

ROMANTIC VALUE AND THE LITERARY MARKETPLACE:  
WORDSWORTH, SCOTT, SHELLEY AND LANDON  
IN THE *KEEPSAKE*, 1829

by

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## Abstract

“Romantic Value and the Literary Marketplace: Wordsworth, Scott, Shelley and Landon in the *Keepsake*, 1829” is an investigation of mediations of value in the Romantic literary marketplace. I focus on the *Keepsake* (1828-1855), the most commercially successful and longest running of the nineteenth-century gift-books and annuals. I approach the annual as embodying the flux and intersection of traditional, commercial and aesthetic ideas of value at a time when, according to some, they were well on their way to being established as separate categories. I look in particular at the writings five now canonical Romantic era writers published in the *Keepsake*: William Wordsworth’s five poems; Walter Scott’s five prose pieces and one play; Mary Shelley’s fifteen short stories as well the original pieces that she contributed on behalf of Percy Shelley; and Letitia Elizabeth Landon’s twelve poems and two short stories. I look at why each writer was drawn, often several times and over many years to the *Keepsake* as a publication venue.

My overall thesis is that these writers engaged with the *Keepsake*’s refinements of the annual form as an intervention into new forms of virtual sociability made available in the literary marketplace. The literal and virtual exchanges of emotion and sensation facilitated by the *Keepsake* allowed readers to vicariously experience a variety of values as they were embodied within the *Keepsake*’s stories, poems and art and by the form of the *Keepsake* itself. This experience provided the raw materials for writers’ reassessment of definitions and practices of value. I trace how these four writers used the *Keepsake* to mediate

their experiments with aesthetics and commerce, reading and writing in the production of ideas of value that could be mobilized into the future. That the *Keepsake* offers multiple case studies of Romantic value as a dynamic idea in a state of flux opens interpretive possibilities for a rethinking of how value was understood and practiced in the era, including how ideas of value and forms of writing and print inflected one another.

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**Dedication**

*To my grandmother (“nanny”)  
Lilian Rosina Degnan*

## **Introduction: The *Keepsake*, Virtual Sociability and Value**

The following study focuses on the *Keepsake* literary annual, the most commercially successful and longest running of the nineteenth-century gift-books and annuals. My reading of the *Keepsake* is one that approaches the annual as a Romantic object—that is, I suggest, as an object that reflected a range of ideas around value, some radically experimental, in circulation at the time of the *Keepsake's* production. According to my reading, the individual stories and poems in the *Keepsake* as well as the volumes as a whole were sites in which writers and readers could explore the possibilities and limitations of traditional notions of value (including property) and new commercial ones struggling to find purchase. I argue that the *Keepsake* embodied the flux and intersection of traditional, commercial and aesthetic ideas of value at a time when, according to some, they were well on their way to being established as separate categories.

The organizing claim of this dissertation is that in the *Keepsake* categories such as economic or imaginative, commercial or Romantic were not those used to define value or distinguish between forms of writing. There is evidence, and I will bring this evidence forward in the following four chapters, that the distinction that was being experimented with and deployed to distinguish between literary writing and other forms of writing was literature's power as a form of value making and communication that was the result of its unique interactions with readers. I suggest that this power included literature's blending of the imagination and commerce and generating of what I call the *Keepsake's* virtual sociability.



I look in particular at the contributed poems, essays and short stories of five now canonical writers—William Wordsworth, Percy Shelley (P.B.S), Mary Shelley, Sir Walter Scott and Letitia Elizabeth Landon (LEL)—to the *Keepsake*: Wordsworth’s “The Triad,” “The Country Girl,” “The Wishing-Gate” and two sonnets (1829); P.B.S.’s posthumously published “On Love,” and “Fragments” (1929); the fifteen short stories of Mary Shelley (1828-1839); Scott’s five prose pieces and one play (1829-1832); and the twelve poems and two short stories of LEL (1829-1836).<sup>1</sup> Each chapter takes up the question of why one of these major writers was drawn, often several times and over a sustained period of time, to the *Keepsake* as a publication venue. I examine each writer’s contributions to the *Keepsake* in context with the words and actions of the annual’s editors as well as the annual’s ambiguity not only as a form but a measure of literary value in itself.

I argue that writers and their readers engaged with the *Keepsake*’s refinements of the annual form as an intervention into new forms of feeling and modes of action made available in the cultural marketplace.<sup>2</sup> As readers encountered the *Keepsake*, and as they responded to the encouragement to personal response they found there, they also participated, I contend, in new forms of virtual sociability. The literal and virtual exchanges of emotion and sensation facilitated by the *Keepsake* allowed readers to experience a variety of values as they were embodied within the *Keepsake*’s stories, poems and art and by the form of the *Keepsake* itself. This experience provided the raw materials for writers’ reassessment of definitions and practices of value. The form and content of the *Keepsake* manifested interfacing values, as manufactured or natural,

purchased or given, feeling or thought, for example, that got rid of the “or” in a struggle to define a modern conception of literary value. In this way the *Keepsake* dialogically constructed sociability as a value in itself and became an alternative medium to the division of knowledge that was occurring around it and which was having the effect of circumscribing the intimacy and connectivity that reading did entail within the annual and could entail in the literary marketplace as a whole.

My analysis of the *Keepsake*, its literary and artistic content as well as form, supports characterizations of the Romantic, as an era and ideology, in terms of experimentation, radicalism and visionary speculation. My analysis also supports the possibility that these aspects of Romanticism manifested in ways that do not fit with characterizations of nineteenth-century commerce as a corrupting force in the production and reception of literature. To argue that the *Keepsake* materialized a Romantic collaboration between writing and commerce in which each worked to refine and channel the individual’s emotions and desires is both to benefit from Romantic criticism of the past thirty years and to approach the era from a different direction. In order for this new approach to succeed I will situate it in terms of the history of Romantic and annual criticism as well as historical interpretations of seventeenth- eighteenth- and nineteenth-century economics that have influenced criticism on the annuals. I will also ground my argument in critical work on the links between commerce and the imagination as well as sociality, reading and pleasure in the Romantic era.

## Background

It is necessary at this point to explain the background history of the *Keepsake* itself. Although nineteenth-century literary annuals and gift-books were dismissed by reviewers in their own day and then forgotten by literary criticism for over a hundred years more, their immense popularity and significance in the careers of an array of now canonical Romantic writers, particular women writers, has become impossible to ignore.<sup>3</sup> Recovery work on the annuals has led to studies into what they can tell us about how current as well as historical configurations of Romanticism, its ideologies and subjectivities, are linked to economic developments of the nineteenth century. This is particularly true for scholarship on the intersections of literature, material culture and political economy during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>4</sup> The story of the nineteenth-century literary annuals and gift-books, their development as well as commercial success, is now a common feature of critical writings on the Romantic era.

