]t this very time of political, social and economic change there is a radical change also in the ideas of art, of the artist, and of their place in society" (32); indeed, the very definition of "artist" was drastically reconfigured as the individual's value was increasingly measured by his ability to produce material goods and provide services. Katherine Hodgkin argues that writing the experience of madness "is surely the reclaiming of control, the reinsertion of the apparently meaningless into a structure of meaning" (57), and these texts exhibit signs of the poet containing madness—and controlling the madman's voice—for various reasons. However, these encounters do not symbolize the poet's anxiety over not being able to return from the place of madness, which was a central concern in the original conceptualization of *furor poeticus* as well as a widespread fear during the Age of Reason. Rather, the "reclaiming of control" that Hodgkin describes is the poet's attempt to maintain a degree of agency in a society increasingly less likely to consider poetry as a legitimate type of labour, especially in contrast with more socially or politically relevant modes of writing.

This anxiety about the value of labour is compounded by the fact that the poet's work does not necessarily *look* like work. Williams argues that, while both generations of the major Romantic poets were active in producing political writing directly related to their historical moment (30), they were concerned about poetry being perceived as somehow a lesser form of work. Serious attempts to define the poet's place, such as William Wordsworth's *Preface to the Lyrical Ballads* (1802) and Percy Shelley's *A Defence of Poetry* (1821), attest to this anxiety. If, as Williams asserts, "[t]he bearers of a high imaginative skill became suddenly the 'legislators', at the very moment when they were being forced into practical exile" (47), it was because they were very consciously creating this place for themselves. Paradoxically, a key aspect of asserting the value of poetry was the emergence of the detached "Romantic artist" persona as one who could elevate his imagination above the crudeness of the material world to "see into the life of things" (Wordsworth, "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern

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of objectification which must be set apart because…it confers entirely original properties on the cultural capital which it is presumed to guarantee" (242).

Abbey," line 49) and express them accordingly. The madman was thus made to occupy a place at the far end of the productivity spectrum, embodying the *absence of an oeuvre* (Foucault 536) in order to emphasize the poet's creative labour. Since the idea of the "Romantic artist" is perpetuated through studying the lives of the Romantic artists, it is difficult to perceive how the persona of the detached artist, who has little concern for the material world, has been constructed by the poets themselves. This image of the "Romantic artist" as one detached from society, but still relevant to it—an outlier but not an outcast—gains symbolic power when compared to the madman's mental stagnation and destruction. The poet's unquantifiable but important labour thus gains cultural capital through his representations of the madman's disconnectedness and absence of work.

To understand why the poet compares himself to the ultimate outcast figure, the madman, I visit two prominent places of madness—the cloistered asylum and the desolate wilderness. I then explore texts in which the city is a potentially maddening place where the poet abandons the solitary mad figure to contend with an uncontainable force that ripples under the bourgeois bustle. These three places were themselves undergoing significant transformation at the end of the eighteenth century. Firstly, demands for hospital reform led to the reconstruction of the asylum as a place that could cure rather than simply confine (Foucault, Ingram, "Report from the Committee on Madhouses in England"). Secondly, the idea of a rough but navigable "wild" place as a desirable destination for city dwellers was developed in conjunction with the rise of tourism during the eighteenth century (Buchardt, Buzard, Ousby). Evolving conceptions of the sublime (Burke) and the picturesque (Gilpin) in relation to the "wilderness" (Cronon) bred a simultaneous desire for, and fear of, this untamed realm. Finally, the rapidly industrializing city, specifically London, was sometimes experienced as an alienating, isolating place that threatened to efface an individual's identity (Gassenmeier and Gurr). Such dramatic changes in these historical institutions and locations inform the psychogeographical definition of place, and it is in considering how people interact with these imagined places that this analysis sheds light on the Romantic poet's relationship with madness.

The mad figure, in particular, had to be relegated to a specific place both physically and in the cultural imagination, since the space of social inclusion is demarcated by his existence on its fringes (Agnew 81; Hubert 4). The variety of labels given to this group of people—"lunatic," "maniac," "idiot," "madman"— attests to the perpetual challenge of classifying insanity (Foucault 251-96). Eighteenth-century patients were diagnosed based on a list of highly visible physiognomic characteristics (Andrews and Scull 28), which ensured that they would be recognized as outsiders and swept to the margins of society. Unsurprisingly, these stereotypes reveal less about those supposedly afflicted with madness than about how physicians and laypeople delineated the conditions of illness. The madman's realm is often metaphorically portrayed as a stagnant and dreary wasteland, but he does not exist in a cultural void for, as Lillian Feder argues, "he embodies and symbolically transforms the values and aspirations of his family, his tribe, and his society, even if he renounces them, as well as their delusions, cruelty, and violence" (5). The madman *does* augment his culture, even though he is an unproductive or destructive force, by acting as the counter to the Industrial Revolution's prevalent "labourer" mindset (Williams 40). As with all outsiders, he is as much a factor in the group's identity-formation as he is a threat to its core values. Despite this influence, however, the madman cannot return from the shadowy margins of society bearing the fruits of reflection. It is the poet, in assuming the role of an astute mediator who *can* return from madness, who reveals why madmen are such a compelling presence in the Age of Reason.

My analysis engages with literary examples of the madman in confinement and at large, as well as of his haunting absence in the city, to demonstrate how the poet's role is reaffirmed when madness is constructed as an inaccessible place. The three chapters argue that the poet peddles his skills as a revelatory truth-teller by assuming the secondary roles of asylum gatekeeper, wilderness tour guide and poet-*flâneur*, respectively, to voice these otherwise ineffable mad experiences. Chapter One, "Burying Madness: The Asylum," contends that, in depicting the confined madman, the poet taps into his society's desire to bury madness in its collective psyche during the period Foucault calls

"the Great Confinement" (44-77). The chapter sketches the gradual transformation of London's Bethlem Royal Hospital into the monumental "Bedlam" that looms in both cityscape and mindscape, and highlights six poems that capitalize on the spectacle of the confined mad body: Bernard Barton's "The Maniac; Written After Reading Tuke's Account of the Retreat" (1824); Charles Dibdin's "The Lunatic" (1807) and "The Maniac's Funeral, *Written upon seeing at Bethlem Hospital what the Poem describes*" (1825); Mrs. John Hunter's "A Ballad for the Eighteenth Century" (1807); George Dyer's "Ode VI. Written in Bedlam: On Seeing a Beautiful Young Female Lunatic" (1801) and W. H. Ireland's "Crazy Tom, the Bedlamite" (1803). Their characters are forced into the stereotypes of "idiot," "melancholic," "maniac" and "lunatic," which echo the popular eighteenth-century diagnoses for mental illness in their limited explanations of madness. To isolate and categorize the madman's physiognomic markers is thus to contain the spectacle of madness, both in verse and in medicine.

This gate-keeping role also influences the narratives of sequestered suffering in Lord Byron's *The Lament of Tasso* (1817) and *The Prisoner of Chillon* (1816) and Percy Shelley's *Julian and Maddalo* (1819). Byron assumes the first-person voice of his subjects, who are based on the Italian poet, Torquato Tasso, and the Swiss monk, François Bonnivard, respectively, to travel deeper into both the madhouse and the madman's psyche. The narrators are threatened by the onset of madness precisely *because* of the places in which they are imprisoned, but Tasso's victory of mind over place echoes Byron's belief in the supremacy of the poetic imagination. Shelley's *Julian and Maddalo* also foregrounds the inextricable intertwining of place and mind, juxtaposing its eponymous characters' psychological and physical freedom with the Maniac's mental decay in his island asylum. Although the Maniac remains unaware of his audience, he becomes a spectacle for Julian and Maddalo, and for Shelley's readers, as he performs a heart-wrenching soliloquy. Byron and Shelley's madmen, as well as those who speak in the Bedlam texts, may appear to express their suffering eloquently, but their voices are ultimately appropriated for the poet's creative project. As the asylum gatekeeper, the poet has the ability to

fulfill—or disappoint—his readers' voyeuristic desires. His apparent failure to fully comprehend or express the mad experience is successful on another level, for in the very attempt to write madness he elevates his position of productive, creative outlier above that of the inarticulate, outcast madman.

Chapter Two, "Banishing Madness: The Wilderness," considers six texts in which the mad figure is exiled from society. Wandering madmen are frequently portrayed as "[l]iminal beings, caught between (human) reason and (animal) passion, between nature and culture" (Hodgkin 52), and I argue that an inherent factor of the mad subject's occupation of this "liminal" place is his inability to return home. The poet assumes the role of literary tour guide to mine the madman's wandering in the wilderness for cultural capital because, although he is exploring the inherent tension between "home" and "away" in these narratives of banishment, the poet-tour guide is also emphasizing his own ability to encounter madness and return triumphantly to tell its story. Mary Robinson's "The Maniac" (1793) and "Poor Marguerite" (1806) and Amelia Opie's "The Despairing Wanderer" (1806) and "The Mad Wanderer, A Ballad" (1808) depict the wilderness as the savage and unfamiliar counterpart to civilization, and its outcast inhabitants are thus to be feared. Despite the appearance of liberty, these vagrants are often doomed to psychological stagnancy as they repeat limited narratives of misery and death. While Robinson straightforwardly portrays the madman in the wilderness, Opie more subtly manipulates the mad experience in order to expose it as a performance. However, in all four poems, the mad subject's suffering is strategically marketed as spectacle to be visually consumed by tourist-readers.

The madman's inability to return home is demonstrated more fully in William Wordsworth's "The Thorn" (1798) and "The Idiot Boy" (1798), an observation supported by Freud's theory of the *unheimlich*. To the garrulous narrator of "The Thorn," the scorned Martha Ray epitomizes "human suffering itself" (Sheats 97), and a crucial factor of this anguish is her perpetual "awayness." The madwoman is inescapably tied to a specific place—a mountaintop, by a pond, by the thorn—by the narrator's psychogeographical interpretation of her story. Conversely, the mock-hero of "The Idiot Boy" *has* a

loving home, but the poem effectively complicates the idea of the hero's triumphant return with its insinuation that madness is inherently *unheimlich*. As an "idiot," Johnny Foy's unconventional use of language presents a barrier to the reader. He becomes a failed Odysseus because he cannot recount his quest. The poet, returning to civilization after an imaginative foray into madness, *is* able to tell Johnny's story, and this is the key to a successful psychogeographical journey.

Chapter Three, "The Absent Madman: The Psychogeographical City," examines how the madman, effectively buried or banished in certain texts, haunts the city with his absence. The urban experience, while by no means purely negative (Gassenmeier and Gurr 309-10), potentially alienates individuals as a psychogeographical place in which "the peril of being mad [is] identified forcibly in every man" (Foucault 462). Throughout the eighteenth century, the city's progress was increasingly measured by its citizens' possession of material goods and uses of leisure time, but as people consumed the city's many pleasures they could also become consumed *by* it. The city can be a symbol of (re)production and even innovation or creativity, but it also threatens the dissolution of the self in favour of a mob mentality when the individual's skills are eschewed in favour of those of the undifferentiated worker bees operating within a hive system. If the poet is to survive in the city, he must market his unique talent as the reader of this palimpsest who can contain the city's inexpressible chaos in his representations.

In this chapter, I analyze how the portrayals of metropolitan "madness" in Wordsworth's "Book VII: Residence in London" of *The Prelude* (1805, 1850), William Blake's "LONDON" (1794), Charles Lloyd's "London" (1820) and Shelley's "Hell" in *Peter Bell the Third* (1819) reaffirm the poet's place in society as a cultural mediator and storyteller. I first demonstrate how the city, an icon of Reason, is simultaneously a chaotic, over-stimulating place whose citizens are perpetually capable of lapsing into madness. Here, the madman is conspicuously absent, but he is replaced by an equally ominous sense of urban anomie. Next, I explore how the poet fears being swallowed by the crowd but successfully distances himself from this senseless mob, a reading illuminated by Baudelaire's *flâneur*. The poet-*flâneur* transforms the city's physical dimensions into a

psychogeographical map, "walking" readers through it and emphasizing its cultural landmarks. Whether the poet knows the city intimately (Blake) or is a transplant (Lloyd) or a temporary resident (Wordsworth), he learns to control these potentially maddening experiences by elevating himself above the crowd (Wordsworth), immersing himself in the city's inner workings (Blake), or finding solace through religion (Lloyd). The poet strives to maintain social relevance with his special ability to contain—and explain—the city's madness in his verse.

My conclusion, "Returning from Madness: *Furor Poeticus*," considers the crossroads at which the poet and the madman's experiences converge and these representations become hierarchized performances. For the madman there can be no return from the "pale region" beyond Reason (Foucault 548). The original *furor poeticus*, on the other hand, allowed the poet to access a mysterious source of inspiration and to compose upon his return, for "[t]he poet had only gone forth on a mental journey of exploration, and that one day he would come back and tell [others] what it was like in the realm beyond the borders of rationality" (Burwick 17). By the late eighteenth century, *furor poeticus* had evolved from symbolizing a literally frenzied state and "was reinterpreted as a revolutionary and liberating madness that could free the imagination from the 'restraint of conformity'" (Burwick 2). This transition supports the characterization of the "Romantic artist" as one gifted with the ability to uncover why a society governed by Reason fears madness. The poet presents himself as one who "employs structures—myth, metaphor, symbol—which continually mediate between unconscious and conscious processes…[and] an interpreter of the apparently indecipherable 'messages'" (Feder 7); his artistic creation is not easily quantifiable, but it is clearly a significant form of labour. In contrast, the literary madman is created for the audience's voyeuristic pleasures and can produce nothing on his own, for it is the poet who extracts any observations his readers might deem valuable from the place of madness. In a society in which an individual's value is increasingly measured by what he or she produces, this hierarchization of productivity allows the poet to reaffirm his or her own indispensable place as cultural mediator and palliates the anxiety that poets do no useful work at all.

1. Burying Madness: The Asylum

The consideration of the asylum as the most literal place of madness combines the historical institutions, including privately owned and operated madhouses, larger public institutions and halfway houses in which priests or doctors kept patients (Porter 24), with the literary representations of confinement and the individual's metaphorical containment within the "madhouse" of language itself (Ingram, *The Madhouse of Language* 7). Foucault argues that the Age of Enlightenment, with its narrowed focus on Reason as man's essential characteristic, attempted to entrap the potential chaos of madness during "the Great Confinement" of the eighteenth century (44). While many critics have since challenged the facts supporting of his bold claim, Foucault's philosophical ideas on the transgression of societal boundaries, banishment and inclusion, and whether it is possible for the mad to have a "voice" have become standard points of entry into the murky world of the eighteenth-century madhouse. Jean Khalfa argues in her introduction to *History of Madness* that, factual errors aside, Foucault fearlessly considers "decisions, limits and exclusions which took place at particular points in time and indicates shifts in the way certain phenomena were experienced" (xv), and his analysis is successful precisely because of its ambitious scope. Wherever Foucault's work "collapses the specific histories of different societies into a single chronology" and "obscure[s] the fierce debates over asylum reform and the localization of the asylum itself as a site of continuing social and political conflicts" (2), Joseph Melling notes, there are other giants in the history of psychiatry such as Roy Porter, Andrew Scull and Jonathan Andrews who problematize and reevaluate Foucault's theories.

This chapter considers how the poet constructs the asylum as the paramount place of madness in relation to Foucault's "Great Confinement" and other critics' nuanced interpretations of his arguments, as well as to the most prominent asylum of in the public imagination, Bethlem Royal Hospital. The first six texts offer sketches of various stereotypes of those confined in the madhouse—the lunatic, the maniac, the melancholic—and demonstrate how the

poet offers the mad body up for voyeuristic consumption by briefly opening the asylum gates, but they do not consider madness as a place in itself. By adopting the voices of "mad poet" Tasso and the prisoner of Chillon, Byron ventures further into the mad psyche in order to explore the arbitrariness of exclusion and the potential for the madhouse to turn a sane man mad. Finally, in *Julian and Maddalo*, Shelley offers up the Maniac's story of suffering as spectacle and only briefly considers its effects on the text's eponymous characters before closing the madhouse door. In all of the texts, the poet, as the gatekeeper of the literary asylum, offers readers a glimpse into the tortured psyche of the madman but never relinquishes narrative control by allowing an unmediated expression of the mad experience to surface. The confined madman is thus perpetually (re)buried and unearthed as a curiosity to be examined from a safe distance by mad-doctors, laymen and poets alike.

"Bedlam" in the Popular Imagination

There is a complex relationship between Bethlem Hospital and its psychological counterpart, "Bedlam," which has "loomed large in the public imagination" (Porter 157) as a terrifying place of punishment and confinement. Until recently, the nightmarish world of Bedlam has been reduced to a simplified icon that scholars briefly recognize but for which they offer no rigorous analysis. Patricia Allderidge, in particular, is unsatisfied that historians of psychiatry "generally refer—you could almost say invariably—to some aspect of the absolute and utter awfulness of Bedlam" (18) without looking past the monumental gates to consider the facts. However, although scholars such as Allderidge want to sweep away the mythical Bedlam in order to attain a more accurate picture of the hospital as a historical institution, this mental image is inextricably intertwined with the real place, both in the nineteenth-century imagination and in current research on the history of psychiatry. In the immense *The History of Bethlem* (1997), Andrews *et al* describe this relationship between the asylum and its image as one of alter egos that "have danced together, if not always in harmony" (11), for it is impossible to understand one aspect without its

counterpart. Rather than attempting to eliminate the myths in favour of the facts, or unwittingly doing the opposite, scholars should consider how these apparently opposing elements serve to inform and enrich one another. The premise that fact and fiction are woven together to create the textual and cultural fabric of the hospital's history offers a nuanced perspective from which to consider the asylum as a psychogeographical landmark.

"Bedlam" may conjure a monolithic image of oppression in the public's imagination, but Bethlem Hospital actually had three different locations with various degrees of prominence.[2] With the construction of the second Bethlem at Moorfields in 1676 at the edge of the City Wall, in particular, "[m]adness, palatially lodged, stood cheek by jowl with the City, a 'monument' of its 'glory', at least on the outside" (Porter 173). Bethlem was no longer positioned at the margins of the rapidaly expanding city a mere century later, and certainly not by 1815, when it moved to its final site. The City Wall eventually became London Wall Street, and the hospital grounds now occupied a significant amount of space at the heart of the bustling city. Richard Horwood's "Map of London, Westminster and Southwark shewing Every House, 1792-9" illustrates the second Bethlem's highly visible location (Figure 1). Bethlem Hospital is a conspicuously "empty" white space, a significant contrast to the myriad houses and shops that pepper the rest of London. Foucault argues that, in building such institutions, Reason "created a neutral zone in its own concrete space, a blank page where the real life of the city was suspended" (77); indeed, that Bedlam occupies such a large space on the map but is recognizable precisely because of its blankness is a telling cartographical metaphor for Reason's complicated relationship with Madness.

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[2] The asylum was established in 1247 as the Priory of St. Mary of Bethlehem, and remained a small, poor institution for centuries; in 1547, the City of London acquired control over its administration from the Church (Andrews et. al 15-17). The original Bethlem's land was directly north of St. Botolph's Church and its property totaled about three and a half acres, around which London continued to expand rapidly. By the 1630s, the hospital site had metamorphosed into a claustrophobic collection of houses, gardens and outbuildings in a crowded urban space (Andrews 36-9). The decision was made to construct a second Bethlem Hospital, which was designed with a regal façade that emulated the Tuileries in France (Porter 157); it operated in the more spacious Moorfields location from 1676 until 1815.

Figure 1. Map depicting Bethlem Hospital at Moorfields in 1799.

Although London had organically grown around this space so that the hospital now occupied a center of sorts, it remained fundamentally an absent, or unknown, centre. With this constant topographical acknowledgement of madness in their midst, the public became "fearful of its power, its suddenness, its inaccessibility, its proximity, its apparently mischievous aping of sane behaviour, of sane patterns of thought" (Ingram, *Patterns of Madness* 2). The only way of psychologically neutralizing Bethlem's threatening existence was to presume that madness could be contained in this one location, present at the heart of the rational city but hermetically sealed from it. Foucault asserts, "in the absence of a fixed point of reference, madness could equally be reason" (165), and Bethlem now served at this "fixed point" of madness that, reassuringly, could never be

mistaken for reason. Psychogeographically, then, the asylum still symbolized a place that existed not only outside the margins of what was "civilized," but also as a place kept out of time. Its inmates were locked in atemporality as well as in their cells, remaining stagnant and silent as the industrious metropolis continued in its unrelenting expansion. Although the Moorfields Bethlem's visibility presented an implicit threat that uncontained madness would contaminate the rest of society, it also sparked the public imagination regarding asylum reform and motivated attempts to cure the mad rather than simply locking them away. The transition into the nineteenth century was thus a significant watershed in psychiatry in both London's geography and its laws, for

> [i]ts landmarks include the "madness" of George III; the opening of the York Retreat, with its "moral therapy," in 1796, and of Ticehurst House in 1797; the trial of James Hadfield in 1800, and the subsequent Criminal Lunatics' Act of the same year; the first major parliamentary inquiries into madhouses in 1807 and 1815; and the passing of the Act first empowering the setting up of public lunatic asylums in 1808. (Porter 15)

The establishment of these reforms and institutions to treat the mad allowed for a distancing of madness from "sane" citizens even as it was brought into the public consciousness and put on display as spectacle for these same people (Ingram, *Patterns* 74). The mad had become a paradoxically present absence in the city, buried within its asylums.

The spectacle of madness could be as titillating as it was threatening, as long as it was perceived as being contained. The Moorfields Bethlem's impressive façade and thick walls were symbols of a newly secured place for madness, and Caius Gabriel Cibber's dramatic—but reassuringly immobile—statues of "Melancholy Madness" and "Raving Madness" guarded its entrance (Figure 2). Hubert argues that the asylum gates symbolize the threshold between social inclusion and exclusion, and to cross this boundary is to move from liberty to a closed-circuit, atemporal environment "in which social existence and relationships are replaced by the constant testing, diagnosing, assessing,
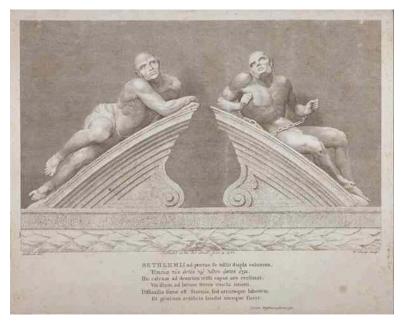
Figure 2. Caius Gabriel Cibber's "Raving and Melancholy Madness," as engraved by William Sharp after an original drawing by Thomas Stohard. From Bethlem Royal Hospital Archives and Museum, Beckenham, Kent.

classifying and organizing" (197). Similarly to the present-day institutional marginalization that Hubert describes, the eighteenth-century asylum constructed its own reality based on special rules and limitations for its patients. Foucault contends that the mad were forced into an "artificial space created out of nothing," because "[b]y inventing the space of confinement in the imaginary geometry of its morality, the classical age found a homeland and a place of redemption for sins of the flesh and faults committed against reason" (86). The intertwining of Madness and Reason is clear in this statement, for although Reason creates the contained, artificial place for Madness, Reason itself cannot exist without this shadow. The success of the asylum as a psychogeographical place, however, depends on the public's perception that these two states of mind are fundamental opposites and remain psychologically, if not always geographically, distant from one another. Ingram boldly states that "[t]he walls of Bethlem in fact stood for nothing. They served to demonstrate how easily they could be breached, how rampantly the meanings of madness could run loose through society" (*Madhouse* 3). However, Foucault's definition of the asylum as an artificial "homeland" for madness implies these boundaries are not as

effortlessly traversed as Ingram suggests. They demarcate the asylum's specific borders, encompassing that "fixed point of reference" from which the core definition of Reason—as "that which is not Madness"—is constantly reaffirmed.

It was the closing of Bethlem Hospital's doors to the public that truly unlocked the imaginative realm of Bedlam. The practice of paying a small fee to see the parade of lunatics and melancholics was common until 1770, when Bethlem Hospital closed its doors to all visitors except for family members and doctors (Porter 157).[3] Following this transition to a more private approach to institutionalized care, the asylum's gates, in particular, accrued a cultural significance for locking the mad in—and for shutting the public out. Porter notes that Bethlem, "seen from outside, was one of London's most impressive buildings" (173), but in fact it made more of a psychological impression after its curious visitors were made "outsiders" to the experiences of the very people they had considered outside of society. The burying of the mad in the asylum resulted in much speculation on their suffering, and the proliferation of representations of madness came to replace the actual individuals with mental illnesses.

The poets writing in the early years of the nineteenth century, then, found a fertile source of inspiration in the iconic Bedlam. Now that the spectacle of madness was no longer accessible to the general public, poets capitalized on its lingering allure by assuming the role of gatekeepers of the imagined asylum. The lunacy trade was a highly lucrative business in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as Andrew and Scull contend (5-12), and such literary representations of madness might be considered another, if limited, effort to profit by pandering to spectators' morbid curiosity. In showing off these tormented mad subjects, the poet enforces the idea that the asylum is a setting in which the lunatic performs his madness for the sane voyeur-reader. The texts explored here depict the extremely limited agency and voice of the token asylum patient: Bernard Barton's "The Maniac; Written After Reading Tuke's Account of the Retreat" (1824);

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[3] Foucault asserts that there is evidence of people paying to see madmen until 1815, but Porter (157), Digby (9) and Allderidge (22) forward a well-documented argument that Bethlem Hospital officially closed its gates in 1770.

Charles Dibdin's "The Lunatic" (1807) and "The Maniac's Funeral, *Written upon seeing at Bethlem Hospital what the Poem describes*" (1825); Mrs. John Hunter's "A Ballad for the Eighteenth Century" (1807); George Dyer's "Ode VI. Written in Bedlam: On Seeing a Beautiful Young Female Lunatic" (1801) and W. H. Ireland's "Crazy Tom, the Bedlamite" (1803). These sketches replicate the desire to bring madness closer for inspection—a valued practice in the Age of Reason— ultimately in order to reassuringly distance oneself from it.

In their discussion of the famous Bethlem physician John Monro's 1766 casebook, Andrews and Scull note that physicians alleviate their anxiety of not fully understanding madness by classifying insanity based on strict rules of physiognomy, symptoms and actions. Just as the asylum walls hold the mentally ill in a specific place, this categorization attempts to "contain" madness by predicting the forms it will take. Patients were thus forced into vague but rigid categories such as "lunatic," "maniac," "idiot" and "melancholic," despite the lack of medical evidence to support these diagnoses (Foucault 133-59). An eighteenth-century mad-doctor can diagnose a patient to the best of his abilities, but he still will only recognize what he has been trained to see. Poets align with the mad-doctors by presenting a list of stereotypical features in their depictions of mad subjects. For example, Ireland's "Crazy Tom, the Bedlamite" crowds five common symptoms of mania—chains, delusions of grandeur, straw, a burning brain and uncontrollable laughter—into six lines:

> I'll grind my chain;
>
> I'm monarch now---obey my law---
>
> Split world---rain fire---lull care in straw---
>
> A bolt has sing'd my brain.
>
> And now poor Tom will merry be,
>
> And laugh to kill old care… (lines 33-8)

Dyer similarly lists a melancholy young Bedlamite's whose face "sickness pales" (1) and whose "languid eye" (5) belies when "moon-struck horrors haunt [her] restless head" (11), while Barton sermonizes that "the Maniac's doom, / Though abject, may be counted blest" (43-44) compared to the rational sinner, because at

least "[h]is mind, though often veil'd in gloom, / At times may know a vacant rest" (45-46). These accounts of the mad body's accessible features and actions offer a familiar performance of madness, putting the reader at ease ("I know this story…") while piquing his or her interest in the gruesome details of a particular maniac ("but what happens next?"). Thus, in both medical diagnoses and literary representations, the madman's experiences are buried under layers of accumulated assumptions, and they are not easily extracted from this cultural mire.

When the poet briefly opens the cell window onto madness for his readers, he controls the emotional outcomes of these carefully plotted performances. Several of the texts' titles imply that the poets are privileged witnesses of the mad experience, and they can draw meaning from these moments by recreating them. For instance, Dibdin's "The Maniac's Funeral, *Written upon seeing at Bethlem Hospital what the Poem describes*" and Dyer's "Ode VI: Written in Bedlam: On Seeing a Beautiful Young Female Maniac," imply both that the poet has special access to a place no longer available to the public, and that there is a therapeutic aspect of writing a poem to communicate what he has witnessed.[4] Once they have established their positions as insightful observers, the poets insert their readers into an asylum cell that is inextricably attached to the madman's mental state. Dibdin's text transports the audience through Bethlem's gates, and right past Cibber's statues, while the moon shines overhead: "The portal open'd wide--- where madness sits, / 'Bays to the moon,' or churns, in moody fits" (1-2). Hunter uses the same strategy for introducing the madhouse: "Her pale beams silver'd o'er the gate / Where sculptur'd frenzy glares, / And moping melancholy scowls / Upon a world of cares" (5-8). The two poets place Cibber's statues at the beginnings of their texts to anchor the reader's mind in the memory of a specific location that they may have passed in real life in order to connect their work to this potentially unsettling experience.

According to Foucault, the nineteenth's century's great fear of madness disrupting society led to "a new reign of terror," since by now "the territory of

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[4] Dyer had his own experiences of social marginality as the son of a poor watchman, and was educated for free by Anna Barbauld; much his work engages with issues of gender inequality and religious liberty (Walker 135-6).

confinement had taken on powers of its own, and had become in its turn a breeding ground of evil, which it could spread of its own accord" (355). The terrifying aspect of madness is that it slips about disconcertingly within any definition a society gives it. Hunter capitalizes on this fear of madness escaping from "its" place in her tale of a lunatic's escape from the monolithic institution:

> From these dark cells, where horror reigns,
>
> And wild distraction bides,
>
> A hapless maniac bust her chains,
>
> And through the portal glides. (9-12)

The madwoman returns to her lover's home, "most unlook'd for at that board, / And [a] most unwelcome guest" (29-30) who represents all forms of madness that escape the confines of their assigned place. Terrifying, too, is the possibility that mania might strike an individual at any moment and strip him of his agency. Dibdin's "Lunatic" has absolutely no control over his abrupt transition into insanity as he melodramatically shrieks, "Horror darkens all my light; / Scenes of anguish crowd my sight!" (13-14), and "My soul is tortur'd, rack'd, and torn; / On furious, rapid, whirlwinds borne" (32-33).[5] Ireland's "Crazy Tom" is also powerless in the throes of his mania, crying, "I rage! I burn! My soul expires; / My heart is scorched with ardent fires" (1-2). The poet manipulates the reader's limited view into the realm of madness by amplifying the madman's performance to its extreme and creating an unfamiliar but imaginable portrait of inner turmoil.

As readers are drawn into a text, the poet counteracts this threat of madness by recounting a specific madman's lack of agency and his inevitable death. The poet wishes to probe at this fear and explore its limits, but mostly because it reaffirms the madman's destructive tendencies and his inability to communicate his suffering without the poet's mediation. As the poet negotiates between readers' fear and their pity, the "negative economy of madness" (Wall 62) is transformed into an "economy of sympathy" and uses sentimentality as its

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[5] Dibdin was a briefly celebrated dramatist and writer of nautical songs. The New Monthly Magazine (1835) observed that "his entertainments, which, from their literary merits, rather than his powers, either vocal or mimetic, were extraordinarily attractive; he very happily fell in with the feeling of the time, and made a much from the sale of his songs as by the performance" ("Records of a Stage Veteran, No. V.," 78).

main currency. For instance, Barton's "Maniac" is actually a straw man set up to warn the sinning reader to repent before he experiences a similar turmoil:

> Strengthen the wakening sinner's vows,
>
> And grant him penitence and peace
>
> Ere frenzied anguish o'er the soul
>
> The dark'ning clouds of horror roll. (51-4)

For Barton, the rational sinner secures for himself a fate far worse than the madman's, for at least the latter has moments of placid oblivion; the poet transforms an otherwise incomprehensible anguish into a valuable moral lesson.[6]

     In all six texts, the state of madness is more pitied than feared. Dyer heavy-handedly associates his melancholic subject with pity in his final lines: "All-hopeless Pity here shall take her stand: / Pity for thee shall spare her softest sigh; / For thou wast Pity's child, the friend of Misery" (12-4). Barton asserts that madness "may well awake / Our grief, our fear, for Nature's sake" (5-6), but he allows the madman the respite of "vacant rest" (46) while reserving the "frenzied anguish o'er the soul" (53) for the sinner. Dibdin's "The Maniac's Funeral" depicts a widow mourning her husband's death, which returns him from "raving with demoniac bile" (23) to the undeniable humanness of a dead body, "his madness all forgot" (24). Ireland's "Crazy Tom" laments about his lost love, pathetic in his apathy:

> Who's now so free, so gay as I?
>
> Who tastes such heavenly joys?
>
> Tush, tush! Poor love-sick Tom will die,
>
> And leave the Bedlam boys. (27-30)

This Bedlamite, in particular, demonstrates the motif that, not only is the madman doomed to die *sans oeuvre*, it is that he often *wishes* for death, a concept fundamentally opposed to the rational human's will to survive. Dibdin's "Lunatic" manages to die with a flourish, crying, "I'm lost! I fall! I sink! I die!"

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[6] Barton managed to carve a place for himself as both a religious man and as a poet. An 1824 review of Barton's *Poetic Vigils* observes, "Friend Barton was not the first or the only writer of poetry in the Society. It is a fact, however, that he is the only one to put out Quaker colours, and has succeeded in making them respected for the sake of his poetry" (*The Eclectic Review* 50).

(42), and, while Hunter's escaped Bedlamite authoritatively confronts her deceptive lover, she also realizes that she has only one possible fate, saying,

> Death is the friend I go to meet,
> And from his bounty crave
> All that can now remain for me,
> An undistinguish'd grave. (73-6)

At the opposite end of the spectrum, the poet strives to gain immortality through his work. Although the madman dramatically rages, burns and expires, he has no real agency, and his fate is ultimately a nonproductive death. These poems can be interpreted as a symptom of the anxiety about madness during this moment, but it should be remembered that their creators are conscious of the public's fascination with the madman's suffering and exclusion, and respond to it accordingly. That most of these poems conclude with death, or a wish for death, affirms that the madman's homeland is essentially a utopia, in the sense that it is a *non*-place.

Byron and the Mind as Madhouse

Lord Byron also plays the role of gatekeeper in *The Lament of Tasso* (1817), demonstrating the poet's privileged experience of visiting—and successfully returning from—the inaccessible place of madness *itself*. The poem is inspired by the seven-year confinement of the sixteenth-century Italian poet, Torquato Tasso, in the madhouse of Sant'Anna at Ferrara. His incarceration is starkly contrasted with his nostalgic descriptions of youthful wanderings and his first experience of forbidden love. Situated within the speaker's claustrophobic cell, the first-person narrative focuses on Tasso's "imputed madness, prisoned solitude, / And the mind's canker in its savage mood" (lines 4-5). Although Tasso occasionally fears the onset of madness, he trusts that his imagination will overpower the potential onset of insanity born of a long, dull imprisonment. Byron's *The Prisoner of Chillon* (1816) also depicts a man's confinement, and the main character's inescapable despair, while not overtly a presentation of insanity or situated specifically in a madhouse, offers a comparison to the "mad poet's" triumph in the *Lament*. The contrast between the imprisoned characters in these

texts evinces Byron's privileging of the mental resilience of the eccentric—but not destructively mad—poet over that of the non-creative individual.

The *Lament*, Stephen Cheeke argues, exemplifies two interests to which Byron continually returns: the relationship between madness and imprisonment, and the idea that the mind is its own place (92). Byron represents Tasso's tiny cell as maddeningly claustrophobic by reiterating its main symbol of confinement,[7] for Tasso constantly sees that "the abhorred gate, / marring the sunbeams with its hideous shade / Works through the throbbing eyeball to the brain" (7-9), and "Captivity display'd / Stands scoffing through the never-opened gate" (11-12). The Italian poet's rationality is gradually eroded by the waves of madness that constantly break against his mind: "Above me, hark! the long and maniac cry / Of minds and bodies in captivity. / And hark! the lash and the increasing howl, And the half-inarticulate blasphemy!" (65-68). That the "mind is its own place" is, of course, defiantly stated by Milton's Satan in *Paradise Lost*: "A mind [is] not changed by place or time. / The mind is its own place, and in itself / Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven" (256-68). Byron's Tasso is of a similar mindset in decrying the madhouse's extreme isolation: "And each is tortured in his separate hell— / For we are crowded in our solitudes— / Many, but each divided by the wall" (87-89). It is a central tenet of Stein's psychogeography, as well as Cheeke's analysis of this text, that, contrary to Satan's tirade, "a mind" is not static, but is constantly affected by both place *and* time. However, it is not simply the case, as Cheeke asserts, that the mind "is its own place" altered by specific circumstances. His conclusion that that Byron adopts Tasso's voice in an act of "poetic ventriloquization" in order to prophesize his own poetry's future vindication, using place to ground this performance, is sound (Cheeke 93). However, a psychogeographical argument demands that the reciprocal

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[7] In *Historical Illustrations to the Fourth Canto of Childe Harold* (1818), Hobhouse describes Tasso's cell: "The dungeon is below the ground floor of the hospital, and the light penetrates through its grated window from a small yard, which seems to have been common to other cells. It is nine paces long, between five and six wide, and about seven feet high" (13). The historical Tasso was only kept in such a small cell from March 1579 to December 1580, when he was transferred "to a contiguous apartment much larger, in which, to use his own expressions, he could philosophize and walk about" (Hobhouse 13).

relationship between the madhouse that Byron actually visited and his portrayal of madness in the *Lament* also be considered. The poet uses place as a foundation for creating his image of Tasso, but the act of writing itself transforms how visitors come to perceive the Italian's actual cell. Byron's *Lament* thus exemplifies the poet's unique ability to transform psychogeographical spaces for his readers.

In this story of societal scrutiny and condemnation, Tasso is the scandalized and rejected eccentric who, it first appears, has failed to secure himself a place in society. The historical madhouse was clearly the source of inspiration for Byron's poem.[8] However, the impact of the actual cell, although it "attract[ed] a more fixed attention" from its visitors, still allowed for ample creative leeway. Byron was aware of the possibility that Tasso was wrongly confined at Sant'Anna, but capitalizing on the myth of the "mad poet" enabled him to write a version of Tasso's story that worked to his own advantage. He exaggerates this image of the languishing poet forgotten in an underground cell for its dramatic appeal, and indeed, this strategy is not uncommon in telling Tasso's story. For example, John Hobhouse histrionically claims that for the Italian, "whose disease was a dread of solitude, and whose offence was a love of liberty, the hospital of St. Anna was, of itself, a dungeon" (22), despite his earlier assertion that Tasso had a moderately sized chamber and opportunities to leave the hospital on day trips. Tasso's cell, which was physically written upon and which became written into the myth of his madness, is also reshaped through Byron's writing. Further, by visiting an actual place of madness, Byron accrues the cultural capital necessary to shape one story in the history of madness as it is told through literary representations. If, as Stein notes, the "whoness" and the "whereness" of a person are inseparable (3)—if one's place indicates who one *is*—then there is no chance for Tasso to ever truly be liberated from the "mad

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[8] Byron's preface describes the site: "[Tasso's cell] attracts a more fixed attention than the residence or the monument of Ariosto – at least it had this effect on me. There are two inscriptions, one on the outer gate, the second over the cell itself, inviting, unnecessarily, the wonder and the indignation of the spectator" (116). The Italian inscription above the supposed cell at Sant'Anna situates Tasso in a place, "celebrità di quetsa stanza" [this celebrated room], and a historical moment, "Luglio 1586" [July 1586], but it also confines him to the mental state of "tristezza che delirio" [sadness/madness] for which he became famous (Hobhouse 15).

poet" persona, even though Byron represents him as apparently rational in *Lament*. By characterizing him as the wrongfully accused and passionate lover, however, Byron encourages readers to question their assumptions about those who have been exiled from their societies. His poem also provides insight into his concern with a society's tendency to exclude eccentrics and his own banishment from England. Cheeke includes the poem in "the on-going sequence of persecution poems dating from Byron's departure from scandalized England in 1816, in which Byron's protagonists are also versions of his troubled self, prophesying their own vindication in posterity" (91). The text's central concern is not whether the Italian was *actually* mad, but that society makes the final judgment on one's sanity. As Byron's Tasso says, "they called me mad" (47), and that is enough. This is not a case of the insane man being imprisoned in the madhouse, but of the madhouse projecting madness onto the sane prisoner.