According to scholarly research on the annuals, Rudolph Ackerman, the editor of the popular precursor to the annuals the *Repository of Arts, Literature, Commerce, Manufactures, Fashions and Politics* (1809-1828), invented the annual form when he published the *Forget Me Not, a Christmas and New Year's Present for 1823*. Ackerman combined the genre of the German *Taschenbuch*, a pocket sized almanac containing literary works and blank pages for personalization, and the English pocket, manuscript and commonplace books to create the beautifully bound and illustrated literary annual and gift-book genre (Renier 5-6).

Commonplace books were “blank leaves bound in fine leather” (Feldman 10) in which people could paste memorabilia and bits of verse and other writing, add illustrations or paintings, keep notes, and comment on important events and special occasions (St Clair 224-25; Renier 5). Pocket books were smaller versions of the commonplace and were used for more practical accounts of the day’s events, expenses, etc. The commonplace books were privately owned and circulated, although they could be put on display in the family home where visitors were encouraged to contribute their own comments, poems and other such additions. Writers and artists of the day, including Wordsworth, Byron and Coleridge, were often asked or commissioned to include extracts of their work or provide original creations. Ackerman’s *Forget Me Not* began the transformation of the genre by turning the book into an object of beauty, removing the blank pages and space for personalization and providing more literary and artistic content.<sup>5</sup>

The literary annuals and gift-books were more organized and overtly commercial than the commonplace books although, as Paula Feldman points out, both “gathered seemingly disconnected works of visual and verbal art in a cultural artifact that articulates the sensibility of aspirations of both giver and recipient” (13). The annuals are understood to have standardized the form of the commonplace books and turned their orientation from the private to the public spheres.<sup>6</sup> The annuals were marketed as gifts for the newly moneyed, middle-class consumer and played upon an ideal of the kinships of a domestic or private economy. That the annuals were generated out of the commercial marketplace, however, was also central to the promotion of their cultural and social value.<sup>7</sup> This

value was attributed to the annuals' acceleration of technological and cultural innovations. These included improvements in steel plate engraving that made previously inaccessible fine art available to more consumers and, as a result, complicated the relations between writing and visual art in the era.

The *Forget Me Not* immediately appealed to consumers and once the *Forget Me Not* had proved itself in the marketplace, editors and publishers scrambled to identify and experiment with the formula.<sup>8</sup> Although they were extremely popular with the upper and middle classes, the annuals continued to be too expensive for most consumers earning the day's average wages. Annuals ranged in prices from eight shillings to four pounds depending on their size, binding and target market. Even so, a range of secular and Christian forms of the books proliferated in the marketplace, including annuals for children and adolescents. Not all of these ventures found their audience, however, and Anne Renier's depiction of the annuals throughout the 1820s offers a distinctly evolutionary narrative of natural selection.

Annual editors and publishers were in a heated competition to continually update the form and to provide readers with new attractions and the freshest works as well as the most value for money. Editors began to look for new ways to appeal to consumers and began to market their books' value as measured by the originality of their content and the financial investment in their production. It is generally agreed that by the emergence of the *Keepsake* in 1827, the annuals had taken on the form by which we recognize them today—beautifully bound, pocket or octavo-sized books filled with illustrations by the best artists as well as

portraits of fashionable ladies and idealized children and animals, elegant literature such as poems and stories or essays and “conversations” on art and culture. In the *Keepsake*, the annual’s editors deliberately play with the dual role of the annual as both fashionable object of pleasurable consumption and artistic product of serious consideration. Reynolds, for example, would often insert his own short, “silly” poems as filler, and a potentially deliberate contrast, between the more “serious” works of authors such as Wordsworth and Mary Shelley. Overall, claims Paula Feldman, annuals such as the *Keepsake* contain “examples of some of the finest writing of the period” (23) and certainly the finest examples of engraved art.

The *Keepsake* became the most successful and longest running annual of the nineteenth century.<sup>9</sup> Heath added to the first *Keepsake* a finely illustrated dedication plate by Thomas Stothard and a frontispiece by Thomas Lawrence, “the most noted portraitist of the day” (Feldman 15), and nineteen engravings, the most of any annual. These additions accentuated the annuals’ social function as elegant gifts, and Heath and Reynold’s offering of a new, larger octavo format meant that the consumer could more easily display the book and enjoy its illustrations. The crimson binding, opulent illustrations and other such elegant accessories to the literature, accentuated the pleasure of looking at and touching the book while inviting readers to explore the equally sumptuous and refined literary content. Heath and Reynolds commissioned improvements to engraving and print technology to produce the highest quality illustration plates, bought reams of crimson silk and gilding material for bindings and hired the best painters,

illustrators and steel print engravers. According to different sources, the first *Keepsake* sold 15,000 copies and the 1829 *Keepsake*, at least 20,000.<sup>10</sup>

After Heath's experiment with subscription sales as well as the anonymous publishing of literary content in the debut *Keepsake*, Heath and Reynolds decided to accentuate the quality of the annual in relation to the names of the writers who contributed their works. They traveled the British countryside on horseback, seeking out high-profile writers such as Scott, Southey, Coleridge and Wordsworth, and offering these writers large sums of money for original poems and stories. Although most annuals simply republished works already found in rival annuals, originality of literary content became central to the *Keepsake's* aesthetic. Heath and Reynolds were ruthless in their insistence that writers sign contracts guaranteeing that they would contribute only original works and that they would not contribute to any other annuals for at least a year following.<sup>11</sup> This caused problems for some writers, such as Wordsworth, for whom an author's ownership of his work and right to it as his own intellectual property was a grave concern.

The combining of these literary contributions with the inclusion of more (the *Keepsake* contained at least nineteen plates an issue) and better quality illustrations than any other annual in the marketplace, also required the laying-out of significant sums of money. Heath and Reynolds described their financial investment as the foundation of the annual's value and its subsequent longevity in the life of the nation.<sup>12</sup> "In a speculation so extensive," declares Reynolds in his "Preface" to the 1828 edition, "the Proprietor is induced to hope that his book will

not be a mere fleeting production, to *die* with the season of its birth, but *live*, a reputed and standard work in every well-selected library” (iv). Reynolds’ suggestion that good taste is related to choice and discrimination in the marketplace situates the annual as not only a participant in the era’s debates about value and agency but, indeed, as their possible solution.