This fear of exclusion that the poem explores exists because society constructs madness to fit its current needs. Jane Hubert observes that the exclusionary practices of any society are arbitrary, to a certain degree, and any individual can potentially be categorized as unwanted and ostracized (4). This view should be tempered with Andrew Scull's argument that some sociologists', such as Thomas Szasz, promotion of "the romantic notion that insanity lies simply in the eye of the beholder, that mental illness is a myth, that were it not for the psychiatric labeling process, the very category of madness would somehow vanish from the map" is misguided (2006: 7). Hubert further explains, "Whoever is unwanted, for whatever reason, is liable to be labeled by the dominant population as 'other,' and when a category is thus formed, it will be vested with a mythology and a set of rules regarding who is to be excluded or not" (3). The aim of both Hubert and Scull is not to banish the idea of "madness" altogether, but to understand how it works as a stress valve in specific situations, whether in the present day or in the eighteenth century, respectively. Hobhouse observes that the real Tasso's contemporaries recognized his genius but were unable to deal with the complex role this type of person plays in society for, even when he was imprisoned, "his countrymen still found that their poet, although hidden from

their sight, [was] still high above the horizon" (29). Any society therefore creates
not only appropriate—and widely accepted—labels for its interpretation of
otherness, but it also carves out a marginal place for those who are excluded.

     The Prisoner of Chillon is based on the Swiss monk François Bonnivard,
another example of the poet being inspired by a specific place that has accrued
cultural resonance.[9] The speaker embodies a similarly woeful entanglement of a
maddening place and a slowly disintegrating self. As in Tasso's experience, place
comes to define self. Tasso confesses, "Yet do I feel at times my mind decline, /
But with a sense of its decay" (189-90), agonized at his mind's retreat from sanity
because he is aware of its regression. The prisoner begins his sentence as an
apparently sane man, but extended periods of isolation and the strict confinement
of his movements chip away at that rationality. His dramatic monologue recounts
the contours of his dismal cell and the effect that the deaths of his father and
brothers has on his psyche. Alone and forgotten, he enters a state of profound
spiritual melancholy that echoes this bleak place:

        I had no thought, no feeling---none---

        Among the stones I stood a stone,

        And was, scarce conscious what I wist,

        As shrubless crags within the mist;

        For all was blank, and bleak, and grey;

        It was not night---it was not day;

        It was not even the dungeon-light,

        So hateful to my heavy sight,

        But vacancy absorbing space,

        And fixedness---*without a place*;

        There were no stars---no earth---no time---

        No check---no change---no good---no crime---

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[9] Byron described the Château de Chillon's visual impact: "Across one of the vaults if a beam
black with age, on which we were informed that the condemned were formerly executed. In the
cells are seven pillars, or rather, eight, one being half merged in the wall; in some of these are
rings for the fetters an the fettered: in the pavement the steps of Bonnivard have left their traces"
(28).

But silence, and a stirless breath

With neither was of life nor death;

A sea of *stagnant idleness*,

Blind, boundless, mute, and motionless! (235-50; emphasis added)

Significantly, the prisoner feels that he is literally "without a place," and his fear of the empty placelessness that the prison symbolizes reduces him to "stagnant idleness." This despairing mindset seems to have become permanent for the prisoner. Although he is eventually freed, he has become an empty shell of a human being and the perpetual gloom of confinement has worn down his sharp political consciousness to a useless stub. The cell has contaminated his perspective of *every* place and, he therefore concludes, "the whole earth would thenceforth be / A wider prison unto me" (322-3). Though no longer imprisoned, he has become inextricably mired in a prisoner's mindset, explaining, "Fettered or fetterless to be, / I learned to love despair" (373-4). His physical liberty masks a lasting mental incarceration, and he merely "Regain[s] [his] freedom with a sigh" (392). This concluding image of the narrator's confinement to a psychological no-man's land echoes Foucault's assertion that, according to the Age of Reason, the mad have no homeland and are doomed to this unending sense of placelessness.

As demonstrated in opposite ways by Tasso, who remains imprisoned in the *Lament*, and the prisoner of Chillon, who regains his liberty "with a sigh," true freedom is not found in the act of striking off one's chains but in escaping a stagnant and destructive mental state. Tasso is more successful at resisting madness than the prisoner of Chillon because he is a poet, and he has a powerful imagination to fortify his soul. While imprisoned, the narrator of *Chillon* is momentarily shaken from his melancholic state by a bird who appears to him "in winged guise, / A visitant from Paradise" (283-84) and sings a "song that said a thousand things, / And seemed to say them all for [him]!" (269-70). The common connotation between birds and poetry, as with Shelley's skylark or Keats's nightingale, suggests that the flight of the imagination is central to the poet's inspiration. Like the bird, the poet visits the place of madness and returns to the free world to sing the tale of the prisoner, who cannot tell his own tale. As a poet

himself, Tasso cries, "I have battled with mine agony, / And made me wings wherewith to overfly / The narrow circus of my dungeon wall" (21-23); he needs no bird to visit him, because he embodies the bird's free spirit in his imagination.

The victory of the poet's mind over place in *Lament* affirms Byron's belief in the superiority of the imagination over the chained body and, more subtly, his agenda to promote the necessity of the poet as a navigator of these obscure places. Tasso skillfully hierarchizes the immortality of his lowly cell over Duke Ferrara's court which, though splendid now, is a place whose glory inevitably fades with time. His confidence falters as he recalls his irreparable separation from his lover, but his cell becomes sacred by the poem's conclusion. Tasso predicts a glorious future of this narrow space inscribed with his story, for

> when the towers
>
> And battlements which guard his joyous hours
>
> Of banquet, dance, and revel, are forgot,
>
> Or left untended in a dull repose,
>
> This—this shall be a consecrated spot! (236-40)

Tasso's identity has become bound to his madhouse cell, but he is determined to transform his space of confinement into a shrine for literary worship that confirms his immortality as a poet. Cheeke argues that, with this concluding speech, "Tasso is reclaiming his mind by performing his own act of consecration for the very place (the prison-cell) that took away his sanity, making of it a 'future temple'" (93). Significantly, though, the readers of *The Lament of Tasso* are worshipping a different poet on this "consecrated spot"—the poet who has appropriated Tasso's suffering and recast it for his own poetic aspirations. As this text demonstrates, location influences identity, but the mind also reciprocally distorts a person's experience of a place. While this continuously shifting mode of perception applies to everyone, the poet presents a special case; literature is a site in which the poet has the power to affect an entire audience's psychogeographical understanding of a place, even if they have never been there. In reading the *Lament*, the audience invigorates the myths of both Tasso and Byron as outcast poets.

Both *The Lament of Tasso* and *The Prisoner of Chillon* depict the dangers of place for the mind, as well as the mind's constant distorting of reality. The prison/madhouse is a place the audience cannot easily access, and they are thus all the more curious about these exiled characters. While certain places inspire the poet to write, a skilled poet can also shape the perception of these places through their imaginative recreations. In fact, it is in his ability to slip easily between these two places of madness—the historical location and the textual version—that the poet justifies his role as a cultural navigator. As these texts show, the poet is not simply a gatekeeper to the place of madness, but performs this "poetic ventriloquism" in order to promote his role as the reader's guide through this treacherous place. As Byron promotes Tasso's immortality through his portrayal of the "mad poet," he also attempts to ensure his own.

Shelley's Psychogeographical Island

Shelley's *Julian and Maddalo. A Conversation* (1819) depicts the poet physically visiting and returning from the place of madness, exposing the Maniac's performance as a fascinating but profoundly unsettling experience that the eponymous characters attempt to integrate into their personal philosophies. The poem situates Julian and Maddalo in four spaces: their ride along the Lido; Maddalo's home, where Julian engages in conversation with his friend's young daughter; the isolated island madhouse; and Julian's return to Maddalo's house years later. The friends' witnessing of the Maniac's place profoundly alters their outlook on madness and psychological freedom, even if they cannot articulate precisely why, and Julian presents a haunted testimonial of this experience. The Maniac threatens to escape his literary chains and rupture his audience's comfortable worldview, but Julian's concluding line, "—but the cold world shall not know" (617), safely (re)encloses the madman within the poet's narrative framework. Although Julian's reticence is ostensibly to protect the sensitive madman from the unfeeling outside world, he has appropriated the madman's story as his own creative property and, in doing so, strips him of any real agency.

Scholars have speculated about which parts the poem are based on fact, focusing in particular on whether Byron (Maddalo) and Shelley (Julian) actually visited an island madhouse in Venice.[10] This particular visit was likely fictional, but the text retains convincing historical connections to both Byron and Shelley.[11] Similarly to *The Lament of Tasso* and *The Prisoner of Chillon*, the disturbing impact that the island madhouse has on both Julian and Maddalo reinforces the Romantic understanding of the strong links between place, imagination and identity. In *Julian and Maddalo*'s opening scene, the Lido's harsh landscape[12] both inspires and reflects Julian's idealistic perspective, while it antagonizes Maddalo and demonstrates to him the impotence of man. Maddalo "is convinced that Julian's philosophical viewpoint is conditioned solely by these reactions to chance external stimuli" as the Romantic idealist, "while Maddalo is the Romantic cynic, distancing himself from the hazards of an environment whose contradictory nature cannot be assimilated meaningfully either by reason or imagination" (Hill 86). Shelley Wall also takes a negative view of Julian's idealism regarding nature in her feminist reading, since Shelley's inspiration from the environment is more due to the fact that "desire projects infinity onto what is in fact a narrow, abandoned space of wreckage and stunted growth" (52). These two Romantic types rely on their assumptions about "placeness" and the interactions between their imaginations and their environments in order to understand themselves. Julian passively lets his environment shape his

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[10] Havens assumes the poem was inspired by a real place that reminded Shelley of the "great Italian poet [Tasso] languishing in a madhouse" (652), but Matthews notes that, although Shelley wrote that his characters "will be all drawn from dreadful or beautiful realities," "it is very unlikely that Byron took Shelley to visit a madhouse where he was maintaining a lunatic at his own expense" (59). That Shelley describes the maniac as "also in some degree a painting from nature, but with respect to time and place ideal" (qtd. in Brown 39-40) in a letter to Leigh Hunt on 15 August 1819 provides further evidence of this.

[11] The island of San Lazzaro, located just off the Lido, had been the location of a leper colony since 1717; Byron "took Armenian lessons here from Father Pasqual Aucher in 1816" (Garrett 161). The island of San Servolo, located between San Lazzaro and Venice, was once the site of a Benedictine monastery and, from 1725, housed an asylum that had spaces open to lunatics with the financial backing of a good family (Garrett 167).

[12] The Lido is a reef that acts as a protective barrier between Venice and the ocean (Garrett 162). A letter from Shelley to Mary on 23 August 1818 describes his ride with Byron along the Lido: "So he took me in his gondola […] across the laguna to a long sandy island which defends Venise [*sic*] from the Adriatic. When we disembarked, we found his horses waiting for us, and we rode along the sea talking" (qtd. in Brown 39).

imagination, while Maddalo stubbornly refuses to perceive place as anything but what he has already decided it signifies. Both friends, however, will have their philosophies on man and nature shaken by their trip to the madhouse.

Although Julian's acute sense of space and time is strictly maintained throughout the poem (Hill 85), Wall's eloquent description of "the poem's shifting narrative sands" (52) and Vincent Newey's observation that the Italian landscape's introduction "suggest[s] endless activity beneath apparent stasis" (80) indicates the unsettling chaos rippling underneath the account of a gentlemanly ride along the Lido. Several critics consider Julian's sensitivity to the surrounding topography as central to the narrative; for example, Everest calls this environment "[a]n ambiguously neutral territory, potentially fertile but barren in the immediate prospect, like the opposed grounds of the argument" (679). Newey also argues that place always reflects one's psychological assumptions and convictions, but he offers a way of understanding the disintegrating boundary between self and world as a relationship that emits, and is influenced by, "psychopoeic energies" (78). As with the psychogeographical definition, place "signif[ies] creative activity that centres in and makes manifest, not shared patterns of human experience, action or belief, but individual psychological processes, impulses and goals" (Newey 78). However one reads Julian's appreciation of his environs, the Lido clearly symbolizes liberty in relation to his business concerns in the city. He mourns, "If I had been an unconnected man / I, from this moment, should have formed some plan / Never to leave sweet Venice" (547-49). Venice represents an "unconnectedness" compared to London, and Julian's experience of this "placelessness" is both mentally invigorating and terrifying.[13] Specific locations within this city—the Lido, Maddalo's house, the madhouse—continue to resonate in Julian's imagination after he leaves, and Venice remains a profoundly unsettling site on his psychogeographical map.

Julian and Maddalo's philosophical discussion eventually reaches a

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[13] Newey argues that Venice "is a *locus* in the narrator's unfolding mind, a spot revisited above all for the sake of the formative experience that took place there" (96). Plotnitsky observes, "Venice, beginning with its architecture, is indissociable from its politics and its geopolitics. More accurately, one should speak of the interplay of both" (115); this reciprocal influence suggests how an imagined city affects its citizens and visitors' experience of its actual streets and buildings.

breaking point, and they decide to travel to the place where madness is contained in order to understand its origin. They take a gondola trip across a lagoon, with Maddalo acting as tour guide for his idealistic friend. This passage clearly represents "a psychological journey to the center of being or intellect" (Brown 42), and the pair experiences an abrupt transition from their urbane genteelness to an incomprehensible realm as Julian recounts:

> Through the fast-falling rain and high-wrought sea
>
> Sailed to the island where the madhouse stands.
>
> We disembarked. The clap of tortured hands,
>
> Fierce yells and howlings and lamentings keen,
>
> And laughter where complaint had merrier been,
>
> Moans, shrieks, and curses, and blaspheming prayers,
>
> Accosted us. (214-20)

Julian and Maddalo stop in a liminal place within the madhouse itself, remaining unannounced and undiscovered by its occupants as they look "[t]hrough the black bars in the tempestuous air" (223). The privileged voyeurs of misery engage the scopophilic "male gaze" (Wall 53) as they eavesdrop on the emasculated Maniac's confessions of lost love and his desire for death. Arguments vary about the inspiration for this complex character.[14] The Maniac may be based on Tasso, like Byron's *Lament*, as the Shelleys visited his prison in Ferrara in November before moving on to Rome, and this is presumably the source of Shelley's inspiration for a drama involving the Italian poet (Matthews 65).[15] Everest concludes, however, "we do not need to know these things to think of the maniac as a poet frustrated by the failure to achieve an audience" (680). Whether or not the unfortunate man on display in Shelley's text owes his existence Tasso, he

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[14] Everest asserts that Tasso would have been "a striking example of the poet isolated and driven to madness" (680), while Saveson suggests that the Maniac is an amalgam of Byron, Shelley and Tasso (53). Brown counters that all three of the poem's characters are different facets of Shelley himself (39).

[15] In a letter to Thomas Love Peacock dated 20 April 1818, Shelley wrote, "I have devoted the summer & indeed the next year to the composition of a tragedy on the subject of Tasso's madness, which I find upon inspection is, if properly treated, admirably dramatic & poetical" (qtd. in Plotnitsky 116). Although Shelley abandoned this drama, his interest in the Italian poet's story persisted (Everest 682).

should still be considered a specimen of madness, pinned and wriggling on the madhouse wall for Julian and Maddalo to examine at their leisure.

Maddalo dramatically frames the madman's soliloquy by recounting how he came "[t]o Venice a dejected man" (233), but cannot say exactly why he went mad; he also claims that the Maniac enjoys captivity to some extent, since "the police had brought him here / [and] Some fancy took him and he would not bear removal" (250-52). Newey observes that the asylum is "a hell-on-earth of sense-deprivation where the individual, everlastingly screened off from external stimuli, is denied the secular salvation of ennobling interchange with Nature" (87-88), but the Maniac has a far more comfortable confinement than those in Byron's texts. Maddalo has decorated his chambers to resemble a cultured man's apartment:

> I fitted up for him
>
> Those rooms beside the sea, to please his whim,
>
> And sent him busts and books and urns for flowers,
>
> Which had adorned his life in happier hours… (252-55)

In this action, Everest notes, "Maddalo attempts to alleviate the maniac's suffering by creating the illusion of a gentlemanly normality" (682), similarly to the mad-doctors in places like St. Luke's and the York Retreat whose cures for madness encouraged individual "moral management" and the illusion of normalcy. In order to instill in patients a sense of personal responsibility and respect for authority, the doctors treated them "normally" during activities such as eating together at the table and performing chores, but always while keeping them under strict surveillance (Digby 63). Sociologist Erving Goffman explains, "the efficacy of informal and formal social control depends to a degree on personal control, for control that is initiated outside the offender will not be very effective unless it can in some degree awaken corrective action from within" (347). Thus, the "moral management" approach only works if externally controlled factors are matched by the patient's internal willingness to respond and behave according to the rules of society. Although Shelley's Maniac resides in a place that maintains the appearance of civilized reason, he is doomed to an infinite psychological regression because he has no rational counterparts with whom he can interact and

compare his isolated responses to his depression.

Julian and Maddalo neglect to interact directly with the madman, but they keenly observe that he has been reduced to a helpless stagnation: "There the poor wretch was sitting mournfully / Near a piano, his pale fingers twined / One with the other" (273-75). However, the depth of his emotions causes him to attempt expressing them, and, "[a]s one who wrought from his own fervid heart / The eloquence of passion, soon he raised / His sad meek face, and eyes lustrous and glazed, / And spoke---" (283-86). As in the Bedlamite texts and the stories of Tasso and the prisoner of Chillon, the Maniac wishes for death, crying, "Would the dust / Were covered in upon my body now! / That life ceased to toil within my brow!" (315-17). Julian and Maddalo's debate is completely forgotten as they witness the Maniac's outpouring of anguish. He is spectacular in his misery but remains ignorant that he is being watched, as "all the while the loud and gusty storm / Hissed through the window, and [they] stood behind / Stealing his accents from the envious wind / Unseen" (295-98). His narrative soon becomes fragmented and incomprehensible, as indicated by the dotted lines between his speeches and a proliferation of dashes. What begins as an eloquent soliloquy disintegrates into the Maniac's violent and self-destructive wish that, "like some maniac monk, I had torn out / The nerves of manhood by their bleeding root / With mine own quivering fingers" (424-26). In trying to understand the source of the Maniac's pain, Julian reveals that "the wild language of his grief was high-- / Such as in measure were called poetry" (541-42); this "poetry," however, is always filtered by the narrator's experience. It is only via the tale of the gentlemen's journey that the Maniac's story is transmitted, and he will never know that it has reached the world beyond his own private chambers.