The *Keepsake* embodied this choice and offered to become the model of the value by which to measure the value other works of literature and art.<sup>13</sup> The *Keepsake* also, however, defied a singular definition of value. By treating the categories of high and low or serious and popular with irony, the annual editors invited the annual’s readers to bring into play their own sensory and intellectual experiencing of art.<sup>14</sup> According to Peter Manning, for example, the annuals “discomfitingly expose the homology between the productivity of the Romantic artwork, the *Bildung* it enacts and sponsors, and the mysteriously auratic commodity” (68). Annual editors and Romantic writers are often described as unconsciously complicit in the production of a naturalized ideal of beauty and taste that would appeal to consumers who were seeking objects by which to signal their new social and economic mobility.<sup>15</sup> That a connection between commerce and works of art is discomfiting, especially if they are Romantic, runs throughout the scholarship on the annuals and the *Keepsake* in particular.<sup>16</sup> This dissertation departs from such studies to argue that Wordsworth’s, Scott’s, Shelley’s and Landon’s interactions with the *Keepsake* were complex but that these writers embraced them as important to their literary and artistic experience and practice.



The majority of critical work on the annuals condenses the literary value of the *Keepsake* to a snapshot that looks something like this: after being financially coerced to publish in the *Keepsake* literary annual, William Wordsworth called the annuals “picture-books for grown Children” (*Letters* 352); the nineteenth-century annuals “functioned in ways similar to the modern-day Valentine’s Day card and coffee table book” (Ledbetter 10). This snapshot brings into play two important aspects of criticism on the *Keepsake*. One is this criticism’s approach to contradictions in how the above-named writers engaged with the *Keepsake* and the other is the critical interpretation of the *Keepsake*’s manifestations of literary value, both as form and content.

In response to the first approach, I argue that the contradictory actions and statements of these writers in relation to the *Keepsake* cannot be reduced to a simple rejection of the annual’s commercialism. The contributions of “quality” writers, such as Wordsworth and Coleridge, to books seen as devaluing British art and literature, however, have been explained as a momentary lapse of integrity in the face of overwhelming economic pressures and temptations. Evidence for this explanation is found in some writers’ declarations of personal contempt for the *Keepsake* as a commercialization of true art and literature. This includes their complaints about the editors’ demands of contributing writers and their pandering to middle-class consumers. These representations are contradicted by the energetic and exploratory engagement of writers with the *Keepsake*. I pay particular attention to what writers did with the *Keepsake* and how writers represented and used the annual as a venue for the pleasurable experiencing of art

and the imagination of what I call virtual sociability. This includes their exploration of the kinds of writing and reading practices the annual had the potential to produce.

*Keepsake* criticism has struggled to incorporate the possibility that the commercial aspects of the annual were integral to the kinds of artistic value that writers were able to produce through its pages. The Romantic ideology continues to stand, within such criticism, as a testament to the natural, stable value of the Romantic imagination over the artificial, contingent value of the marketplace. The assumption that literary value is predicated on a detachment from commerce has led most readings of the *Keepsake* to conclude that the ideological value of the annual is limited to the writings of its contributors and is thus split from its circulation in the marketplace. Romantic readers and writers are in turn reduced to pawns of an economic system in which they are forced to participate.<sup>17</sup>

I build upon critical work that offers a counter to the above snapshot, such as Cindy Dickinson's study of the materialities of the annual ("Creating a World of Books, Friends, and Flowers"), Leah Price's of the annual and genre (*The Anthology and the Rise of the Novel: From Richardson to George Eliot*), Isabelle Lehuu's analysis of the annual's trading in the dual economies of the marketplace and sentiment (*Carnival on the Page: Popular Print Media in Antebellum America*) as well as Laura Mandell's analysis of role of the annuals in the consolidation of the Literary (*Misogynous Economies: The Business of Literature in Eighteenth-Century Britain*). The following study continues in the direction of such work to read the value and meaning of the *Keepsake* in terms of the annual's material significance,

other than as an object of conspicuous consumption and display. The perspective of this dissertation is that Wordsworth's, Scott's, Shelley's and Landon's configurations of literary value in the *Keepsake* implicitly understood profit in both its economic and cultural senses. This could include an aligning of the annual's popularity with definitions of literary quality and evocations of luxury with good consumer choice.

### **Literary and Economic Value**

To understand the *Keepsake* as the embodiment of the intersection of literary and commercial value in the Romantic era or of the personal and artistic agencies enabled by the literary marketplace, however, is to question the stability of categories such as value and taste and even art and fashion in the Romantic era and today. Campbell, for example, describes the defining of value in the Romantic era as a struggle between a bourgeois placement of value in the individual, an intuitive taste for what is right and good, and an aristocratic definition of value as generated by society, a taste moderated according to "norms and conventions" and "an elegantly refined style" (159). As Pocock and Albert Hirschman have argued, these two definitions of value were actually always overlapping; the bourgeois definition of the autonomous individual, whose value lies in his self-possession, developed not out of a resistance to aristocratic ideals and values but as a modification of them.

According to Pocock, the monolithic ideology of liberal humanism that is understood to have dominated Britain (and then the world) since its emergence in

the eighteenth century masked its contingency upon the immediate conditions of its articulation. The model of commercial humanism and liberalism transformed itself throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries because it was internally structured to accommodate and incorporate competing economic and political systems, such as those of the landed aristocracy and the monarchy, into its most basic drive for economic growth and geographic expansion.

The core shared by both aristocratic and bourgeois perspectives on value, according to Pocock, was the individual's relationship to property, whether mobile or land-based. The liberal ideology, for example, articulated the conviction that the unfixing of property from the private realm would liberate the individual's purchasing power and so his ability to form his own identity and self-worth amid the despotisms of the aristocratic ruling class. Pocock argues that the promoters of liberal humanism failed, however, to provide the individual with "a personality adequate to participation in self-rule, with the result that the attempt to ground sovereignty in personality was not thoroughly carried out" (Pocock, *Virtue* 45). C.B. Macpherson claims that this failure played out in liberal humanism's continued reliance on an aristocratic investment in the ownership of property as the regulator of value (263-277). Pocock, on the other hand, claims that the contradictions imbedded in liberal humanism, including the combining of its own definition of value with that of traditional power structures, can be explained by its sharing of republican ideals, particularly of the individual and their practicing of virtue, with its political rivals. Liberal humanism, Pocock claims, is ultimately successful at transforming these republican ideals into a hybrid value necessary

for the new political economy it was promoting. This was a value organized around a belief in commerce's ability to refine and channel the individual's private feelings, thoughts and desires. Pocock's and Albert Hirschman's theories on forms of valuation are formed in relation to their tracing of the figure of the classical-aristocratic hero and definitions of interest in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century development of a commercial marketplace.