While visiting Venice, Julian exhibits key traits of the flighty tourist, and Maddalo assumes the role of gatekeeper for his friend. A tourist occupies a liminal space in his or her ability to shirk the duties of citizenship and ignore the distasteful aspects of a foreign city, and "[t]he freedom of the traveler (temporary and artificial in some ways) enables him or her to gloss desolation as an instance of 'ruin' and an occasion for the picturesque" (Pite 53). Julian has a strong

emotional connection to the madhouse *in that moment*, but it fades quickly as his real life responsibilities again loom in the forefront of his consciousness. At first, he dreams of altruistically rescuing the Maniac from his tortured state:

> I imagined that if day by day
>
> I watched him, and but seldom went away,
>
> And studied all the beatings of his heart
>
> With zeal, as men study some stubborn art
>
> For their own good, and could by patience find
>
> An entrance to the caverns of his mind,
>
> I might reclaim him from this dark estate. (568-74)

However, his wish to "reclaim" the Maniac turns out to be an empty promise to himself. Julian "wants to appear philanthropic and comes across as self-involved" (Pite 54), since his plans to discover the source of madness and its cure are never actualized. Mere lines later, he admits that he returned to London the next day to attend to business matters, and the Maniac regresses to the back of his consciousness as Julian retreats from the physical place of madness. The speaker concludes his narrative with a return to Maddalo's home years later; although he meets with his friend's grown daughter and learns of the Maniac's fate, the reader is not privy to this information: "I urged and questioned still; she told me how / All happened—but the cold world shall not know" (617-18). This sense that the speaker still feels a kinship with the sensitive Maniac and is protecting him from a world too "cold" to empathize with his fate emphasizes the poet's privileged access to the place of madness. The narrator takes his readers on a journey to the isolated island madhouse and briefly opens its gates so they may witness the mad performance, but he concludes that they can never know the Maniac's pain. The speaker uncomfortably reveals that he lacks the courage to fully enter the madman's tortured psyche, and he never truly permits his readers the opportunity.

Conclusion

From the period Foucault classifies as "the Great Confinement" until present day, the madman has occupied a liminal place in society, and it is

significant that these poets have situated this figure as the central—or at least a significant—character in their texts. However, the center cannot hold on its own if it is a place that cannot be explained (the asylum) or a subject who cannot speak (the madman). These poems generally represent the asylum as *the* place to bury the living madman, and he is unearthed for viewing—but still kept at a distance— at the poet's convenience. In the sketches depicting Bedlam and the longer poems analyzed in this chapter, the mad subject's voice is continually appropriated for the poet's project. The mad are represented as stagnant or destructive, and their stories, while sentimentally moving, must be accessed through the poet's imagination if readers are to glean meaning from them. Although this "poetic ventriloquization" of madness presents a narrow and manipulative perspective, the asylum at least offers a relatively safe holding case in which the madman might be observed. It is when the mad subject has been cut loose from society, and is wandering in the wilderness, that he or she becomes a more ominous threat to both domestic and civilized boundaries.

2. Banishing Madness: The Wandering Madman

If the madman is not buried in the asylum, he is doomed to wander the sublime cliffs of the cultural imagination, a place that Foucault describes as "a strange homeland where his residency [is] also that which abolishe[s] his being" (376). The previous chapter's tracing of Bedlam's transformation shows that the asylum's evolution into a monolithic icon took centuries; in this process it accrued significant cultural capital and still holds a prominent place in the public imagination. However, the "wilderness" is just as constructed, despite the popular misconception that "Nature" is the one place that has remained relatively untouched by man. Textual encounters with the banished madman portray this subject as walking a difficult path; he oscillates between embracing the "noble savage" persona—which is frequently characterized by an enviable obliviousness—and mourning a lost position in society. The exiled madman

exemplifies a complicated liberty: although he is free to wander, he is not free to return to society, and his repetitious, circuitous existence is just as psychologically confining as that of his imprisoned compatriots.

The six texts analyzed in this chapter reveal the construction of the wilderness as a place in which the mad wanderer becomes a spectacle for touristic consumption. The rational tourist, observing the lunatic from within the boundaries of civilization (*here*), can safely indulge his curiosity—or even envy—of madness with the reassurance that he is not permanently trapped there. In this chapter, I consider the familiar definitions for the *sublime* (Kant and Burke) and the *picturesque* (Gilpin) in relation to the rise of tourism during the eighteenth century to determine how psychogeographical experiences of "Nature" are portrayed in the literature. A parallel literary tourism both enriches and is informed by this emerging consumer culture, and the place of madness is a potentially lucrative source of cultural capital for those who write about it. These texts shape the psychogeographical experience of tourists who venture into the "wilderness" before they ever set foot outside. By placing the madman in this sublime landscape, the poet also makes a place for him- or herself as a privileged guide for the interaction between the tourist group (known, rational, civilized) and the banished madman (unknown, irrational, primitive). The poet's ability to return to society to narrate the mad experience, while the madman cannot do so himself, is crucial in promoting the "mad" wilderness as a "site" worth visiting.

The "Wilderness" and Literary Tourism

By the eighteenth century the wilderness had become a consecrated space, and it accreted cultural value as it moved into its more or less permanent position opposite civilization in the public imagination. People tended to consider the wilderness as a pristine, primitive place that would remain intact even as they watched their cities become increasingly crowded, industrialized and polluted. William Cronon reminds us, however, that the wilderness should not be imagined as pure or isolated, for "it is quite profoundly a human creation—indeed, the creation of very particular human cultures at very particular moments in human

history" (7).[16] Wandering in the "sublime" wilderness is represented as a quintessentially Romantic experience; Immanuel Kant and Edmund Burke's oft-cited passages testify to this attempt to understand Nature's effect on an individual.[17] Both philosophers emphasize the "delightful horror" of the sublime experience that is, in Burke's words, "the most genuine effect, and truest test of the sublime" and evokes, as Kant explains, "at once a feeling of displeasure . . . and a simultaneously awakened pleasure" (qtd. in Hitt 607). Encounters with madness have the power to elicit similar feelings of experiencing the sublime. For example, Amelia Opie wrote of feeling a "thrilling fear" upon visiting an asylum as a child (Thame 310), and in a letter to John Wilson regarding his composition of "The Idiot Boy," Wordsworth claimed, "I have often applied to idiots, in my own mind, that sublime expression of Scripture, that *their life is hidden with God*" (qtd. in Nordius 179; emphasis original).[18] However, emerging at the same time as the idea of a "pure," untouched wilderness is humankind's desire to tame it and to experience this delightfully terrifying place. The "terrible awe" that Wordsworth and Thoreau wrote of in an almost religious sense was "giving way to a much more comfortable, almost sentimental demeanour" (Cronon 12), the powerful effect of this wilderness diminishing as more travelers sought to "take in" the spectacle. Just as the sublimity of the wilderness was eventually tamed by

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[16] Katz and Kirby agree that this epistemological division between humans and nature is problematic. Reminiscent of Hubert's argument for the necessity of exclusion, they equate the "wilderness" with what is excluded from an (apparently efficiently) functioning society: "Nature as other reflects the limits of bourgeois propriety, defining 'what is (a)social, (ab)normal, (sub)cultural" (266).

[17] Kant, for example, depicts the sublime as an encounter with a fierce wilderness: "consider bold, overhanging, and, as it were, threatening rocks, thunder-clouds piled up in the sky and moving about accompanied by lightning and thunderclaps, volcanoes with all their destructive power, hurricanes with all the devastation they leave behind, the boundless ocean heaved up, the high waterfall of a mighty river, and so on" (120).

[18] Hitt's description of the sublime is easily applied to an encounter with madness: "The unfathomable otherness of nature unnerves us, and the idea that we are somehow part of this alien entity shocks us. Hence we devise ways to circumvent, deny, escape, or overcome it. Such efforts, indeed, constitute the story of the conventional sublime--a story which describes the validation of the individual through an act of transcendence in which the external world is domesticated, conquered, or erased" (611). Foucault often employs similar themes of alienation, escape, and erasure in constructing his narrative of the Great Confinement in *History of Madness*.

tourism and filtered by the picturesque,[19] so has the place of madness been made consumable by those poets who seek to recreate the "thrilling fear" it awakens.

The eighteenth-century rise of tourism is well documented, and indeed the "yearning" instinct became popular during this time of idolizing the wilderness and offering more people access to its riches.[20] Gilpin characterizes the typical sojourner into the wild as an enthusiastic hunter of novelty, "pursu[ing] [nature] from hill to dale; and hunt[ing] after those various beauties, with which she every where abounds" (48). The practice of viewing nature with Gilpin's "picturesque eye" (44) involves its strategically placed blind spots as well for, as Buzard explains, the landscape is transformed by the viewer's expectations: "Everyday features of the visited place (populations included) either fell cleanly away from view or arranged themselves as part of the spectacle" (34). Within England, tourism became a significant factor in how its citizens defined Nature in relation to civilization, as well as how they constructed a unique national identity (Ousby 4). The psychogeographical maps of England's places are every bit as influential—and likely also as informative—as their topographical maps.

When the traveler returns home, the story of the journey replaces the journey itself, having already been relegated to the easily mutable realm of memory. This practice is most beneficial to the traveler, of course, if the telling of these adventures elevate him in the eyes of his peers, for, "After we have amused *ourselves* with our sketches, if we can, in any degree, contribute to the amusement of others also, the pleasure is surely so much inhanced" (Gilpin 52). Gilpin's sketch of the enthusiastic traveler demonstrates how the countryside has become a place easily visited and a spectacle readily consumed; this image paves the way for tourists' growing need to "take in" sights and return home with souvenirs and

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[19] Gilpin coined the term "picturesque" in his writing on beauty and travel in 1794, asserting that, in a particular landscape, "*roughness* forms the most essential point of difference between the *beautiful*, and the *picturesque*; as it seem to be that particular quality, which makes objects chiefly pleasing in painting" (6).

[20] Enzensberger notes that the first uses of "tourist" and "tourism" in the English language occur in 1800 and 1811, respectively (119), and the concept of "yearning for faraway places" is distinctly Romantic (123). Olsson observes, "[t]he reason is that the truth of yearning is in the yearning itself, not in the things and relations the yearning is for" (122). For more on the general theory of tourism see Graburn; on the rise of tourism in England, see Ousby and Buzard; on the construction of the English "countryside" see Burchardt.

stories as proof. Frow argues that, in the very act of telling of the story of the journey the journey is destroyed, but the telling is also an essential part of the touristic experience (125). This is the paradox embedded in the practice of tourism; the very process of traveling to a place ruins it, and the actual fulfilling of this desire destroys the place's purity. Tourism perpetually "remains in its own feedback loop" (Enzensberger 126), for the tourist can escape from the banality of "home" but can never escape the banality of his own existence. Thus, although the tourist's quest is always one of anticipation and disappointment, the potential for cultural capital exists in the stories he or she collects. The poet cashes in on this touristic desire to view the outcast madman and appropriates the sublime or revelatory mad experience and makes it accessible through telling its story.

This idea of a literary tourism has similar characteristics to its historical counterpart; while the depictions of the wilderness as the madman's place often perpetuate cultural stereotypes of madness, they also invite readers to consider the performance of madness and the dynamic of social exclusion. The literary landscape, in general, both imitates and transforms how people perceive the physical landscape.[21] Setting is therefore as important as plot, as many critics have argued within their analyses of tourism and literature. Douglas Pocock's assertion that "[p]hysical place is 're-placed' through our sensibilities by an image of place, which is no less real, while the phenomenon of sense or spirit of place highlights the experiential nature of our engagement" (17), is a helpful starting point for considering what factors are at work in constructing the literary tourist's gaze. Gilpin asks, "Is there a greater ornament of landscape, than the ruins of a castle?" (27), and the poet might answer that a madman inhabiting these ruins,

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[21] For instance, Pocock argues that "literature is the product of perception, or, more simply, *is* perception" (15). Ousby observes, "To the leisure traveler, literary associations are as much a part of the landscape as country houses or historic buildings or beauty spots" (22), while Frow similarly asserts, "Places are sanctified, in a way that is neither simply religious nor simply aesthetic, by the poems that have been written about them" (123). Lowenthal and Prince argue: "Places are linked most of all with persons: a creator, designer, or author; a possessor, patron, or heir; an individual associated, either causally or fortuitously, by historical events of literary allusions" (211). Raffestin observes that in reading literature about a place, "[o]ne thus discovers that the landscape of the writer composes a whole from elements mobilized by a gaze and a language that hark back to the situation of the painter" (134).

himself a ruined spectacle, is also a form of ornamentation. In the process of viewing a "sight," "[t]he 'original' becomes itself when the viewer perceives that it suits its representations" (Buzard 36), and a successful trip into nature "confirms (like the tourist's photograph) not an empirical act of seeing but the congruence of the sight with the idea of the sight" (Frow 125). Buzard and Frow's observations on the constructedness of the tourist's gaze, I argue, also apply to the "rational" person reading or viewing the madman. The poet interested in representations of madness, then, is at liberty to use the mad experience in the same way that he might use the sublime to create a powerful poem. The madman's performance is brought into focus, but it is always framed and distorted by the narrator's voice. The sublime, unknown terror of madness is thus transformed by the narrator-guide into a more understandable, picturesque view of the maniac ranging along the cliffs and singing of his misery.

Robinson, Opie and the Spectacle of Suffering

Mary Robinson's "Poor Marguerite" and "The Maniac" and Amelia Opie's "The Mad Wanderer, A Ballad" and "The Despairing Wanderer" strategically use the trope of the wandering madman to explore how madness relates to societal exclusion and belonging, gender and the performative nature of language. Although similar in theme, each poem offers a unique contribution to the discussion of madness as place and of the potential for literary tourism in the wilderness. In the more narrative-driven "Poor Marguerite" and "The Mad Wanderer," the poets create a harsh wilderness as the background against which the mad subject is placed as a spectacle for both narrator and reader. In both poems the repetition of certain phrases, especially the adjective "poor," plays into an economy of sympathy. However, while Robinson invests earnestly in her narrative, Opie works to subtly resist the image of the "poor," scorned lover. For "The Maniac" and "The Despairing Wanderer," the more introspective inquiries into the nature of madness and exclusion, my analysis focuses on the narrator's psychological progression. Robinson's poem features a sympathetic voice but ultimately cannot bridge the distance between the narrator and her subject, while

Opie's narrator in "The Despairing Wanderer" actually wishes for madness, complicating the traditional Reason/Madness hierarchy.

In "Poor Marguerite," Robinson outlines a series of tableaux in which the protagonist seems to move freely through the countryside. Marguerite embodies many of the stereotypes that characterize representations of the mad; she oscillates between traveling "[s]wift, o'er the wild and dreary waste" (1) as a "noble savage" and voicing her misery in the third person. Marguerite has a certain "wildness" that animals recognize and relate to, for she "cha[ses] the fly… and mock[s] the beetle" (71-72) and "[t]he watchful Cur assail[s] her not," for "[s]uch sorrow her dark eyes beam'd, / That savage fierceness could not greet/ With less than love" (50, 54-56). These sketches of connecting with animals emphasize both Marguerite's innocence and the alternative modes she uses to communicate with the world. The narrator's focus on her protagonist's intimate relationship with nature causes her relationship with the lost lover, Henry, to become secondary. However, although Marguerite feels a communion with the beasts and insects, her pain retains a distinctly human quality. In both the wilderness and the asylum, the mad subject is seen as a hybrid between human and animal, but he possesses too many qualities of both to exist in either world.

Foucault traces the theme of animalizing the mad during the Great Confinement, focusing on the **"**cage-like, menagerie aspects" (147) of their institution cells and the limited ways in which they "expressed" themselves: "The men chained to the walls of the cells were not seen as people who had lost their reason, but as beasts filled with snarling, natural rage, as though madness at its furthest point was liberated from the moral unreason where its milder forms languished, and was revealed in all its immediate, animal violence" (147). The madman's apparent affinity for nature also meant he was impervious to its more abrasive elements and did not need protection from the sun and cold. Foucault discusses this invulnerability to the elements in relation to the abhorrent conditions of asylums, but the trope is also exploited in representations of the wandering madman, and examples abound in Robinson and Opie's texts.

Marguerite appears to feel more "at home" in nature, for "many a night, her bosom warm, / Has throbb'd beneath the pelting storm" (17-18), and "the rain falls sweet, / It bathes the wounds of Marguerite" (19-20). Kate in "The Mad Wanderer" chooses to remain outside, for "e'en in winter's coldest day / She still would cry, 'My brain is hot'" (7-8). "The Maniac" is impervious to his harsh environment, and his "form upon the cold earth cast, / Now grown familiar with the blast, / Defies the biting frost and scorching sun" (37-41). Foucault's assertion that "The animal ferocity of madness was a barrier against sickness for the mad, granting them a sort of invulnerability like the one that nature, in her bounty, provided for the animal world" (149) makes it seem like this "invulnerability" is a kind of privileged position for the mad, and these literary representations tend to idealize the state of madness in this way.

However, the apparent freedom attributed to the "noble savage" has its limitations. Foucault explains that the perception of "animal solidity" further distanced the place of madness from the more "civilized" world of man, for "[t]he mad were protected by their animality from all that was fragile, precarious and delicate in man" (148). From this perspective, entering a state of madness could be conceived of as its own type of liberation because the madman was not aware of his confinement or the social interactions he was lacking. This was "not because the beast had been silenced but because all humanity had been evacuated" (Foucault 150). While the madman was no longer blamed for his condition, it was also easy to distance oneself from empathizing with a human/animal hybrid. Both Robinson and Opie's texts strategically work this hybrid image by oscillating between sketching the madman as a savage animal and as a suffering human, problematizing the assumption that madness is a completely disconnected state.

In discussing the psychogeographical boundaries imposed by countries in order to foster the necessary sense of national (or group) identity, Stein uses the term *homo monstrous* to explain why the "other" appears as whatever the psyche desires, since the "Fanciful geography of geological features and fanciful

geography of distantly imagined human body are of one piece" (63). The wandering madman's only "home" is in the wilderness, and thus his otherness is marked by both physical attributes such as unruly hair and sun-scorched skin, decaying clothes and thistle or straw crowns, and actions, such as his propensity for scaling mountains and howling at the moon. In their description of otherness, Katz and Kirby observe that "The tropes of wildness, purity, instinctuality and animalness have been strategically useful to capital and patriarchy in the subordination, domination, and exploitation" (265) of various marginalized groups, including the "mad" or "abnormal" among the population. This is the privileged place that Reason and, by extension, human civilization, holds in relation to madness, animals and the wilderness; if the latter group occupies a blissful, ignorant state, it is also clearly inferior to Reason. The very purity for which the mad subject is envied by Opie's "Despairing Wanderer" and pitied in Robinson's "Poor Marguerite" and "The Maniac" is what allows Reason to exploit them. The *homo monstrous*, isolated in the wilderness and stranded in his ignorance, is both feared and envied. For the wandering madman, then, Foucault's description of "animal solidity" is translated into a sentimental portrait of the madman's oneness with Nature, which is distances him while idealizing both him and the wilderness. This argument for the superiority of the "ignorance is bliss" state of madness recurs throughout these texts and idealizes the place of madness in the same way that Cronon speaks of the idealization of wilderness as a "pure" state that people trapped in the city can escape into, if only in their imaginations. The poet capitalizes on the idea of madness as a liminal place existing within the civilization/wilderness divide and the reactions the mad subject can evoke, tempting the reader with this temporary escape to a realm known only to the mad.

Opie's eight-stanza "The Mad Wanderer" contains similar tropes to "Poor Marguerite:" a woman with a mysterious past, word repetition, the protagonist's death, and a sympathetic or sentimental tone. However, while Robinson's poem seems to offer no hints beyond the narrator's limited gaze at Marguerite's true psychological state, Opie's text offers several glimpses into the performative

aspects of her protagonist's madness and leads the reader to question the assumption that mad subjects have no agency. When she first comes to Grasmere, "Poor Kate" fits the stereotype of the mad woman perfectly as "A stranger maid in tatters clad, / Whose eyes were wild, whose cheek was pale, / While oft she cried, 'Poor Kate is mad!'" (2-4). While Marguerite is alone in her wild wanderings, Kate's madness alters its dimension because she has entered a society from a mysterious "away." This gives the mad subject an audience; both the narrator and the village inhabitants are fascinated and horrified by Kate. The first hint that she might be performing occurs in the third stanza, which indicates the collective "We" gazing at the mad subject: "A look she had of better days; / And once, while o'er the hills she ranged, / We saw her on her tatters gaze, / And heard her say, 'How Kate is changed!'" (9-12). Mad Kate's gaze turns inward as she reflects on her current state, and her proclamation deepens the narrative in several ways: she is neither completely atemporal nor unaware of herself as a unique being, which counters Foucault's claims of the perceptions of a pure animal state of madness. Kate also has specific reactions to stimuli in her environment, which seem both alien and familiar to her observers. She reacts in a way that seems distinctly human, but because social conventions dictate that "civilized" humans do not show their feelings, she appears alone in her sentiments. Kate's reaction to "a wedding peal" in the next stanza seems particularly overdramatic, and her four words seem to express the freedom the mad outsider enjoys: "With dark revengeful leer she smiled, / And, curses muttering on her tongue, / She loudly screamed, 'Poor Kate is wild!'" (21-24). Both Opie and Kate herself purposefully keep certain knowledge hidden from the villagers and the reader, who are the mad subject's audience. The hint that this is performance—and readers' frustration at not knowing for sure—is amplified by Kate's own death scene. When "[a] corpse one day from far [is] brought" (26), Kate's dramatic reaction is its own performance: "She started, screamed, and back retired, / Then clasped it [...] breathing such a groan! / And with that dreadful groan expired" (27-32). Kate's body is silenced, and her performance reveals neither the stranger's identity nor any clue of how mad she really was.

Grasmere is a "pleasant vale" (1) recognized by its inhabitants as safe and comfortably familiar, and the "stranger maid" (2) ruptures the serene landscape. Her presence is distinctly *unheimlich*, which Freud defines as "that class of the terrifying which leads back to something long known to us, once very familiar" (123-24). Kate literally refuses the comfort of "home" ("Nor would she shelter in a cot" [6]), and threatens to rupture the villagers' own sense of "home" and their place in the world. Thomas Weiskel's model of the Romantic sublime is applicable here because the literary encounter with the madman pushes the reader through similar phases, albeit in a "safer" textual space.[22] The "pre-sublime state" is the village life before the poem, the "stranger maid['s]" arrival marks the moment of rupture that destabilizes the relationship between mind and object, and attempts to restore this equilibrium occur throughout the rest of the poem. As Freud argues, "we know that we are not supposed to be looking at the products of a madman's imagination behind which we, with the superiority of rational minds, are able to detect the sober truth; and yet this knowledge does not lessen the impression of uncanniness in the least degree" (137). Kate does not signify the traditional sublime terror of the wilderness, but her performance ruptures the knowledge structures of this peaceful village. The inhabitants can be reassured of their rational superiority by observing the madwoman's responses to death and marriage and maintaining polite but distant reactions to her outbursts, but even in death she symbolizes a troubling aporia in their understanding of the world.

David Thame argues that the mad characters in Opie's novels develop a sense of how madness should be performed so that they can use it to their advantage, and "[t]he intervals between performer and performance are deftly manipulated" (321). However, Thame does not consider how Opie controls her readers' access to both the narrator and the protagonist's consciences. Opie herself is manipulating the mad girl, the village *and* the reader in portraying the

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[22] Weiskel divides this experience of Romantic transcendence into three phases: an essentially pre-sublime state in which "the mind is in a determinate relation to the object," a moment of rupture that destabilizes this relationship, and finally the restoration of equilibrium in the mind; this "movement of the mind," according to Kant, results in a sort of cognitive dissonance (second phase) but in the final phase, "[t]his rift is then overcome by the triumphant emergence of reason, revealing to us, finally," the rational individual's superiority to nature (qtd. in Hitt 608).

mad experience, both tempting and frustrating readers' morbid curiosity about the place of madness. The voyeurs of "Grasmere's pleasant vale," both fictional and real, will never know Kate's "true" story; we are not even told, besides the hint in the marriage stanza, whether she is the stereotypical "love-mad maiden." Opie uses these gaps in knowledge to her advantage, framing her story to engage the reader. Kate's subtle performance indicates a psychological depth beyond the surface spectacle of madness, but the Claude glass of the narrator's framing frustrates the reader's desire to know more.[23] A literary representation of the wilderness, in general, might be considered a kind of Claude glass, whether it aims to recreate the sublime or the picturesque, as it creates a nicely-framed scene by strategically omitting details in order to manipulate the reader's experience.

In "The Maniac," Robinson similarly capitalizes on the impenetrability of the mad experience, even though her narrator also becomes frustrated and bewildered at her inability to understand the maniac. This figure is the least articulate of all six of the subjects profiled in this chapter with no lines of his own, and the narrator's stream of questions remains frustratingly unanswered. Although the maniac is the center of the poem, he remains a blank space that refuses to offer any insight into his condition. The narrator's inability to interpret the maniac's existence—and her subsequent construction of possible narratives for him—demonstrates the fundamentally unbridgeable gap between the pair. It first appears that the narrator wants to participate in the economy of sympathy and implicitly invites readers to do the same, claiming, "O tell me, thing forlorn! and let me share thy woe" (5-6). The poem's conclusion repeats this heartfelt plea for the maniac to unburden himself through the cathartic act of storytelling:

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[23] Lowenthal and Price describe how the Claude glass, a popular sight-seeing aide, helped to intensify the picturesque and strategically create blind spots: "To see landscapes as pictures, the traveler of the period stood with his back to the view and looked into a Claude glass, a plano-convex mirror about four inches in diameter, tinted to conjure up the illusion of golden distance. With the landscape thus reduced to the size of a postcard and extraneous detail lost, shape, balance and perspective could be seen at a glance" (195). Baker uses the Claude glass to argue for the picturesque as a constructed "practice of looking": "The picturesque landscape was viewed from a single, fixed vantage point (the choice of which was critical for overall success); its outline, the field of perception, tended to roundness (for example, the Claude glass and tondo form of William Gilpin's paintings) with the margins of the scene dissembled by its actual features" (651).

Oh! tell me, tell me all thy pain;

Pour to mine ear thy frenzied strain,

And I will share thy pangs, and soothe thy woes!

Poor MANIAC! I will dry thy tears,

And bathe thy wounds, and calm thy fears,

And with soft Pity's balm enchant thee to repose. (115-20)

It becomes apparent throughout the poem, however, that although she implores the madman to confess his sinful or painful story, this request masks the narrator's own voyeuristic pleasure in the experience. In the same vein, the reader's emotional release may be expressed in the form of *Schadenfreude*, pity, morbid curiosity or delightful terror, but the core motivation for reading this text is pleasure. The portrayal of the madman's freedom in the wilderness, whether it is dreaded, pitied or envied, is always constrained by this narrative framework; in this text, especially, the narrator's barrage of sentimental questions heavily influences the reader's experience of madness. The poet gains cultural capital if she is able to extract a marketable experience from madness and inject a suitable degree of compassion into her narrator's voice for the audience's consumption.

Robinson's text subtly calls attention to the reader's voyeuristic tendency when the rational narrator's own gaze upon the passive madman is threatened. The maniac momentarily returns the gaze, and she is frozen by the alien emptiness in his eyes. Her reaction reveals an extreme discomfort underlying her apparent sympathy:

Fix not thy steadfast gaze on me,

Shrunk atom of mortality!

Nor freeze my blood with thy distracted groan;

Ah! Quickly turn those eyes away,

They fill my soul with dire dismay!

For dead and dark they seem, and almost chill'd to stone! (49-54)

As the narrator quickly glazes over this potential moment of sublime terror with safer questions about the maniac's history, the episode itself becomes a climax in the performance when the narrator and maniac almost make a connection. By the

end of the text, however, the narrator herself has become the centre of the performance, her showy outpouring of pity upstaging the maniac even as she promises to share his misery: "With thine my mingling tears shall flow, / And I will share thy pangs, and make thy griefs my own" (59-60). As the narrator mulls over the possibilities for sentimental narratives, any potential for reaching beyond this stereotyped façade is eclipsed by her sentimental performance.

In "The Despairing Wanderer," Opie's first-person narrator digs deeper into the obscure realm of madness, wishing that insanity will overtake her so that she will not fear the sublimity of the cliffs in her own imagination. She essentially wishes for the state of ignorant animality Foucault describes, assuming that this freedom from the psychological constraints that weigh on her—especially that of melancholy—will be worth the banishment from society. She is not mad, but hopes that her sublime surroundings will push her over the edge of reason. The narrator demonstrates how drastically environment affects psychology, since her introduction mobilizes the discourse of Kant's sublime with "midnight reigns with horrors crowned" (Opie 4). The wanderer enhances her wilderness with the supernatural elements her mind invents:

> Lo! clouds in swarthy grandeur sweep
>
> Portentous o'er the troubled deep:
>
> O'er the tall rocks' majestic heads,
>
> See, billowy vapour slowly spreads:
>
> And lo! fantastic shapes seem near,
>
> The rocks with added height appear,
>
> And from the mist, to seek the tide,
>
> Gigantic figures darkly glide;
>
> While, with quick step and hurried mien,
>
> The timid fly the fearful scene. (5-14)

It is actually this supreme imaginative power that is the cause of the narrator's misery, for her thoughts overwhelm her and she becomes incapacitated by fear. Gilpin lauds the fruitful imagination of an enthusiastic traveler, saying: "If we let the imagination *loose*…The imagination can plant hills; can form rivers, and lakes

and vallies; can build castles and abbeys; and if it find no other amusement, can dilate itself in vast ideas of space" (56). In Opie's poem, however, the places created by the wanderer's imagination become overwhelming and oppressive, and the "dread idea, fancy-taught" (21) itself becomes pleasurably imprisoning: "To me with gloomy pleasure fraught! / I should rejoice the world to see / Distrest, distracted, lost, like me" (22-24). These lines indicate that she is also isolated from the world by this heightened sense of imagination. Rather than wishing to become more socially inclined and striving for happiness, however, the narrator wishes for the rest of the world to join her in the depths of misery. Opie's narrator expresses her feelings of helpless misery, asking, "Oh! why is phrensy called a curse? / I deem the sense of misery worse" (25-26), inverting the economy of sympathy Robinson employs in wishing for oblivion to overtake her imagination.

Charlotte Smith's sonnet, entitled "On Being Cautioned Against Walking on an Headland Overlooking the Sea, because it was Frequented by a Lunatic" (1797), expresses a similar longing for what appears to be the madman's blissfully ignorant state. The "solitary wretch who hies / To the tall cliff" (1-2) is conscious only of the waves below, "Murmuring responses to the dashing surf" (8). Smith's tellingly parenthetic "uncursed with reason" (13) after the sonnet's *volta* suggests that the narrator is not fearful or even pitying, but is instead envious of the lunatic's oblivious rambling. The sonnet appears straightforward, but the lines, "In moody sadness, on the giddy brink, / I see him more with envy than with fear" (9-10) do not clearly indicate whether it is the narrator or the lunatic who is "[i]n moody sadness, on the giddy brink." The madman may be on the brink of the cliffs, his only communication being "half-utter'd lamentation" (7), but he remains unaware of his deplorable social place. In stating, "*He* has no *nice felicities* that shrink / From giant horrors" (11), Smith privileges this state of ignorant bliss, *felicities* meaning in this case both a sense of domestic happiness and the ability, and thus the responsibility, of expressing himself. Her final lines suggest that the madman can gaze fearlessly into the face of the sublime—and is thus more enmeshed in this wilderness than the rational individual—because his mind cannot grasp the depths of his own misery. Thus, Smith and Opie's texts

both express the narrator's envy at the more primitive and apparently liberated state of madness. In the fear of oblivion and destruction there also exists the paradoxical human desire for them, which is frightening in itself.

While Robinson's narrator straightforwardly admits that she cannot breach the barrier to "The Maniac's" consciousness, although she pities his state, Smith's narrator expresses her desire to gain access to this supposedly oblivious place. Opie's narrator ventures further than either in her invocation of Madness as a Muse: "Come, Madness, come! though pale with fear / Be joy's flusht cheek when thou art near, / On thee I eager glances bend" (27-29). She calls on Madness to invade her body, so she can assume the stereotypical markers of madness and become impervious to the effects of nature:

> Spread o'er my cheek thy feverish bloom,
>
> To my weak form thy strength impart,
>
> From my sunk eye thy lightnings dart!
>
> O come, and on the troubled air
>
> Throw rudely my disordered hair… (32-36)

This unruly figure is empowered to "[w]ith fearless step ascend the steep / That totters o'er the encroaching deep" (45-46) standing alone and confident on the very brink of the abyss, and is also present in both of Robinson's texts. Her narrator asks "The Maniac," "Why dost thou climb yon craggy steep, / That frowns upon the clam'rous deep, / And howl, unresponsive to the waves below?" (19-21), and Marguerite is similarly heedless of the sublime terror around her: "And wild was her groan, / When she climb'd, alone-- / The rough rock's side" (65-67). The cliffs in these texts are objective correlatives for the mad subject's state of mind, and the chaotic environment expresses the maniacs' inner turmoil where they cannot. In "The Despairing Wanderer," however, the narrator triumphantly expresses herself in the face of the sublime: "Let me the mountain torrent quaff, / And midst the war of nature.... laugh!" (53-54). Thame argues that Opie frequently "creates a recognizable Ophelian image only to efface it" (312) in her novels, but in this text, the state of madness imagined by the narrator is, in its last word, a triumphant outcry against the repressing powers of Reason, a willing

journey to a state beyond speech. The narrator imagines the liberation of her mad alter ego as joyful rather than terrifying, and her laugh is an expression outside of the limiting realm of language. Nietzsche says in *Beyond Good and Evil*, "Whoever fights with monsters should see to it that he does not become one himself. And when you stare for a long time into an abyss, the abyss stares back into you" (69). The fear is that the gaping maw of the abyss threatens to rupture the rational mind, but it is this very threat that offers the imagination a thrill of danger and the inspiration for a story, if the wanderer can wrench her eyes away from the hypnotizing gaze of oblivion.

The psychological place of madness offers a similar voyeuristic opportunity to tread the thin edge of reason without falling irredeemably into madness, and literature is the perfect place in which to explore these boundaries. Burwick asserts that "the deep depression into which an artist can fall *may* be the gap between 'sanity' and 'madness,' and perhaps most creative artists (and indeed most writers, including critics) live in this borderland" (4). However, the ability to *tell* of one's desire for the oblivion of the mad abyss trumps the actual desire for madness because it proves one still has the choice of venturing into this idealized, mythical place. Burwick's conclusion that "[a]rtistic genius may cross over the borders of madness, but remains productive only if it can return again" (17) undercuts the effect of Opie and Smith's desire for this state of ignorant bliss and exposes the central paradox of their texts. The real twist that remains unsaid in both poems is that the poet's ability to express ideas and emotions has a direct correlation with her cultural capital, and thus the value of her place in society.

Home and Away in Wordsworth

"The Thorn" and "The Idiot Boy" are two poems in Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) that focus on the experiences of mad—or apparently mad—subjects, offering insight into the relationship between "home" and "away" in their depictions of a disgraced mother's banishment and an anti-hero's midnight quest, respectively. Both texts question the relationship between home and the place of madness, as well as whether madness can ever truly find "its own

homeland" (Foucault 386), and the complex role of the poet in making this "place" is revealed in the process. The relationship between "home" and the wilderness as the place of madness is briefly considered in terms of these poems, in which we can see how the mad subject embodies certain anxieties that the poet has about his own place in society. Cronon idealistically suggests that, in order to stop exploiting the wilderness, "we need to discover a common middle ground in which all of these things, from the city to the wilderness, can somehow be encompassed in the word 'home'" (24). To have *every* place embodied in the concept of "home," however, would empty it of meaning; just as Reason needs its counterpart, Madness, to imbue it with meaning, so "home" requires an "away." Just as the idea of "home" encompasses the opposing qualities of hominess and familiarity and the *unheimlich* and unfamiliar at its very core (Freud 129), so the wilderness, or the "away from home," contains paradoxical meanings. The poems' narrators, different from both Wordsworth and each other but having similar motivations in their acts of storytelling, strategically place themselves as distinctly non-Other through their portrayal of the banished mad subject. The narrators, partially excluded from society in their own ways, thus attempt to construct a hierarchy of exclusion. By telling the stories of mad subjects who cannot return to a true "home," the narrator-poets reaffirm that they themselves have a place in society, even if it tends to be marginalized, and that it is of value.

In "The Language of Space," Foucault links the practice of writing to the cycle of departure and return, for "to write was to make return, it was to return to the origin, to re-capture oneself in the primal moment" (163). One's understanding of home, as it were, cannot form completely until one departs from it. Part of the argument for the poet's anxiety about social place is based on Wordsworth's own ambivalence about his return to the Lake District in October 1799 after twelve years of being "away." James Butler argues that the poet ameliorated his concern over whether he was "a tourist who stayed or a homecoming native son" by creating "a fictive self who had *returned*" (5, emphasis original). In his poetry, Wordsworth creates for himself a treasured place and successfully connects it to an actual location with limited access:

"Tourists are mere observers (and readers of inscriptions); in these poems
Wordsworth depicts himself as owner and informed interpreter of his landscape"
(Butler 13-14).[24] Wordsworth's strong connection to this place made it a source of
inspiration. A 1798 journal entry about "The Thorn" indicates that a real thorn

> Arose out of my observing, on the ridge of Quantock Hill, on a
> stormy day a thorn which I had often passed in calm and bright
> weather without noticing it. I said to myself, 'Cannot I by some
> invention do as much to make this Thorn permanently an
> impressive object as the storm has made it to my eyes at this
> moment?' (qtd. in Gilman 41)

The thorn's strong impression on Wordsworth is notable from a
psychogeographical perspective. Stein comments on the intangible magnetism
that certain places have for certain people, stressing the importance of its
uncanniness: "The place or site is invested with charisma or mana unlike
anywhere within one's familiar round of activity. Its very outsidedness or
remoteness confers upon it additional power" (60). The narrator's introductory
observations on the thorn and its surroundings are, indeed, unsettling but
compelling.[25] A central node that keeps this story together, at least in the
narrator's head, is the thorn itself and the social space it represents. Swann
observes that "[t]he narrator is less concerned with what Martha may or may not
have *done*—her possible criminality toward her child—than with where she *is*"
(69), a place which is, essentially, a permanent banishment "away" from home.

Indeed, the mad subject's place is established before the mad subject
herself. In fact, by the end of the story, the reader has learned about the local
geography and the narrator's psyche, but Martha Ray remains an indistinct figure
on the mountainside. Much work has been published on the psychology of

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[24] Due to his concern in the preserving the Lake District, Wordsworth has "been seen as a prophet
of the conservation movement" (Whyte 101), but he is also considered a "high priest of protection
and exclusion no less than conservation" (Kay 345). Frow argues that it was his poems, "act[ing]
as a sort of tourist brochure" (149), as much as his *Guide to the Lakes* (1810) that popularized his
beloved Lake District.

[25] The thorn has attracted a sensational tale that has its own roots in history, for, "[o]n 6 April
1779, James Hackman shot Martha Ray through the forehead outside a London performance of
Love in a Village and then, with his second pistol, attempted to take his own life" (Swann 72).