These critics describe the idealisms of liberal humanism as embodied by the man of political economy, or what Caroline Robbins calls the Commonwealthman. According to Robbins, Commonwealthmen were men of great thought and action, "asserters of liberty" who "kept alive political ideas which proved suitable and useful for a great new republic" (386). They possessed many of the qualities of the medieval knight: his personification of "self-dominion" (Robbins 386) and personal liberty, dedication to the greater good, interest in the sufferings of the poor or "oppressed" (Robbins 386), faith in the right and the good and his commitment to acting on this faith, even to the death. As Hirschman points out, however, the transformation of the reviled figure of the seventeenth-century economic man, self-interested and rational, into Robbins' Commonwealthman, liberal humanism's version of the aristocratic, self-sacrificing and benevolent hero, involved blending bourgeois and aristocratic definitions of economic interest in terms of the self-serving and selfish and the communal and benevolent (386).<sup>18</sup>

Hirschman claims that the self-interest of commerce was painstakingly transformed into a moderating passion that would benefit mankind by regulating and taming unruly social forces such as the despotic monarchies formerly running

Europe and Britain (9-66). The transformation was made material in the body of the man of commerce and trade. Unlike the “heroic virtues and violent passions” of the aristocratic knight who pursued only glory, the trader modified his emotions and desires through the pursuit of interests that which would benefit the nation (63). The heroic ideal remained but in a more refined form that was more easily accommodated to the needs of not only the commercial economy but the needs of a liberal humanist society. “The by-product of individuals acting predictably in accordance with their economic interests,” writes Hirschman, “was therefore not an uneasy *balance*, but a strong *web* of interdependent relationships” (51-52). Interest or self-interest in both its emotional and economic manifestations became the source of new networks between people and an ideal of the nation modeled on politeness and manners (52).

Pocock makes a similar argument about the coalescence of a classical “ideal of the citizen, virtuous in his devotion to the public good” and his “independence of any relation which might render him corrupt” (48) with the “‘monied interest’ of stock holders and office holders” (48). This was an uneasy merger because the exchanges and dependencies of commerce, such as the trading of credit, could not accommodate the necessary requirements for the individual’s independence of thought and of body, such as the ownership of fixed property and arms, necessary for virtue. Commerce depended upon the exchanges of fixed and moveable property such as credit and so the corruption of economic man was guaranteed. Thus, in much the same way that the man of commerce was transformed into a heroic figure through the transformation of interest, virtue was “redefined” so as

to release it from that which was impeding it from accommodating a new political economy. Commerce's economic and social exchanges were no longer understood as a corruption of the high ideals and artistry of the heroic ideal and virtuous citizen but as their facilitator. "The social psychology of the age," writes Pocock, "declared that encounters with things and persons evoked passions and refined them into manners; it was preeminently the function of commerce to refine the passions and polish the manners" (49).

Although republicanism itself was not concerned with issues of writing and literature, I argue that the nineteenth century's experiments with writing and value, including the *Keepsake's* aesthetics as well as its marketing as both a gift and standard of artistic value, develops out of this hybrid seventeenth-century republican ideal of virtuous citizenship as defined by the circulation of commodities in the social realm. The *Keepsake's* combination of aesthetic and commercial appeal is then a self-conscious remediation of traditional and newer forms of valuation that serve to mobilize a stable form of literary value that is like property but also knows itself to be a figuration of it. For scholars such as William St Clair, who turn the arguments of economic historians such as Macpherson to literary studies, the *Keepsake* was the embodiment of a commercialized system, dependent on possession as a public display of value, that led to insidious forms of social and intellectual and political control.<sup>19</sup>

A significant body of print culture criticism attends to the categories that Pocock and Hirschman illustrate, persisted and were simply renamed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This was the language of difference between

an intellectual, disinterested realm of literature and the commercial, self-interested realm of a bourgeois economy that was naturalized as value within literature of the era as well as the discourse of literary criticism. Scholarship attuned to this language coincides with the more specific scholarly work that opens its readings of the annuals to Romantic definitions of value that are not based on the interests of the self-sufficient individual or privately owned property.<sup>20</sup>

Martha Woodmansee, for example, identifies and critiques the roots of the distinction between the imagination and commerce in the historically situated creation of the category of “fine art” and its naturalization by “[t]hose who make an occupation of reflecting on it...as if it were universal and timeless” (1). According to Woodmansee, the category of fine art was configured so that value became intrinsic to the art work itself, thus liberating art from the utilities that it traditionally served, such as the giving of pleasure or the reflection of nature. Consumers were also categorized and controlled through their ability to access and properly experience fine art, as opposed to productions of the popular marketplace such as the *Keepsake*. The consumer’s engagement with fine art became the measure of not only the individual’s value as a participant in culture but a measure of his or her value in the community at large, an index of their income and access to education. Woodmansee illustrates how the aesthetics of disinterest and language of value thrown round the arts was “invented to stem the commercialization of literature” (4) and to protect the property of those writers and theorists who found their work abandoned by consumers or threatened by



other genres finding success in the marketplace. The ideal of the detached Romantic imagination and artistic aesthetic, distinct from commercial and social concerns, shielded writers and artists from the corrupting demands of the marketplace.

Woodmansee's analysis of how literary and artistic criticism participated in the production of fine art as the idea of value by which the worth of all things and people could be measured is useful in understanding the history of annual criticism. This includes the ways in which criticism on the *Keepsake* continues to interpret the annual and its literary and artistic content in relation to its value as a status object. The annual's ability to synthesize the cultural capital of fine art with a popular and commercially successful venture has very rarely been approached from any other angle. According to my argument, the *Keepsake* brought together different values from within and without the marketplace and provided the space for an exploration of these values, some of which use, critique and reconfigure the artistic value described by Woodmansee. Although the category of fine art and its definition of value has been assimilated by the rhetoric and scholarly practices of literary criticism and used to define Romantic literature, the *Keepsake* provides evidence that it was not the only mode of practicing value at that time.