Wordsworth's garrulous narrator, since the reader's mode of looking at this mountain—and by extension, the mad experience—is heavily tempered by this narrator's worldview.[26] He describes the sublime wilderness, where "High on a mountain's highest ridge, / Where oft the stormy winter gale / Cuts like a scythe" (23-25) he has apparently seen the madwoman and heard her cries. The mad subject, "A woman in a scarlet cloak" (63), is not introduced until the sixth stanza, and the reader does not discover her name until stanza XI. Martha Ray is described as inseparable from the topographical elements that the narrator uses as his story's foundation, "For oft [she] there sits, between the heap / That's like an infant's grave in size, / And that same pond of which I spoke" (60-62). The interlocutor asks about Martha Ray, but the narrator, who knows so much of her place but can conceive of only a blank space for the madwoman herself, returns repeatedly to the place of madness he has delineated in the first stanzas. The interlocutor is assured that he will decipher the plot if he ventures there himself:

> But would you gladly view the spot,
>
> The spot to which she goes;
>
> The hillock like an infant's grave,
>
> The pond—and Thorn, so old and grey;
>
> Pass by her door—'tis seldom shut—
>
> And, if you see her in her hut,
>
> Then to the spot away! (91-97)

The repetition of "spot" marks out the plot of land to which Martha Ray's self-imposed exile and her potential infanticide confine her, but the word also indicates her spotted reputation and the narrator's chance "spotting" of her on the mountain when he runs "Head-foremost, through the driving rain, / The shelter of the crag to gain" (183-84) and "Instead of jutting crag, I found / A Woman seated on the ground" (186-87). The narrator clearly sees the story's value as being

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[26] Previous scholarship outlines a long debate about the psychology and motivations of Wordsworth's narrator. Please refer to Parrish, on his argument that Martha Ray exists only in the narrator's imagination (1957); Ashton, on the narrator's scientific predilections (1972); Kirkham, on his innocence and experience (1974); and Schopf, on his potential senility (1981). For more on the narrator's reaction to the thorn, see Gilman, on the thorn's origins (1996), and Swann, on the thorn's "lightning rod" attraction of scandal (1997).

derived of the place rather than the person, for he never actually interacts with her: "I did not speak—I saw her face; / Her face!—it was enough for me" (188-89). Her face and repeated mantra of suffering are enough of a foundation upon which to build the narrator's own story of expedition and discovery, and his tale of her lost love amplifies his own terrifying encounter with the tormented woman.

Just as the madwoman's "home" is fundamentally *unheimlich*, so her story can never be comfortably familiar, even if its elements of love and death are familiar tropes. Martha Ray's only speech is a refrain that concludes four of the stanzas, amplifying her expressions of suffering but revealing nothing of her actual life: "Oh misery! oh misery! / Oh woe is me! oh misery!" (76-77). Her story is a closed circuit, just like her agony over being left at the altar has apparently short-circuited her brain:

> A cruel, cruel fire, they say,
>
> Into her bones was sent:
>
> It dried her body like a cinder,
>
> And almost turn'd her brain to tinder. (129-32)

Martha Ray's repetitive sentiment presents a blank slate upon which the articulate narrator inscribes his version of the story. The narrator also tends to repeat himself, especially when describing the madwoman's place and in his assurances of his impartial knowledge—"I cannot tell; I wish I could" (89); "I'll give you the best help I can" (111) and "No more I know, I wish I did" (155)—even as he proceeds to bombard the interlocutor with more details. His repetition, in contrast, makes his incomplete story all the more fascinating, and indications of his own ignorance therefore increase his cultural currency.

The site of madness is thus saturated with potential cultural capital for the narrator; his knowledge, although partial, trumps the madwoman's because she cannot articulate it. Schopf observes that the narrator is himself "an outsider in the community in which he has settled and therefore not wholly integrated into the society of the natives" (36). Contrary to Ashton's argument that the narrator's sympathy remains unaffected by his "bleak vision of raw human suffering unrelieved" (171), it seems that he would be sympathetic to the exiled woman's

story if he were also an outcast. This sympathy does not, however, negate his desire to use this story to elevate his own social standing. Similarly to Robinson's narrator in "The Maniac," he strategically employs the sentimental tropes of madness to participate in the economy of sympathy. The poem's concluding lines underscore his sentimental narration:

> And this I know, full many a time,
>
> When she was on the mountain high,
>
> By day, and in the silent night,
>
> When all the stars shone clear and bright,
>
> That I have heard her cry,
>
> 'Oh misery! oh misery!
>
> Oh woe is me! oh misery!' (232-42)

The narrator distances himself from the construction of the tale in the first line, but uses the physicality and seeming permanence of the thorn to promote his message of pity. He urges his interlocutor to travel to the sublime place of madness, so that he may glean something of the intriguing story himself: "I wish that you would go: / Perhaps when you are at the place / You something of her tale may trace" (108-9). Although not a poet himself, the narrator echoes the poet's appropriation of this experience by positioning himself as a marketable guide to madness, despite his admittance that he cannot know the whole story.

While Wordsworth focuses on the fascinating place of the mad subject's exile in "The Thorn," in "The Idiot Boy" he delves into the impossibility of the mad subject's returning home. "The Idiot Boy" concerns itself with the potential psychological depth beneath the surface representation of madness, for although the poem has a generally humourous tone, it also features a more unsettling encounter with this dark world.[27] The poem has a liminal and disorienting setting that contains certain "preternatural" (Cosgrove 19) tropes:

> 'Tis eight o'clock,---a clear March night,
>
> The moon is up,---the sky is blue,

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[27] For previous interpretations of "The Idiot Boy," please refer to Murray's argument for Betty Foy as a mental traveler (1971); Easson's analysis of the poet's role (1980); and Cosgrove's reading of the poem's setting (1982).

> The owlet, in the moonlight air,
>
> Shouts from nobody knows where;
>
> He lengthens out his lonely shout,
>
> Halloo! halloo! a long halloo! (1-6)

This scene is not terrifyingly sublime, as in that of "The Thorn," but this depiction of the *unheimlich* wilderness presents an attempted entry into the outcast figure's psyche. Wordsworth's primary goal is to make this place difficult to discuss, and indeed it is this inability to pin down the mad experience that makes it both fascinating and frustrating. Critics of "The Idiot Boy" therefore tend to focus on his mother, the pony, the moonlight and especially the narrator rather than on the title character. For example, Roger Murray classifies the mad subject as a peripheral character even though his presence is "a catalyst" (53) that drives the poem's action, and he neglects to adequately address how the text represents the boy's surroundings. Angus Easson outlines the text's psychological depth more fully, considering the possibility that "Johnny, perhaps, knows more than he can or than he will communicate" (10). However, both Murray and Easson privilege the pony, with its animal sensibility, over the idiot boy's hybrid "animality" because this state is less knowable. Although he is actually the center of the poem, Johnny, similarly to Martha Ray, is a conspicuously blank slate in comparison to his mother's transparent psychological state. The mad subject can only be considered from the peripheral gaze of the critic or reader—never head on—and his actions are filtered through the distanced gaze that considers him a spectacle.

Johnny's psychological depth, of course, should not be so quickly dismissed.[28] He engages fully with his "preternatural" landscape because he is free of any socialized fear of the unknown; he has no mental categories for "known" and "unknown." Rather than conceiving of Johnny's madness as purely

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[28] Nordius focuses on the "emotive zones" of the narrator and Betty Foy, though she also explores Johnny's experience to a limited extent. Primeau argues that Wordsworth makes his eponymous character "ludicrous" in order to "destroy the romantic and alluring image of the fallen warrior or the wild huntsman" (91) popular in German and English Romantic literature. Conversely, Wilhelm discerns the idiot boy's "visionary insight" (21), praising his couplet as "terse and to the point" (22) in comparison to the narrator's inefficiency.

a negative isolation from society, Cosgrove suggests that he has access to a
different perspective precisely because he is not imprisoned by society's narrow-
mindedness and, "unafflicted by its potentially alien nature, he is free to indulge
spontaneously and joyously in what is presented to him" (22) on his solitary
journey. However, Johnny's receptivity to the potential joy of his wild
surroundings closes him off in other ways. Although an "idiot" may have ulterior
forms of knowledge that rational people cannot perceive, his limited access to
language prevents him from presenting his keen insights to the world beyond. He
runs into a barrier whenever he communicates with "civilized" people who
privilege certain types of knowledge, including his loving mother, ailing Susan
Gale and the narrator. Wordsworth describes the boy's only two lines as "the
foundation of the whole" (qtd. in Wilhelm 21): "The cocks did crow to-whoo, to-
whoo, / And the sun did shine so cold!" (450-51); but this, as with his expressions
of happiness, are usually incoherent, as the narrator repeatedly announces: "His
lips with joy they burr at you" (14); "Burr, burr---now Johnny's lips they burr"
(97); "And Johnny's lips they burr, burr, burr, / As on he goes beneath the moon"
(105-6). The narrator's admission that, "Johnny burrs, and laughs aloud; /
Whether in cunning or in joy / I cannot tell" (377-79), demonstrates his inability
to access Johnny's mode of perception. Wordsworth strategically multiplies the
word "burr" in each instance to emphasize both the boy's lack of speech and his
simple joy at being in the moonlit night. While this lack of communication
frustrates the narrator, it also allows him the textual space to tell his own story,
similar to the reader's, of failing to connect with madness. Johnny's impenetrable
psyche contrasts with the narrator's other points of access, as he even accesses the
pony's limited mind through Betty's intuition when she considers the pony "mild
and good" (303) because it follows a predictable routine. It is this inaccessibility
to Johnny's mindset that provides the underlying tension throughout the poem.

  Due to his inability to communicate, Johnny's adventure is a doomed
hero's quest. Murray argues that Johnny "is collector of nature's most impressive
images" (54); based on Gilpin's definition of the "picturesque eye" (44) then,
Johnny is a collector of experiences, and even a connoisseur of nature, within this

disorienting landscape. A key part of the adventure, however, is in the telling of the quest upon the hero's return, just as the tourist must have appropriate souvenirs in his pack and stories on his tongue. While they are traveling home, Betty implores her son: "Tell us, Johnny, do, / Where all this long night you have been, / What you have heard, what you have seen" (437-40). Johnny is cast in the role of Odysseus, who returns to regale his faithful listeners with an account of his adventures. The dilemma with this reading of Johnny as hero is, of course, that Johnny has no desire to complete the cycle of the hero's quest. Although he joyfully utters his two incomprehensible lines, the idiot boy is frozen in the mad experience, and does not even reach home before the poem's end. Johnny's psychogeographical journey remains unmapped by logical cognitive devices, for the terrain he has physically covered is perceived differently by a rational mind. The madman's journey remains inaccessible, but in the end Johnny's journey is the most threatening because he *returns* to live among the sane and civilized.

Johnny is the only mad subject in these texts who actually has a home, which includes the domestic trappings of mother, hearth and docile pony that anchor him to civilization even when he ventures into the wild. The reader's sense of the *unheimlich*, however, comes not from Johnny's journeying away from home, but from his feeling of being "thoroughly at home in the strangeness of the moonlit world which, we may feel, is continuous with his own strange inner life" (Cosgrove 22). Cosgrove argues that the joy of the poem is derived from "this triumphant sense of being at-home-with-otherness" (21) exhibited by the idiot boy when he is discovered near the waterfall, but his feeling of *heimlich* in the preternatural world also means that the domestic "home" is equally alien to him. Freud observes, "*heimlich* is a word the meaning of which develops towards an ambivalence, until it finally coincides with its opposite, *unheimlich. Unheimlich* is in some way or other a sub-species of *Heimlich*" (131). If the *unheimlich* is always repressed in our conception of home, then a madman such as Johnny— equally at home in either the moonlit wilderness or by his mother's cozy hearth— threatens to unearth this uneasiness.

The relationship between home and *unheimlich* is the same as that of reason and madness. Foucault observes that one can only exist in the light (or shadow) of the other: "It was necessary to speak of madness only through that other 'trick' that allows men to not be mad, and that other trick could only be described, for its part, in the primitive vivacity that engages it in an indefinite debate regarding madness" (xxxv). It is through language, the mask that reason wears, that the expression of the mad experience fails. In fact, in order for the unequal reason/madness dichotomy to exist, it is essential that this attempt fail, but this necessity does not eradicate the rational individual's curiosity about madness. In both "The Thorn" and "The Idiot Boy," Wordsworth's narrators implicitly align themselves with their readers as they distance themselves from the mad subject in their ability to return from the place of madness. Stephen C. Behrendt, writing on Wordsworth's early work, argues that "in that transaction between poet and reader lies both valorization and forgiveness, for in the compact that constitutes the reading activity lies the implicit realization that the poet is 'just like' the reader—neither more guilty, more naïve, and more susceptible to temptation and the trauma of 'fall,' *nor less*" (663). The poet markets himself with the ability to reveal the source of the *unheimlich* by infiltrating the place of madness, but he also must be able to return from the wilderness to tell his story.

Conclusion

The wilderness is constructed as the opposite of civilization, and the madman is relegated to the boundaries of society whenever the asylum fails to contain him. Here, he is idyllically perceived as being free to roam and at one with nature, the threat of madness neutralized because he is physically at a distance from civilization. However, although the wandering madman can be characterized on a spectrum ranging from oblivious animal savagery to eloquent human misery, he never slips comfortably into either role, and the tension arises from his inability to inhabit a true "homeland" within the cultural imagination. The rise of tourism in the eighteenth century encouraged people to consume the wilderness as something scary but entertaining, and the madman in this place is

thus transformed from a threat to a titillating spectacle. As the madman is enmeshed in his "sublime" environment, the poet acts as the tour guide to these textual sites. While the madman in the asylum is physically locked away and stagnant, the wandering madman represents a different kind of disconnect from his society. The mad subjects featured here often exude a charming innocence typical of the "noble savage," but this also means that they are non-productive members of their society. According to the theory of tourism, to not be able to recount one's experiences is akin to never having had them at all, and the madman cannot recount his potentially valuable wanderings. The poet *is* able to venture into this place of madness and collect the stories, and he brings them "home" to invest in an economy of storytelling.

3. The Absent Madman: The Psychogeographical City

While literary representations tend to imagine the asylum and the wilderness as places in which the threat of the mad body can be neutralized, the city contains its own incarnations of madness that are less visible, but more ominous. Rather than straightforwardly symbolizing a third place of madness, the city presents the potential for perceiving the madness *of* a place. Dostoevsky suggests, "apparent disorder [of the busy city crowd] is actually bourgeois orderliness in the highest degree" (qtd. in Skilton 91), but a more threatening madness ripples under the surface of this mild chaos, for it is contained not in a few citizens but in the city's very fabric. London holds a special place in the cultural imagination at this time, and it has myriad historical, literary, and geographical representations.[29] There is a tradition in London literature,

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[29] Phillips argues, "it is not just about crowds, shops, streets, trains, poverty, wealth, building works, architecture, social and cultural governance, but is already the transformation of experience of those places, spaces, and things into the social imaginary where consciousness of the city resides" (4). Coverley notes of the Situationist movement in Paris, inspired mainly by Debord's "Theory of the Dérive" (1958), that "the predominant characteristics of psychogeographical ideas – urban wandering, the imaginative reworking of the city, the otherwordly sense of spirit of place, the unexpected insights and juxtapositions created by aimless drifting, the new ways of experiencing familiar surroundings" (31) are present as far back as Defoe's representations of London. Gilbert observes of today's London: "while there are an infinite number of Other Londons, there are no Londons other than those of the imagination" (1) and Mancini agrees that

especially, of "a journey that reworks and re-imagines the layout of the urban labyrinth and which records observations of the city streets as it passes through them" (Coverley 14-15). As poets are inspired to create their own personal "London," they influence how future citizens and visitors experience the city. Just as a place influences how its stories are written and understood, so too do these narratives shape the trajectory of its evolution.

In this chapter, I analyze how the portrayals of metropolitan "madness" in Wordsworth's "Residence in London" of *The Prelude* (1850), William Blake's "LONDON" (1794), Charles Lloyd's "London" (1820) and Shelley's "Hell" in *Peter Bell the Third* (1819) strive to reaffirm the poet's place in society as a skilled cultural mediator and storyteller. As these texts show, madness haunts the city by its anonymity, all the more terrifying for its vagueness, and the city readily propagates its illusions. No longer confined to the mad body, madness threatens city-dwellers indiscriminately with the madman's fate—isolation, emotional stagnation, contamination and death—regardless their mental capacity. Mancini observes, "the image of the city … precedes the city itself; even better, it is through it that the traveler seems to be attracted into its texture/web of streets, buildings, monuments" (1). If the city is understood as a complex text, then to walk its streets is to listen to and speak its language. The poet-*flâneur* appears similar to the nonproductive madman as he wanders aimlessly, alienated from the crowd. The crucial difference between these figures is that the madman has a fragmented, partial view of the world that never coheres in thought, while the poet "sees the parts / As parts, but with a feeling of the whole" (Wordsworth, *Prelude* 7.731, 735-36). By producing insightful interpretations of his city's energy and character, the poet reinforces his position as an outlier who is valuable precisely because of his detachment from the myriad "parts" of the city, rather than as a social outcast whose position is expendable. The madman is absent in the city, but the poet still manages to use madness as a platform to showcase his own work.

"there seems to be no more *one* (real) London but *many* (imagined/ remembered) Londons: the product of our imagination, our (hi)story/imaginary, our dreams and/or nightmares, our inner space/landscape" (11).

The City as Hell

Michel de Certeau wrote in 1984 of his walking in New York City that "[t]he desire to see the city preceded the means of satisfying it" (92), just as, two centuries before, William Wordsworth and Charles Lloyd imagined London long before they actually visited it. Unlike Blake, who spent nearly his entire life in the city (Miner 281), the young Wordsworth and Lloyd first conceived of London as a magical place of pleasurable excess. Wordsworth's narrator listens raptly to the stories of a disabled boy, a "[f]ortunate / and envied traveler!" (7.92-93) who has returned from the city, and admits, "the thought of London---held me by a chain" (7.87). He builds a London based on the "wond'rous power of words" (7.119):

> Vauxhall and Ranelagh! I then had heard
>
> Of your green groves, and wilderness of lamps
>
> Dimming the stars, and fireworks magical,
>
> And gorgeous ladies, under splendid domes,
>
> Floating in dance, or warbling high in air
>
> The songs of spirits! Nor had Fancy fed
>
> With less delight upon that other class
>
> Of marvels, broad-day wonders permanent:
>
> The River proudly bridged; the dizzy top
>
> And Whispering Gallery of St. Paul's; the tombs
>
> Of Westminster; the Giants of Guildhall;
>
> Bedlam, and those carved maniacs at the gates,
>
> Perpetually recumbent; Statues---man,
>
> And the horse under him---in gilded pomp
>
> Adorning flowery gardens, 'mid vast squares. (7.121-35)

Like Wordsworth, the young Lloyd's partial view of the distant city fuels his fantastical expectations for the metropolis: "I mark'd far off / The wreathed smoke that capp'd thy palaces" (13-14). He addresses his imaginings to the great city itself, nostalgically recalling how he thought, "Within thy walls there must be somewhat strange, / Surpassing greatly any wondrous dream, / Of fairy grandeur,

which my childhood lov'd" (17-19). The boys' first crossing over the threshold into the city, however, quickly becomes an overwhelming and alienating experience. Wordsworth recalls how, when he was first "saluted by that quickening breeze / Which met [him] issuing from the City's walls" (7.2-3), he "felt in heart and soul the shock / Of the huge town's first presence" (7.66-67). Patrick Parrinder describes this initial encounter with the city as a moment of tumultuous excitement, for Wordsworth "felt on the verge of penetrating to the city's heart when, in fact, he had only crossed the outer boundary, or 'threshold'" (409). Likewise, when Lloyd actually gets to the city, he is entranced by its sensory effects, and reflects, "it seem'd to me / As though all living things were centered here" (23-24). Writing from his mature perspective, Wordsworth muses, "Those bold imaginations in due time / Had vanished, leaving others in their stead," which are informed in his psychological experiences of "the living scene" (7.142-44) of London. The shock of the city's streets, however, is a sublime moment for both poets, as intense as a terrifying encounter with the wilderness.

      The source of the sublime in daily urban life, like a thundering cataract or a looming mountain face, lies in the magnitude of the surroundings. In the city, however, it is the mundane that is abundant and potentially overwhelming. Wordsworth lists its effects:

> Thy every-day appearance, as it strikes---
>
> With wonder heightened, or sublimed by awe---
>
> On strangers, of all ages; the quick dance
>
> Of colours, lights, and forms; the deafening din… (7.152-55)

Max Byrd argues that, in Burke's definition, an element "necessary for sublimity [is] the feeling of terror without real danger," and thus "London is unendangering and trivial: its life is human, it lives like living men, its otherness is sameness to the philosophic mind" (143). Ross King also asserts that Book 7's crowd scene is not sublime because of the spectator's viewpoint, since "London, massive and heterogeneous, cannot be seen in its entirety," so the poet "never achieves the perspective required for an ordered, all-embracing view" (70). However, Wordsworth's first vision of the faceless multitude "[w]ith wonder heightened, or

sublimed by awe" (7.153), suggests that the sensory details of the city *are* frightening, and the crowd presents a ceaseless repetition that becomes terrifying in its banality. R. F. Storch describes Wordsworth's first experience in London as "a momentary despair, a look into the abyss" (116). The youth's mind is bombarded with a thousand images at once, and he has not yet developed a strategic way of processing these details. In his desire to read every part of the city, he is blinded by the trivia that surrounds him. New arrivals in London, "unable to build a coherent description around an understanding of it, resort to the rhetorical device known as *adynation* or *impossibilia*, often summed up as 'words cannot express'" (Skilton 92). This affliction is especially threatening to the poet, who measures his work—and worth—in words. To evade the madness of the city, one either has to ignore it by focusing on monotonous busywork, as the crowd does, or learn how to encounter it head on, as the poet must do. This fear initially presents itself without the revelation of the sublime, as Byrd and Ross argue, but the poet eventually regains control of his senses and finds a quiet moment in which to contemplate the scene from a physical, emotional and temporal distance. Wordsworth and Lloyd's crowd scenes introduce the potential madness of the city that the poets glimpsed as young men, before they had learned how to find meaning in the crowd's ceaseless movement.

Nineteenth-century London is a hellish and confusing place, even for those who are not first-time visitors. In *Peter Bell the Third*, Shelley inverts the characterization of city as hell: "Hell is a city much like London--- / A populous and a smoky city" (147-48). He has an obvious precedent for comparing Hell to the city, for Milton models Pandemonium on the industrial city in *Paradise Lost*. When Satan commanded that Pandemonium be built, the architect "was headlong sent / With his industrious crew to build in Hell" (1.750-51) and the devils soon entered "[t]he suburb of their straw-built citadel" (1.773). Pandemonium's sparkling surface is merely a façade for its evil core, an image Shelley employs for his description of "the 'Hell' of post-Peterloo boredom" (Gassenmeier and Gurr 322). His evocation of Milton's Hell becomes explicit with his observation that some "believe their minds are given / To make this ugly Hell a Heaven; / In

which faith they live and die" (244-46), a direct link to Satan's motivational speech to his devils to remain steadfast in the face of God's punishment: "A mind not chang'd by place or time: / The mind is its own place, and in itself / Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven" (1.253-54). Gassenmeier and Gurr argue that Shelley's "Hell" is "an insight that ascribes to the infernal city the destructive force of the fires of hell that melt and reduce to one corrupt identity all moral and political distinctions" (321). Thus, if Reason was considered the mind's ideal place, then Madness was its hellish opposite, and Hell's "destructive force" was inseparable from a sinner's psychological turmoil.

Most threatening to the rational citizen, then, are the city's undifferentiated nooks and alleys in which madness lurks. In a psychogeographical understanding of the city, "[t]he dark gorges, the decrepit buildings, the dirty lanes, the black basements transform themselves into an elastic, porous fabric" (Mancini 9). The poet understands that this tenebrous fabric, often forgotten or ignored, brings the city's lights and edges into sharper focus. Wordsworth laments, "But foolishness and madness in parade, / Though most at home in this their dear domain, / Are scattered everywhere, no rarities" (7.594-96). Although the Great Confinement pushed madmen into the "safe" enclosure of institutions such as Bethlem Hospital, Wordsworth's lines indicate that madness takes on many forms, and is not merely contained within the mad body. Here, madness is a shadow haunting the city's fringes, living just under the skin of the bustling capitalist system. The breathless excess of dashes in Shelley's "Hell" echoes the cataloguing of madness—the maniac, the idiot, the melancholic—found in Bethlem: "German soldiers---camps---confusion--- / Tumults---lotteries---rage---delusion--- / Gin---suicide---and methodism; (174-76.) In "Hell," however, the madhouse's confusion, rage and delusion are mingled with other vices potentially sustained in the city, such as alcoholism, fighting, gambling and religion. Shelley's text contains the only mention of an apparently insane man who is, ironically, very successful:

> There is a ---, who has lost
> His wits, or sold them, none knows which;

He walks about a double ghost,

And though as thin as Fraud almost---

Ever grows more grim and rich. (157-61)

In losing or selling his mind while still gaining financially, this figure demonstrates how easily the Reason/Madness hierarchy is overturned in the city. When Shelley reveals the bourgeois system itself as being ludicrous, he reconfigures how madness is measured in an individual and evaluated in this economy. In fact, everyone is stricken indiscriminately by the metropolitan plague: "Each man be he sound or no / Must indifferently sicken," (247-48), and "So good and bad, sane and mad, […] / All are damned---they breathe an air, / Thick, infected, joy-dispelling (247, 56-58). As ethical systems ("good and bad") dissipate, people who are driven by greed can escape the responsibility of being a good citizen, and the Reason/Madness line becomes blurred. In the city, the blank face of Madness is everyone's face.

This confusion is effectively brought to the city's surface in the representations of faceless crowds that attest to Shelley's cynical proclamation that "All are damned." [30] Plotz's assertion, "the percolation of society through the streets in changing congeries took on a hundred guises, with a thousand unexpected effects" (1), comes alive when Wordsworth laments,

How oft, amid those overflowing streets,

Have I gone forward with the crowd, and said

Unto myself, 'The face of every one

That passes by me is a mystery!' (7.626-29)

In his innovative take on the poet's interactions with urban phenomena, Wordsworth experiments with capturing a crowd's movement in verse and proves his ability to conjure chaos in the reader's mind. He first reduces the people of London to insects: "Rise up, thou monstrous ant-hill on the plain / Of a too busy world! Before me flow, / Thou endless stream of men and moving things!"

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[30] Bruhn argues that the spatial description in Book 7 replicates walking in a real city, for the reader is continuously "advancing through a streaming scene of buildings, people, and objects, with attention shifting here and there among clusters of visual and auditory images" (157). For more on the Book 7 crowd scenes, see Plotz (3), Johnston (89, 104) and Meyer (11).

(7.149-51). Lloyd is similarly enthralled when he sees, "the busy hum of men… / Gaily caparison'd" (20, 23). Wordsworth and Lloyd's entomological descriptors are reminiscent of Milton's crowd of anonymous devils rushing into Pandemonium, "Thick swarm'd, both on the ground and in the air, / Brush'd with the hiss of rusling wings" (1.759-60). All three poets strip the crowd of their humanity, reducing the city's noise to the indistinguishable insect hum of industry. One's immersion in the crowd is not alienating because of the droning, insect-like characteristics of its labourers, but precisely because this group is comprised of humans who were once measured by their unique skills and contributions to society. Wordsworth's description of a crowd that has mutated into an unruly mob driven by very human impulses is therefore much more unsettling than his anthill metaphor. He wonders how the reader will react "when half the city shall break out / Full of one passion, vengeance, rage, or fear" and races "To executions, to a street on fire, / Mobs, riots, or rejoicings" (7.671-75). Shelley's narrator also captures the crowd's energy by exclaiming, "Thrusting, toiling, wailing, moiling, / Frowning, preaching---such a riot!" (197-98), but the stanza's satirical denouement also reveals each person's motivations. The individuals in the mob, "Each with never-ceasing labour" (199), have undifferentiated skills and cheerless lives. Each man, "Whilst he thinks he cheats his neighbour, / [is] Cheating his own heart of quiet" (199-201), and he suffers from this inner turmoil because he is motivated by greed and the desire to elevate himself above others. The city's madness is based in this frantic drive to produce more so that each can consume more. In writing this desire, the poet strategically makes madness itself a commodity and develops a language to capture it.

What Wordsworth and Lloyd perceived from a distance as the city's busy insect hum becomes a cacophony of individual sounds as the poet joins the fray. Wordsworth's auditory description combines "some female vendor's scream, belike / The very shrillest of all London cries" (7.181-83) and a distorted band:

> Grimacing, writhing, screaming,---him who grinds
> The hurdy-gurdy, at the fiddle weaves,
> Rattles the salt-box, thumps the kettle-drum,

>And him who at the trumpet puffs his cheeks... (7.698-702)

The city's noises blend together disconcertingly, the commodification of entertainment and the promotion of excess threatening to tip the poet himself into madness. Blake is more adept at "tuning in" to his city's discordant music. Although his speaker in "LONDON" is acquainted with the city streets and the Thames as "an actor in the very drama of blood and tears he is compelled to witness" (Johnston 79), he is also assaulted by the city's noises. His final three stanzas register the sound effects in the city, and the word "hear," in particular, is repeated.[31] The varied repetition of "every," "cry," and "hear" resonates as a palimpsest of sound, the hungry "Infants cry" (5) mingling with the "Chimney-sweepers cry" (9) that markets his skills and the political outrage heard in "every cry of every Man" (6). Blake's narrator is silent, intuitively penetrating this wall of sound to distinguish how institutions have corrupted those they proclaim to protect. He will later "mark" down the sights that he "mark'd" in the streets. What Blake instinctively knows, and Wordsworth and Lloyd come to realize, is that, as the poet must learn how to recognize the madness present in the dark places that make up the city's fabric, so he must separate its myriad sounds in order to hear the city' heartbeat thumping at its core.

The noisy, monstrous throng is epitomized in Wordsworth's climactic description of St. Bartholomew's Fair, [32] where speaker sees:

>All out-o'-the-way, far-fetched, perverted things,
>
>All freaks of nature, all Promethean thoughts
>
>Of man, his dullness, madness, and their feats
>
>All jumbled up together, to compose
>
>A Parliament of Monsters. (7.714-18)

The people who have come to see these "freaks of nature" at the Fair become freakish themselves by amalgamating into what Wordsworth perceives as the

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[31] Graves interestingly points out that "hear" appears as an acrostic poem in the third stanza (131).

[32] Bartholomew Fair's long history began with the establishment of the Priory of Bartholomew in 1102; the Fair was established in 1120, and its last year was 1855 (Alden xi). The Wordsworth siblings visited the Fair for the first time in September 1802 (Gassenmeier and Gurr 316).

"many-headed mass / Of spectators" (7.434-35).[33] The literary madmen may be contained in the asylums or wandering in the wilderness, but the Fair reveals that madness is in every individual in every crowd, "All jumbled up together." The mob is monstrous in its size, and ravenous in its desire to see the "far-fetched, perverted things" the Fair offers up for its consumption. When the poet learns how to physically immerse himself in this "Parliament of Monsters" while remaining psychologically distanced from its perversions and excesses, he becomes an astute reader of the city's underlying madness.

The Poet-*Flâneur*

Blake, Wordsworth and Lloyd each represent themselves as the city wanderer who is both within and separate from the crowd. As a prototype of Benjamin's *flâneur* and even Debord's later *dérive*, the poet must *sense* his way through the metropolitan landscape before he can truly read and understand its madness. However, this ability to achieve deeper understanding has its risks, for it is accompanied by the potentially insurmountable alienation that characterizes the madman's existence. Lloyd's experience of the crowd both numbs and nauseates him, and his wonder is soon "transformed [by] these shews / To merest emptiness, e'en till my soul / Would sicken at their presence" (25-27). Plotz's definition paraphrases Lloyd's detachment:

> The crowd functions as a virtual emptiness, within which one can escape the bother of talking to people very different from oneself… surrounding oneself with an alien presence insures that no particular foreigner ever demands more than a mere physical proximity. A paradoxical distance is established between crowd and writer. (19)

Wordsworth's oft-quoted passage of his early conception of London demonstrates

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[33] Parrinder describes Bartholomew Fair as "the inexhaustible exhibition that London presents to [Wordsworth's] eyes, the endless procession of its subservient multitude, reaches a hellish climax" (411). Plotz argues that in this conclusion, the poet feeds off of the crowd but must not be immersed in it: "[t]he poem becomes the antithesis of the crowds of the city, yet only does so by borrowing the energy of the crowds of the city" (35).

his inability to comprehend the crowd's "alien presence," or "how men lived / Even next-door neighbours, as we say, yet still / Strangers, not knowing each the other's name" (7.116-18). Lloyd echoes Wordsworth's description of "[t]he comers and the goers face to face, / Face after face" (7.156-57) in exclaiming, "I have look'd, and all has been to me / A crowded desolation!" (55-56). The poets experience "[d]istraction, disorientation, confusion, [and] oppression" as mere strangers within the crowd, and they represent it with "a classic description of advanced urban anomie" (Johnston 99). With the effacing of identity comes a unique solitude, and the poets must transform this crushing anonymity into a more positive meditation if they are to retain their storytelling abilities. This relief is found in becoming the *flâneur* because, as de Certeau argues, "[t]he act of walking is to the urban system what the speech act is to language or to the statements uttered" (97). In walking the city, the *flâneur* learns to interpret the angles of its streets and the edges of its buildings and strives to develop a language that captures its more elusive elements.

Keith Tester notes that Baudelaire, the original 1860s *flâneur* defined by Walter Benjamin, is a poet "who can reap aesthetic meaning and an individual kind of existential security from the spectacle of the teeming crowds" and "is only at home existentially when he is not at home physically" (2). The early nineteenth-century prototypes of this figure instinctively sense this homelessness, although they are still learning how the poet must become "a man apart" even as he appears to be a part of the crowd. Most tellingly in Blake, Wordsworth and Lloyd's texts is the sense that, "even though the *flâneur* does not choose his urbanity, he senses himself to be responsible for it. It is his inescapable fate" (Tester 8). Thus, Lloyd admits, "I have sought the solitary walk" (31), a common trope in city poetry, and he must "be content / To live a lonely uncompanion'd thing, / Exil'd from human loves and sympathies" (87-89). The poet's recordings of his wandering are not merely outward observations, but express a contemplative inward turn. Lloyd's invocation to London expresses the *flâneur*'s tendencies: "Thy scenes, / Thy tainted scenes, proud city, now detain / My restless feet" (7-9). Blake, whom Iain Sinclair describes as the "Godfather of

Psychogeography" (qtd. in Coverley 32), also opens "LONDON" with his restless wandering: "I wander thro' each charter'd street, / Near where the charter'd Thames does flow" (1-2). For *The Prelude,* Taylor notes, "Book 7 is about inbetweenness" (77), since a reflective Wordsworth calls his younger self "a transient visitant" (7.67-68) of London. He is "Well pleased to pitch a vagrant tent among / The unfenced regions of society" (7.56-57) and strategically situates himself as neither a tourist nor a true resident of London, which gives him a liminal status fitting of his lingering ambivalence about the metropolitan experience (Heffernan 432). Of his societal role while in London, Wordsworth happily admits, "I filled / An idler's place; an idler well content" (7.71-72). As these examples demonstrate, the *flâneur*'s walking is a way of life, and this perpetually solitary, pensive state distances him from the maddening crowd.

These texts, perhaps unsurprisingly, are represented as having been composed at night or contain sections of the poet walking at night. Blake's journey "thro' the midnight streets" (13) leads to his epiphanic vision of "mind-forg'd manacles" (8). Lloyd prefers the anonymity of empty streets to "[t]o cherish quiet musings" (27-28), and in fact, his triumph over loneliness stems from both this nocturnal contemplation and the therapeutic effects of telling his story: "'Twill sooth a vacant hour / To trace what dim inexplicable links / Of hidden nature have inclin'd my soul" (9-12). Wordsworth also seeks respite from the crowd, for he confesses, "I feel the imaginative power / Languish within" (7.468-69), and he escapes "Abruptly into some sequestered nook, / Still as a sheltered place when winds blow loud!" (7.169-71). Although he admits that this mentally reinvigorating nocturnal calm is self-constructed (Plotz 33; Heffernan 433), he stills requires "Moonlight and stars, and empty streets, and sounds / Unfrequent as in deserts" (7.661-62) to counteract the daily metropolitan bustle that numbs the mind. Just as the poet needs madness to occasionally flood his senses with poetic inspiration, he also occasionally searches out a "shelter'd nook" in which he has time recompose himself and compose his lines. In this wandering, the poet is suddenly threateningly close to the liminal place of the madman, who is also contained in a solitary nook or wanders the cliffs bemoaning

his exclusion from society. However, in walking these streets, the poet-*flâneur* is gathering the raw material for stories and shapes a city in his wake, for "[i]t is through the opportunity they offer to store up rich silences and wordless stories, … that local legends (*legenda*: what is *to be read*, but also what *can be read*) permits exits, ways of going out and coming back in" (de Certeau 106). The difference between the madman and the poet lies in the poet's ability to tell stories, to form textual connections between the city's bewildering cacophony, its tangle of dark streets and the psychogeographical imagination.

The *flâneur*'s status of "a man apart" in the crowd, as well as his supplementary wandering at night, offers him a privileged but complicated gaze. Lloyd senses a lack of emotional reciprocation in the blank gaze of the crowd while "looking all around, / Nor catching one known face amid the throng, / That answer'd mine with cordial pleasantness" (45-49). Shelley, on the other hand, sums up the philosophy behind Bentham's *Panopticon* and reveals why everyone becomes imprisoned in the economy of looking encouraged by the crowd:

> …in this smother
>
> All are damnable and damned;
>
> Each one damning, damns the other
>
> They are damned by one another,
>
> By none other are they damned. (217-21)

The poet remains outside of this reciprocal panoptic gaze, and this detachment can be both lonely and liberating. Wordsworth understands the importance of distance for the poet to gaze upon the whole scene for, when he enters St. Bartholomew's Fair, he hopes his Muse "shall lodge us, wafted on her wings, / Above the press and danger of the crowd, / Upon some showman's platform" (7.683-85). Alberto Gabriele privileges the poet's position over the crowd's, for Wordsworth is "on a lofty stage where one sees the spectacle from above, thus preparing for the intellectual movement of association and unity" (379). However, this physical distancing works the opposite way, also putting the poet on display to the crowds below (Heffernan 441; Meyer 12). In a city peppered with both blind spots and "damning" gazes, it takes a special type of spectator to read its

psychogeographical maps. The poet-*flâneur*'s aimless journey through the city at first appears similar to that of the wandering madman, even though his sense of alienation and loneliness are bred from an emotional detachment rather than a physical banishment. The significant difference, of course, is that the poet takes his solitary exploration of a place and transforms it into poetry that reveals his insight into both his surroundings and his own psychological state.

The City as Palimpsest

The metaphor of the city as palimpsest is both popular and powerful.[34] It is thus problematic that Leo Hollis argues the Great Fire of 1666 "offered the blank slate on which to recreate the modern city" (6). The city may have appeared as a *tabula rasa* geographically and architecturally after the fire, but it retained its essence in the public imagination's retention of previous experiences. The city is thus reshaped based on these partially retained memories of what it was before the fire, in what Rabasa calls an "imperfect erasure" (qtd. in Massey 110). The poet reads the city's palimpsest as he walks through it, bringing the blurred and multitudinous images into focus in the same way as he "tunes in" to its soundscape. Of course, to gain insight into a city built upon foundations of Reason involves deciphering the dark undertones of Madness that also shape it. David Pinder outlines the interconnected themes of "rights to the city" and "writing the city" (383), claiming that "a poetics of walking can unsettle grand stories" (401) precisely because it does not conform to the city's main narrative of bourgeois capitalism. The practice of walking can therefore be subversive, and so are the texts that result from this intimate urban interaction. When the poet recreates the psychogeographical city through this writing, he transforms his disconnected and "outcast" position into a socially relevant, and even necessary, form of labour.