In her study of the connection between developments in writing throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century, Mary Poovey argues that Romantic-era definitions of value, particularly literary value, and assumptions about who could do the defining were heavily contested throughout the nineteenth century. The Romantic-era split between Literature and other kinds of

writing, such as economic writing, was achieved with great difficulty (Poovey 301-305). Poovey argues that it was the increased competition between forms of writing and print in the marketplace that ultimately led to the creation of Literature as a category and as the standard against which all other writing could be defined and measured. Literature established its distinction by absorbing the imagination and positioning itself as a superior value, abstracted from commerce and eluding “that other kind of value that Literary writing continued to have, as a commodity priced by market forces” (Poovey 2). Poovey argues that, by the middle of the nineteenth century, the value that Literary writing had assigned itself was dismissed for the more practical “facts and information” of economic writing, thus completing Britain’s transition into a fully bourgeois, capitalist society (Poovey 2).

I argue that in the *Keepsake*, the value that Poovey ascribes to Literature was only one standard amongst many that writers were using to distinguish Literature and its functions from other kinds of writing in the marketplace. The ecology of writing in the *Keepsake* suggests that the interactions between different forms of writing available in the marketplace cannot be simplified to a competition between writing that was imaginative and writing that was “facts and information”-based. Just as the *Keepsake* merged artistic and economic concerns to create a variety of possible definitions of value, different writings in the *Keepsake*, such as short stories, poems, elegant essays, travelogues, literary sketches and character studies, indicate a deliberate and often playful combination of facts and imagination on the part of writers.

### **The *Keepsake's* Sociability**

Gillian Russell's and Clara Tuite's *Romantic Sociability* (2006) is a seminal text in Romantic criticism's turn toward the possibility that the Romantic era and more specifically its marketplace can be understood through the concepts of community, conversation and shared experience, including pleasure. The sociabilities that Russell's and Tuite's collection explores cross a range of material, imaginative objects, acts and spaces. The critical work that I look at in this section participates in Russell's and Tuite's challenging of previously held understandings of sociability in the Romantic era including the role of commodities in this sociability.

Scholars such as anthropologist Mary Douglas and economist Baron Isherwood have studied public consumption, including the circulation of commodities, such as the purchasing of objects in the marketplace, and the giving of objects as gifts, as central to the organization of communities. Consumerism, they argue, is a mode of communication that functions to organize individuals by group (xxi-xxiv). They see consumption as integral to social relationships that are organized not around the protection of property but the pursuit of communication and information. Even though this study does not agree that all social interactions are mediated through consumption, Douglas and Isherwood's argument is useful for this study's claim that Romantic-era popular literature such as the annual was a space in which writers, artists, readers and viewers experimented with the social in terms of new objects of consumption and modes of communication.

My reading of the *Keepsake* and its literary, social and economic functions is informed by Deirdre Lynch's and Andrea Henderson's configuration of the Romantic era marketplace as an amorphous space and undefined set of behaviours with which people could experiment in terms of new modes of political and social agency as well as configurations of value. In her contribution to *Romantic Sociability*, Lynch argues that political actions and social connections were made through the simple act of handling and trying on a glove in the public space of the shop ("Counter Publics" 221-224). According to Henderson, the emotional and physical pleasures of desiring a glove that one couldn't have could be a powerful act of cooptation—taking the limitations of the marketplace and using them to push at the boundaries of feeling and thought in the private sphere (Henderson 1-27).

Like Lynch and Henderson, Colin Campbell departs from the focus of Pocock, Hirschman and Macpherson on the importance of private property in the conceptualizing of value in the Romantic era. In so doing, these critics establish a different kind of role for the Romantic object than as an empty sign of the individual's worth. This study's interest in how the *Keepsake* acted as a venue for the artistic exploration of different models of value benefits from the work of critics who explore how the commodity's imagined effects, such as their mediation of social connections, rather than their possession shaped both the marketplace and a Romantic sensibility. My reading of Romantic objects such as popular publications like the *Keepsake*, and their relevance in the literary marketplace, as

producing value through their purchase and consumption, however, differs from the conclusions of the above critics.

Campbell proposes a hedonistic theory of consumerism that positions modern consumption as the development of utilitarian and puritan ideologies that involved economics, sensibility, imagination, romantic love and pleasure (*Spirit of Modern Consumerism*). The blending of consumer desire and imagination that Campbell describes makes sense in terms of the *Keepsake's* experimental merging of its material value in the marketplace with its value as a work of art. According to Campbell's argument, taste and value were established in relation to the consumer's desire for an object and his or her ability, through the imagination, to control the meaning or the effects of objects. According to Campbell, aesthetic standards are always in flux because fashion, and the desire for fresh pleasures, exercises control over the process of generating aesthetic value (175-177). To own and physically manipulate the object was secondary to the possible pleasures of the act of Romantic imagining. In fact, owning the object soon led to consumers' seeking of more novel products onto which they could transpose their needs and desires. Value and meaning lies in the consumer's imagining of the pleasurable effects of the commodity. The relations between objects and individuals are mediated through this imagining, rather than the object itself (92-95)

Lynch, in her book *The Economy of Character: Novels, Market Culture and the Business of Inner Meaning*, also describes a powerful experience of pleasure in readers' combined resistance and giving over to the forces defining their relations with themselves and their community. The looking at, touching and yearning for

objects in the marketplace generates a pleasurable imagining without end. As people try on and discard an array of identities in the marketplace, they are creating a new, commercialized subjectivity (181) that is either always in a state of creation or too layered and dense to find reflection. Personal property cannot fully define the self nor can the commodity fully capture or manifest one's identity for others to read and understand. Consumers are left open to superficial misreadings and "social identifications not of the individual's making" (186). In the terms of Lynch's argument, consuming the *Keepsake* could be a pleasurable act of self-making as well as giving over to the identities and measures of value that will be read into the act by others—a play with the superficial and internal qualities of the self. The *Keepsake's* mixing of public and private consumption engages with what Lynch describes as a suspension of individual agency and identity "between the me and the not-me" (186) in the cultural marketplace. According to Lynch, the era's vacillations between economic systems played out in the struggle on the part of readers to construct an identity that was both self-sufficient and social.

The above two studies are useful rethinkings of the economic in the shaping of genres and values as well as of reader identities in the Romantic era. Campbell, however, is ultimately unable to conceptualize a productive connection between the literary values and ideals of Romanticism and the demands of the consumer. Campbell is still operating under a definition of Romanticism as inherently anti-economic. Lynch focuses her attention on one aspect of literary criticism and its analysis of how writers and readers used the materialities of the annuals, including their artistic content and the consumer and artistic practices

they generated. The literary annuals are described in terms of what has been seen as their modeling of a definition of “bad reading,” that which failed “to read through the books’ materiality to the meaning within” (*Economy* 149), and “bad readers”, those who “judged books by their covers...[and who] got hung up on the commodifiable body of the text” (*Economy* 149). Although Lynch is critical of this Romantic-period understanding of books and reading, her argument still finds the Romantic imagination within a type of reading removed from the body of the individual reader and the commercial aspects of literary production. The following study reads the Romantic imagination within the variety of sensory and affective experiences, social and political commentaries and modes of consumer practice that I argue are explored in the *Keepsake’s* literary content. I investigate the different ways that the “body of the text” was conceived in the Romantic era and in the *Keepsake*.