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[34] Rabasa elaborates: "The image of the palimpsest becomes an illuminative metaphor for understanding geography as a series of erasures and overwritings that have transformed the world" (qtd. in Massey 110). For other metaphors of the city as palimpsest, see Hollis (1), Gilbert (8), Massey (139) and Mancini (5).

For Blake, especially, London had no advantageous *tabula rasa* effect after the Great Fire, since its corrupt institutions had deep historical and geographical roots and continued to poison its people over a century later. His speaker can read the crowd's tragic story: "And mark in every face I meet / Marks of weakness, marks of woe" (3-4).[35] As a witness to the city's many unjust institutions, Blake's sense of responsibility for the state of society remains ambivalent. The poet represents himself as the only one who can decipher the chorus of cries of the disenfranchised as he walks London's chartered streets, and in "marking" these societal blights he calls for their reform. Jennifer Davis Michael argues that Blake's desire to define these injustices in his work forces him to occupy "a difficult space between inspiration and industry, between the individual artist and the community he addresses and creates" (20). This task of understanding the darker aspects of one's culture is clearly difficult, as Michael argues, but it is more interesting to determine why the poet himself has constructed this "difficult space." The production of city poetry is deeply enmeshed in an understanding how the city became a symbol of economic and cultural progress, and thus, as Michael concludes, "Blake sees the city as a great labour of art, not 'work' as a finished product, but as a process" (36). This position is further elucidated when one considers why this great "masterpiece" always remains unfinished. Having assumed the difficult task of representing the city, the poet ensures that his role will never become obsolete by emphasizing the city as a perpetually ongoing "process" that works towards some artistic end.

Wordsworth also highlights the poet's unique ability to perceive the flourishing capitalist cityscape as a whole and to draw meaning from it. Even amidst the over-stimulating details of Book 7, he never stops deciphering his surroundings, visually absorbing "the string of dazzling wares, / Shop after shop, with symbols, blazoned names, / And all the tradesman's honours overhead"

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[35] This marking, according to Glen, demonstrates a constricted form of reading, for the poet "may 'wander' freely enough, but he can only 'mark' one repetitive set of 'marks' in all the different faces before him" (6). Freedman sees the city's repetition as a more expansive reading project, since "the marked city must be elaborately deciphered" as "a science-fictional object, shocking but not beyond something like scientific understanding" (254).

(7.157-59). Skilton argues, "The city, the crowd, with their innumerable sensory stimuli cannot be read, not because there are no signs, but because the signs are too many to interpret" (94). At times, it seems Skilton is correct, and Wordsworth cannot interpret the signs:

> Oh, blank confusion! true epitome
>
> Of what the mighty City is herself,
>
> To thousands upon thousands of her sons,
>
> Living amid the same perpetual whirl
>
> Of trivial objects, melted and reduced
>
> To one identity… (7.722-27)

However, the poet repeatedly indicates that he filters these signs, "reading them with quick and curious eye" (7.585), and even that he has been specially singled out: "Me, rather, it employed, to note, and keep / In memory, those individual sights" (7.598-99). When he invokes the Muse to lift him onto the showman's platform, he observes the "staring pictures and huge scrolls, / Dumb proclamations of the Prodigies" (7.692-93), and notices that cripples lie "beside a range / Of well-formed characters, with chalk inscribed / Upon the smooth flat stones" (7.205-7). The narrator's voice is deictic, pointing to the signs he is learning to recognize through the blur: "*Here*, fronts of houses, like a title-page, / With letters huge inscribed from top to toe, / Stationed above the door, like guardian saints" (7.160-62), and "*Here* files of ballads dangle from dead walls; / Advertisements, of giant-size, from high / Press forward, in all colours, on the sight" (7.193-95, my emphasis). Wordsworth reads London's signs as de Certeau reads New York's graffiti, the "'embroideries' composed of letters and numbers, perfect gestures of violence painted with a pistol, Shivas made of written characters, dancing graphics whose fleeting apparitions are accompanied by the rumble of subway trains" (102). It first appears that the poet does not know what to take from these signs.[36] It is in his later reflection on the city, however, that

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[36] Gabriele argues that for Wordsworth, "a city of fleeting spectacles thwarts any act of interior mediated vision as well as any form of intellectual reading" (379), while Bowlby suggests that "against and alongside the readable Wordsworthian city is something else…[i]n the absence of the

Wordsworth manages to contain the signs that evade him when he first learned to "read" as a young idler in London. If "unreadability marks the breakdown of that settlement, as if exposing it as merely provisional" (Bowlby 308), it is only a problem for young Wordsworth. The poet writing Book 7 is at liberty to direct the flow of the literary city in every word choice and iteration of his youthful "blank confusion." Meyer concludes that Wordsworth's *Prelude* is successful "because he creates himself as a major poet by writing a poem about the creation of a poet" (13). Indeed, the poet depicts his first experience of the crowds as approaching the edge of madness so his quest seems all the more intriguing, but just as important is his construction of the reflective Wordsworth composing the piece.

Wordsworth's descriptions of the theatre and the panoramas that introduce Book 7's themes of theatricality and spectatorship have recently received critical attention.[37] However, it is not at these spectacular events that he learns how to read the city, but in the crowd itself. In the midst of the throng, his narrator sees:

> a blind Beggar, who, with upright face,
>
> Stood, propped against a wall, upon his chest
>
> Wearing a written paper, to explain
>
> His story, whence he came, and who he was. (7.639-42)

Readers are not told what the "written paper" says, but this story, after all, is not about the beggar: it is about the poet's learning to read these types of signs in spite of the city's alienation and distractions. Meyer argues that this figure is "solitary, single, fixed, an individual human being with his own history and identity" (20), but really, he only exists as a figment of the speaker's imagination, and his story exists only if the poet chooses to write it. Although the blind beggar is meaningless when considered "as a real person," as Meyer misguidedly attempts to do, as a readable sign he forces the poet to stop and consider his own worth. In describing the beggar episode, Wordsworth is always telling his own story, using his own words "to explain / [the beggar's] story, whence he came,

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codes or keys that would make assimilation possible, there is 'blank confusion' and dislocation" (307-8).

[37] For recent readings of Wordsworth's experiences at London's theatre and panoramas, see Meyer (2003), Gabriele (2008), Taylor (2009) and Arnold (2009).

and who he was" (7.641-42). The beggar is inextricable from the speaker's imagined London, and provides a code for the city, as de Certeau describes it:

> It is as though the practices organizing a bustling city were characterized by their blindness. The networks of these moving, intersecting writings compose a manifold story that has neither author nor spectator, shaped out of fragments of trajectories and alterations of spaces: in relation to representations, it remains daily and indefinitely other. (93)

In his writing, the poet both invents these signs and decides whether he should represent them as fundamentally "readable" or "unreadable;" this is why Wordsworth draws readers' attention to the beggar's "written paper" but prohibits them from accessing that knowledge. The poet possesses the unique ability to verbally reconstruct the city's "thickening hubbub" (Wordsworth 7.211), which cannot be slowed down and "seen" by anyone else. As when he adopts the role of asylum gatekeeper, the poet decides just how much of the city he wants to reveal.

These poems exhibit the poet's ability to penetrate the city's blur of images and sounds to see the truth in madness, and to return, enlightened, after looking to this abyss. Lloyd triumphs over his loneliness by embracing his *flâneur*'s solitude and perceiving a harmony that transcends urban cacophony:

> For though the dim
> And inharmonious ministrations here,
> Of heavenly wisdom, may confound the sense,
> The partial sense of man, *my soul* is glad;
> Trusting that all, yea every living thing,
> Shall understand[.] (98-103)

Neither is Wordsworth swallowed by the city's threatening energy, since he learns how to intuit, "though the picture weary out the eye" (7.713), a coherent whole within the myriad parts of the busy city. Even in the heart of the city, he reflects that "[t]he Spirit of Nature was upon me there" (7.766). These lines are reminiscent of his "Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey" (1798): "While with an eye made quiet by the power / Of harmony, and the deep power of joy, /

We see into the life of things" (47-49). Wordsworth does not experience the same immediate tranquility as when he is looking down on the abbey's ruins, but he discovers a similar sense of harmony in the Nature underlying everything—even in the chaotic city crowds. It is primarily this ability to of see "into the life of things" that allows the poet to understand the world differently, and it is his ability to communicate these visions that places him above the madman.

Conclusion

While the madman can be repressed in the asylum or banished to the wilderness, madness operates differently in the city. In these texts, the poet positions himself as a superior spectator to the "regular" labourers who populate the city's crowds. As Wordsworth and Lloyd's texts intimate, at first the poet is nearly swept under the current of madness that washes through the city. He supports his artistic achievement by showing how he has become stronger for having overcome this psychological trauma, and now he can look beyond the city's surface distractions to decipher its secret signs. He wanders the city as a seemingly detached *flâneur*, but he is actually more aware of its inner workings than anyone else. While other labourers shut out urban chaos to survive there, the poet opens himself to this madness in order to fully understand the city. The poet carves out his urban niche as a labourer who is not content to *merely* produce material goods or provide practical services; he represents himself as that rare man who reflects on the past, understands the present and prophesizes the future.

As the poet's real experiences of the city fade into memory, his literary representations become the most visible layer of the palimpsest and accrue symbolic value upon which the poet can capitalize. If, as Andre Jansson argues, "Urban areas are the locations of economic and symbolic exchange…where the reflexive individual can gain symbolic experiences" (463), then the poet plays a pivotal role in his reader's psychogeographical conceptualization of the city and of their roles within it. Culture itself is a commercial space, and "[b]ecoming the measure of reality, culture thereby substitutes illusion for reality, since 'it' is more compelling" (Stein 107). The idea of "London" represents both a cultural capital

and exchangeable cultural *capital*. In transcribing his personal experiences, the poet becomes both a prime shaper of the psychogeographical city and one with insight into urban madness itself.

Returning from Madness: *Furor Poeticus*

In its aim to depart from the popular analyses of the complex relationship between madness and creativity, this thesis has focused not on the madman's artistic production or on the sane poet's *furor poeticus*, but rather on how the Romantic poet uses the mad subject's experience to hierarchize types of exclusion and to reaffirm his own place in a society that privileges production. The preceding chapters outlined how the place of madness is represented by the asylum and the wilderness and how the city is a potentially maddening place, building an argument that the poet appropriates the madman's experience in order to accrue cultural capital. As a part of this appropriation, the poet strategically invokes the state of *furor poeticus*, a poetic frenzy perceived as both a navigable place and a mode of being, to obscure the methods of creative production upon which he bases his livelihood. Although most of the poets in this analysis do not purport to directly enter this state—the exception being Robinson during her composition of "The Maniac"— they *are* all concerned with the artist's fluctuating value in the cultural economy. The poet is often considered an eccentric, both for acting strangely or unconventionally and for not occupying a central role in society. The madman, however, is forced into the position of irredeemable outcast because of his nonproductive status and—the ultimate sign of unproductiveness—his inevitable self-destruction. By establishing the place of madness as almost inaccessible and stripping the madman of any real agency in these texts, the poet reaffirms his role as the navigator of this tenebrous realm.

These representations of madness offer a place in which the stagnant, ineffable world of the madman and the fertile, expressive realm of the poet intersect, and it is at this crossroads that madness becomes a hierarchized

performance. The goal for this hierarchy is to prove that although the poet may be an out*lier*, he is not an out*cast*. In the metaphor of mind as place, the psyche is labyrinthine; the "disturbed," however, ostensibly have "more direct access to the subterranean regions of their minds where unusual, novel or unconventional perspectives are apt to exist" (Ludwig 10). The poet, as one who might be considered "disturbed," or at least unusual, can infiltrate this place because his powerful imagination allows for a special mobility within psychogeographical places. This fluidity has the added value of allowing him to return from madness in order to tell its stories, thereby shaping significant landmarks in the cultural mindscape. An essential component in maintaining the "Romantic poet" image is the illusion that this skill is specific to the poet, and that he may even possess the gift of divine inspiration that spurs him to enter this state.

The Romantic artist's reconceptualization of *furor poeticus* thus maintains a romantic overtone to the labour involved in producing literature. The famous instance of *furor poeticus* is Samuel Taylor Coleridge's account of his inspiration for "Kubla Khan: A Vision in a Dream" (1797), in which he introduces the poem as a mere fragment of a much longer work he envisioned during a laudanum-induced dream. He explains that the text is beneficial rather as "a psychological curiosity, than on the ground of any *poetic* merits," especially since it has a mysterious source inspiration and, "from the still surviving recollections of his mind, the Author has frequently purposed to finish for himself what had been originally, as it were, *given to him*" (51, 53-54; emphasis added). This implies that Coleridge passively received the raw material for "Kubla Khan," and he has merely acted as the scribe for an undefined higher power. Kathleen Wheeler argues that Coleridge's preface actually contains clever instructions for how to approach the "curiosity," and this narrative frame "reaffirms the view of art not as merely unconscious outpouring of unreflective feeling, but as a highly self-conscious activity" (32). The poet is not overwhelmed by the Xanadu he has envisioned, since he has purposely created this privileged "receiver" position and is highly conscious of how the poem is presented. While certain readers may naively believe in the passive reception from some "Other" world accessible only

through the Romantic imagination, the poet's "special" *furor poeticus* is a destination just as constructed as any place shaped by the contemporary psyche.

Mary Robinson's account of her mental state when she composed "The Maniac" is a second example of a poet attributing her inspiration to a drug-induced frenzy. Robinson's poem originates from her witnessing of "mad Jemmy" being assaulted by a crowd and later having consumed 80 drops of laudanum on the advice of her doctor (Pascoe 122). Her *Memoirs* explain, "Having slept for some hours, she awoke, and calling her daughter, desired her to take a pen and write what she should dictate…and she repeated, throughout, the admirable poem of 'The Maniac' much faster than it could be committed to paper" (Robinson 218-19). Her description of this process as instinctive and immediate suggests that the poet's anxiety over the place of madness emerges from her subconscious when she is in her own temporary state of madness. Both Robinson and Coleridge frame their texts as having been mysteriously "given" to them while "mad," but their narratives also feature the ostracized mad figure; Coleridge's wild-eyed poet-prophet is ambivalently revered but also socially excluded, while Robinson's "Maniac" offers the speaker no insight as to why he raves on the cliffs. Although Robinson's *furor poeticus* might temporarily overlap with "mad Jemmy's" real-life experience, the performance of creative madness is ultimately projected as being superior to that of the destructive madman.

Coleridge and Robinson's accounts of *furor poeticus* imply that although poetic madness is never completely comprehensible, it is valuable because the poet's experience results in an artistic work that perhaps even he or she cannot fully explain. There can be no representation without some semblance of a lucid state through which to filter the mad vision. Raw inspiration and flowing creativity produce nothing in themselves; they must be tempered by consciousness if they are to be received and understood in some capacity.[38] To

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[38] Pine argues that the apparent psychological liberty embodied by *furor poeticus* "is only a freedom in so far as the artist can find satisfactory expressions to describe that freedom and the experiences encountered within it" (9). Woodman notes that "[i]f madness is the identification with the unconscious, sanity is the creative process arising from it as it separates itself out into those supreme fictions" (21). For the creative, productive individual, "[t]here must be a genius behind the vision, a disciplined intelligence capable of transforming these private, primitive,

discover what *furor poeticus* symbolizes for the Romantic artist, one must ask, "to what extent is art the result of inspiration, or forces beyond conscious control, and to what extent must the artist consciously guide this inspiration through decision, judgment, and technique acquired by practice?" (Wheeler 32). A crucial element of representing the journey of *furor poeticus* is therefore proving the inherent daringness of the poetic performance, for the danger of traveling to this realm is the poet's potential entrapment within madness and the inability to return to a lucid state. Albert Rothenberg contrasts the creative person's desire to produce with the mad person's repetition, stasis and decay by arguing, "[t]here is thus a thin *but definite* borderline between the most advanced and healthy type of thinking—creative thinking—and the most impoverished and pathological types of thinking—psychotic processes" (12). Richard Pine similarly argues, "all artists are at least posed on the threshold of madness … an artist can be a 'visitor' to madness and can 'step in' and 'step out' of that space" (9). This idea of a "thin *but definite* borderline" that purportedly divides wild creativity from wild destruction has become a common assumption, but it appears to have its roots in the Romantic artist's reconstruction of *furor poeticus*—and the place of madness in general—for his own purposes. His strategy is to portray *furor poeticus*, or any source of inspiration, as not completely within the poet's control, and to partially obscure the labour involved in writing while still retaining more agency than the inarticulate, nonproductive madman. The Romantic artist wishes to construct his persona as one born with this mysterious gift of perception who uses it to produce art, and who should thus be recognized as occupying a special place in society.

The texts examined in this thesis imply that to keep madness at bay one must remain engaged with it at some level. Foucault observes in "Madness, the Absence of Work" that the more central role Reason plays in a society, the more important it is for its opposite, Madness, to exist as its shadowy counterpart. He is interested in exploring "the relationship of a culture to the very thing it excludes

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idiosyncratic or extraordinary perceptions into a language that is accessible and coherent for others" (Ludwig 11) and "*nothing* is ever created without the particular intention to produce a creation" (Rothenberg 9).

or, more precisely, the relationship of our culture to this truth about itself, far away and inverted, which it discovers over and over in madness" (292). We remain at a distance from the silenced voice of madness, but telling stories is essential to how we understand it, for, as Foucault predicts future generations will say of this era, "we were *at a distance* from madness but *within distance* of it" (292). The poet must remind readers that they should retain the ability to recognize and interpret madness, lest it insidiously infiltrate busy, rational minds. The real power of writing madness thus lies in the poet's ability to contain it. Even if it escapes those written boundaries, the poet affirms that by writing madness he, the poet, although perhaps an eccentric in his mode of productive work, is not destructively mad. It is the poet's presentation of his willingness to trek into this murky place and to speak of the unspeakable that imbues these texts about the mad experience with the potential for accruing cultural capital.

Madness, as a psychogeographical place, is the ultimate frontier: it can never be fully explicated by a rational outsider, whether he or she is a poet or a psychiatrist. The movement from considering the places of madness (the asylum and the wilderness) to the madness of a place (the city) and, finally, to the representation of madness *as* a place in *furor poeticus* does not aim to reveal anything about the madman, whose experience is always deferred, misinterpreted or appropriated. However, this exploration of how the poet and his audience interact with this figure elucidates the psychological work the madman performs within his or her milieu. These narratives do not simply represent the potential for rupturing readers' perception by capitalizing on their anxieties about madness; the texts' entire process of production evinces the poet's more surreptitious suturing back together of this "mad" rupture with the reassuring threads of narrative. Every author has a stake in how his texts are read and remembered, especially if he aims to be apotheosized and remembered as a "Poet" after his death. As the poet-speaker tells of the madman's movement through—or confinement within—a textual space, the madman's stagnant or destructive performance highlights the poet's own triumphant return from the overflowing emotion of frenzied inspiration. In the hierarchization of types of madness that range from the mild

eccentric to the raving lunatic, the poet justifies his indispensable position as cultural mediator in an attempt to secure literary immortality. While the madman ultimately symbolizes self-destruction in these texts, the poet hopes to use the cultural capital accrued from such representations to stake out his place as an immortalized Poet in the public imagination, an eccentric but not an outcast. It is ultimately within the poet's imagination, which he constructs as a unique but valuable site of production, that the madman makes the most compelling performance.

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