Of particular interest to this study is Andrea Henderson’s claim that in the Romantic era, the not-owning of property or of a desired object, fixed or mobile, worked positively to establish the individual’s social identity.<sup>21</sup> Henderson turns what St Clair described as commercialism’s disabling of reader agency into the very stuff by which readers understood themselves and others. She looks at the trope of masochism and self-denial in Romantic-era literature as a returning to the hierarchies of a traditional order and as “a way of wanting” from within the bourgeois, capitalist economic system. This was a system that promised the unlimited satisfaction of individual desire as well as “power enough for everyone” (38) but did not deliver on this promise in the everyday life of the individual. As a

reflection on the contradictory tendencies of the commercial economy, Romantic-era writers began to represent desire in terms of dissatisfaction and, more particularly, the painful pleasures of self-denial such as the subordination of the individual's desires to those of others. Desire became a space in which configurations of power and economics were in constant flux and change.

Because value, according to Henderson, was established through desire rather than the object, consumers didn't need to possess the desired thing or person (19). Taste, value and pleasure were measured against the constant withholding of satisfaction rather than on acts of consumption (23). "Desiring without hope of gratification," writes Henderson, "was regarded by contemporaries as the sign of a willingness to dream and to risk; it seemed to set its practitioner apart from the mundane world of getting and spending" (27). Writers, claims Henderson, "contemplated the possibility that the consumer might find it most satisfying to remain in a speculative posture, money in hand; the goal of the consumer was no longer simply to buy, but to shop" (23). Shopping, the central activity of the commercial economy, was an act of imagination by which objects were idealized as "capable of providing infinite satisfaction even as they withhold that satisfaction" (23).

Henderson situates consumerism in the mind and the imagination, as do Campbell and Lynch, and so abstracts the value of publications like the annuals and commercial practices such as shopping from their material effects and pleasures. Their arguments are useful in releasing the value of the *Keepsake* from the fixity of the popular, bourgeois commodity and object of conspicuous



consumption. I am left wondering, however, about the configurations of value that objects of desire, rather than the desire itself, are embodying if they are inconsequential to the meanings of consumer practices. What is this value in terms of the annuals? Furthermore, if reader and consumer agency is abstracted from action, such as actually purchasing a desired dress or painting or reading an annual, is the Romantic imagination and its practicing of value still essentially a transcendence of the real or, by extension, of physical pleasure? If so, then what motivated writers, “serious” writers, to publish in the annuals and to engage so brazenly in such a commercial publication? In my attempt to answer these questions I have concluded that the production and practice of value within the *Keepsake* is inextricable from the production and practice of agency in the Romantic marketplace. We cannot abstract either from the material or the imaginative aspects of purchasing and handling, giving and receiving, producing and consuming the *Keepsake*.

### **Chapter Summary**

In the chapters that follow, I study the experimentations of William Wordsworth, Percy Shelley, Mary Shelley, Sir Walter Scott and Letitia Elizabeth Landon with literary form and value within the *Keepsake*. The first chapter interprets Wordsworth’s publication in the *Keepsake* as an opportunity for the poet to explore notions of value through the pleasures and choices offered to readers in the literary marketplace. I argue that Wordsworth’s negotiations with annual editors and his contribution of five poems to the *Keepsake* are a part of the

literary labour that he models in his *Keepsake* poems. This was a labour that was built out of the pleasures of the literary marketplace as embodied by the annual and that would teach readers how to manage their desires and make good choices as literary consumers. The tastes and choices that Wordsworth defines as good would then serve to position his poetry as the moderating centre of the literary marketplace itself .

In my second chapter I argue that the *Keepsake* provided Scott with a venue uniquely suited to his career-long experiments with multisensory writing as a model of literary value. The *Keepsake's* invitation to readers to participate in the definition of the annual's function and value in the literary marketplace reflected Scott's emphasis on the importance of readers and their reading practice in the liberation of writing from the stasis and silence of the printed page. Scott utilizes the literacy of his readers in regards to the new forms of communication and expression proliferating in both private and public spaces to build a form of multisensory writing as well as an experimental reading community. Form and content could together generate a value that would situate literature at the centre of the structures of modern life into the future.

My third chapter shows how Shelley further embodies a definition of literary value by creating from within the *Keepsake* a self-aware reading practice that engaged the virtual sociabilities generated by the annual. Shelley does so as the means by which to materialize in her writing the emotional and intellectual exchanges necessary for the effective production and consumption of literature. Shelley's stories explore the technologies of representation and forms of writing

necessary to access the full potential of these exchanges to bring people together and to manifest revolutionary change in the individual and society. Shelley situates literary value in writings' ability to provide practitioners with the ability to exploit and manage this potential. Shelley also situates the responsibility for this management on writers and readers and their use of a self-aware and self-conscious reading practice.

The dissertation concludes with a reading of Landon's urban poetics in the *Keepsake*. I argue that Landon spatializes the literary marketplace and embodies value as the city. To embody value within the literary marketplace and to geographically situate the literary marketplace as urban space meant that literary writing as well as its producers and consumers had to be able to adapt and change with the varieties and rapid transformations of the city. Landon builds this flexibility into her own literary practice and the form and content of her annual writings to create a modern Romantic definition of literary value as generated out of the literary marketplace.

## Chapter One Pleasure and Choice: Wordsworth in the *Keepsake*

In 1828, Wordsworth accepted an offer of 100 guineas from Reynolds and Heath, in exchange for contributing twelve pages of verse to their annual. This agreement was the culmination of five years of correspondence between Wordsworth and Reynolds and other annual editors such as Alaric Watts, editor of the *Literary Souvenir*, and Allan Cunningham, editor of *The Anniversary*, in which Wordsworth was repeatedly courted to submit works to their publications. Most critics agree that Wordsworth only contributed to the *Keepsake* because of the amount of money Reynolds offered the poet.<sup>22</sup> In contrast, I read Wordsworth's contradictory representations of his publication in the *Keepsake* as a part of what he saw as an opportunity to use the *Keepsake* as a scene of experiments in value. In particular he experiments with establishing the preeminence of his poetry in the literary marketplace and among the variety of ideas of value and forms of writing and print that could be found there.

I will look at Wordsworth's correspondence with annual editors and his five *Keepsake*-published poems—"The Triad," "The Country Girl," "A Gravestone Upon the Floor in the Cloisters of Worcester Cathedral," "A Tradition of Darley-Dale, Derbyshire" and "The Wishing-Gate"—to argue that Wordsworth worked to incorporate the drives and demands of the literary marketplace into an idea of Romantic value that would in turn proffer a centre for the literary marketplace itself. Wordsworth, I claim, situates his poetry in this centre and frames it with what he suggests is the literary labour necessary to regulate the boundaries of

writing, print and commerce. My readings have found that Wordsworth enacts two necessary components of this labour from within his correspondence with annual editors and his *Keepsake* poems: the regulation of desire in the marketplace and the cultivation of the choice-making abilities of the *Keepsake's* readers.<sup>23</sup> Wordsworth repeatedly refers to the pleasures involved in writing and reading his poetry and links these pleasures to the choices that writers and readers must make in terms of their participation in the literary marketplace.<sup>24</sup>

My analysis of Wordsworth's *Keepsake* poems as a part of Wordsworth's development of a particular model of literary work is informed by Clifford Siskin's influential writings on the connection between the development of "Literature" as a hierarchical category of writing and of "Profession" as a hierarchical category of labour. According to Siskin's formulation, Wordsworth's attempt to establish the poet's authority and poetry's value in the plethora of writing available in the literary marketplace involved his shaping of the work of writing into a discipline and a "vocation" that privileged the poet as "a member of the *best* profession" (105) engaging in the best work, writing. Wordsworth, Siskin argues, valorized writing as a profession that disciplined the individual and his desire into a narrowed "deep developmental self" (106).

The literary labour that I argue Wordsworth models through his negotiations with annual editors and his contributions to the *Keepsake* works to discipline readers and their desires in the literary marketplace. What Andrea Henderson would call the painful pleasures of such a discipline involved not the satisfaction of the reader's own desire to consume the annual and the poem and

the desire of the poet that his poem be consumed but the pleasurable disciplining of that desire, as Wordsworth illustrates in “The Triad,” through a continual cycle of selection. Where Wordsworth differs from Henderson’s idea of deferred, painful desire, however, is that the reader achieves pleasure through a choice that is ultimately and necessarily satisfied by the reading of the poem itself. Although the poet and the poem retain a value that is singular in its association with a particular kind of writer and literary form, they must be responsive and adapt to the changing desires and demands of those, such as readers and publishers, who make up the literary marketplace.

Wordsworth’s interest in the role of pleasure in the labours of writing and reading poetry is evident from the 1800 and 1802 “Preface” to *Lyrical Ballads*. In the “Preface,” for example, pleasure involves an obligation of work on the part of the writer and the reader, as they both must cultivate a position in the literary marketplace. The choices involved in cultivating this position must be produced through the individual reader’s “own feelings genuinely, and not by reflection upon what will probably be the judgment of others” (270). Wordsworth is calling for his readers to trust their judgment to the literary pleasures he offers them but he is also suggesting that this judgment requires work on their part and is only really fulfilled through a response to his poetry.

Wordsworth further defines what I will call the “pleasurable work” of choice in the *Keepsake* as the poet’s and reader’s holding together of the content and the metrical form of the poem to truly experience its pleasurable effects. Readers are taught through the process of reading the *Keepsake* poems (and, as in

the case of “The Country Girl,” looking at the illustrations) how to manage their desires in the literary marketplace and to choose and read well. Thus, pleasure in Wordsworth’s *Keepsake* poems arises out of a poetically regulated encounter with the literary marketplace. By regulation, however, Wordsworth does not indicate that poetic form should distance readers from the pleasures offered by poem or the process of its selection. In the “Preface” Wordsworth claims “[t]he poet writes under one restriction only, namely, that of the necessity of giving immediate pleasure to a human Being” (257). Wordsworth’s emphasizing of “immediate pleasure” is framed as a response to those critics “who talk of Poetry as a matter of amusement and idle pleasure; who will converse with us as gravely about a taste for Poetry, as they express it, as if it were a thing as indifferent as a taste for Rope-dancing, or Frontinac or Sherry” (257).

Pleasure, for Wordsworth, is integral to the deeper emotional and intellectual experience of the poem and “a taste for Poetry” is something integral to the health of the individual, not simply a form of amusement, although it is that as well. Wordsworth continues on to link poetic value to its production of an “immediate” and not a heavily mediated experience of pleasure. He writes:

let this necessity of producing immediate pleasure be considered as a degradation of the Poet’s art. It is far otherwise. It is an acknowledgment of the beauty of the universe, an acknowledgment the more sincere, because it is not formal, but indirect; it is a task light and easy to him who looks at the world in the spirit of love: further, it is a homage paid to the native and naked dignity of man,

to the grand elementary principle of pleasure, by which he knows,  
and feels, and lives, and moves. (258)

Pleasure is stimulated in readers by poetry. Poetry's gentle regulation of this experience is internalized by the solitary reader so as to become a natural and seamless aspect of that "by which" this reader "knows, and feels, and lives, and moves." Wordsworth furthers his claims in the "Preface" to establish poetry's special administration of pleasure in his *Keepsake* poems as a work engaged by the annual poet and reader. In choosing the *Keepsake*, readers and writers are brought into a pleasurable literary labour that is not abstracted from the literary marketplace or the cravings and desires it evokes but is mediated and refined by Wordsworth's poetry.

### **Pleasure and Poetic Labour**

Wordsworth's poems in the *Keepsake* take readers through the pleasurable process of desire and choice in relation to the annual and engage them in the necessary work by which those desires and choices would establish the poem as the embodiment of literary value. This section addresses the contradictions in Wordsworth's dealings with the annuals and his exploration of the *Keepsake's* ability to satisfy what Jill Barker describes as his "desire to earn a just financial reward for his poetical labours" and his "high-minded notions of the integrity of his work" (391). I argue that Wordsworth shapes these contradictions into a viable literary practice and value that consists of a particular type of literary



labour.<sup>25</sup> This is a labour that brings together the pleasures of literary production and consumption in both the *Keepsake* and Wordsworth's individual poems.

Wordsworth's contradictory negotiations with annual editors, including his statement in a letter to Allan Cunningham that if "high prices given to writers could secure good matter it would be found in the *Keepsake*, but...it was far from certain that would be the case" (*Later Years (LY)* 680), highlights the complexities of Wordsworth's relationship with the literary marketplace. Wordsworth recognized the lucrative aspects of the annuals as well as the possible gap between definitions of value in terms of economics and definitions of value in terms of literary production and consumption. Wordsworth's engagements with the annuals illustrate his attempt to bring these two values together and to develop a management strategy by which Wordsworth could privilege his name and his works in terms of the financial and cultural profits that the annual offered. This included establishing an added value for his poems over that of the other contributed works and the annual itself. This added value was the pleasure of the personal and financial exchanges required for both the production and the consumption of the annual and the literary labour and the pleasurable choices that the poems themselves modeled. In this way, the value of his works benefited from but did not need to depend on the "high prices" that he was paid.

What Wordsworth critics have read as Wordsworth's reluctance to mix the necessity of "matters of trade" with his authorial persona might be more accurately understood as his trying out of different kinds of work and definitions of literary value in a new business of poetry. Wordsworth also practices and forces

the annual editors to engage in the kind of pleasurable work and deferred desire of his *Keepsake* poems. The entire process of negotiating with the annual editors and then writing to the annual form was a chance for Wordsworth to experiment with notions of artistic production and literary value in relation to the agency and value of the poet himself. The labour that Wordsworth develops in these negotiations required an intimacy that reflected the intimacy that he later produced in his poems between readers and writers as they exchanged the different pleasures of producing and consuming poetry.

The letters that Wordsworth exchanged with Alaric Watts, Alan Cunningham and Frederick Reynolds illustrate Wordsworth's explorations of this literary labour and its attendant pleasures and tastes in relation to the relationship between the poet and those who control the publication and dissemination of his work. Wordsworth's letters from the period of November 1823 to December 1831 indicate that Wordsworth and the annual editors fully blended friendship, personal favour and obligation with their financial and professional negotiations. High-minded ideals facilitated their "matters of trade" and vice versa in a variety of combinations that changed over time. Wordsworth plays with various roles throughout these negotiations, including genius poet and loyal friend, professional writer and skilled opportunist as well as master manipulator of editors, readers and critics.

Both the editors and Wordsworth manipulate different kinds of exchanges ranging from the gift to the financial trade, from friendship's offering to business contract. Cunningham, who was the clerk of the works in Francis Chantrey's

London sculpting studio, had made and gifted busts for Wordsworth; Reynolds and Wordsworth shared the symptoms of and remedies for their various physical ailments; and Wordsworth and Watts established a professional connection when, on the recommendation of Maria Jane Jewsbury, Watts negotiated a new contract for Wordsworth with Hurst and Robinson.<sup>26</sup> Even as Wordsworth's relationship with Reynolds soured, the poet did not turn away from the annual as a form of publication.<sup>27</sup> Once Wordsworth released himself from his obligations to Reynolds, for example, he contributed a sonnet to his friend Alaric Watts.

Wordsworth knew that he could benefit financially by publishing in the *Keepsake* and that he could also benefit in terms of the increased exposure the annual and the popular literary marketplace could provide. Thus, Wordsworth refuses Cunningham's insistent invitation to publish in *The Anniversary* not only because it would break the terms of his contract with the publishers of the *Keepsake*, but because "they [the *Keepsake's* publishers] pay for my name fully as much as for my verses; and this would sink in value, according to the frequent use made of it" (LY 680). It is clear here that Wordsworth was acutely aware of what Pierre Bourdieu termed "cultural capital" and the potential role of the Romantic poet in the exchanging and accoutrement of such a capital in the nineteenth-century (*Distinction*).

Wordsworth's transformations of his personae as a poet, businessman and friend served to test his "capital" within the different determinations of value embodied by the *Keepsake*. In the spring of 1828, Cunningham offered Wordsworth a bronze bust of the poet in exchange for one of his poems.

Cunningham tried to establish leverage in his negotiations with Wordsworth by emphasizing their friendship and utilizing Wordsworth's own self-construction as a poet unsullied by economic exchange. He wrote:

Pay me in such coin as your heart and imagination stamp and I shall be enriched. Take up your pen and pay me with verse—a far better coin than minted gold. Then behold a miracle! a Scottishman prefers true poetry to current cash. (Cunningham, *LY* 592)

Cunningham worked to transform poetry into a material more valuable than gold or cash. Wordsworth, however, evaded Cunningham's offer "as a mode of remuneration too indefinite" (*LY* 592) and once again situated literary value according to the exchanges and fluctuations of the literary marketplace. Later that year, Wordsworth's representation of his contract with Reynolds changed. Writing as a businessman and, equally, as a friend, he described their arrangement as a matter of integrity. If he were to accept Cunningham's offer, Wordsworth explained, it would be a betrayal of Reynolds, who has paid him considerably more. "I would most gladly meet your wishes as a Friend," he wrote to Cunningham, "but I must not break my word" (*LY* 680) or financial contract with Reynolds. So Wordsworth would give Cunningham his work as a gift to a friend, but not under the current conditions of the literary marketplace. In this way, Wordsworth adapts his reasons for choosing the *Keepsake* over the other annuals to the demands of the moment.

Alaric Watts was particularly angry about Wordsworth's decision to publish in the *Keepsake* as Wordsworth had declined to submit anything to Watts'

*Souvenir* on the grounds that the poet had a “general rule” against publishing in such books. Watts complained to mutual acquaintances that Wordsworth was marketing the *Keepsake* at the expense of other annuals, including Watts’ own. Although Wordsworth argued in a letter to Reynolds, “[h]ow he could think me capable of anything so presumptuous, so ungentlemanly, and so *ungenerous*, I can’t conceive” (*LY* 693), it is also true that Wordsworth promoted the *Keepsake* to his friends, found an appreciative audience amongst his family, and even distributed the annual’s prospectuses amongst a “large party of people of rank” at Lowther Castle (*LY* 693). Wordsworth was not ashamed to promote the literary annual with which he was aligned, but his negotiations with the annual editors suggest that he did not want to commit to a set definition of value—according to his high price or the literary quality of his works—either.

As Wordsworth’s letters with his editor-friends progress, we can see Wordsworth more openly acknowledge a process in which the author must, as he writes to Maria Jane Jewsbury, make hard choices and “hard bargains. Humility with these Gentry is downright simpleness” (*LDW* 52). Wordsworth’s ability to “trade” with the annual editors becomes more skilled and displays a conviction in the right of the poet to garner both economic and cultural capital through the literary marketplace. “The proprietors of some of these works,” Wordsworth points out, “have made large sums by them, and it is reasonable that the writers should be paid in some proportion” especially, as Wordsworth notes, the writing “forms but a small part” of the annual in relation to the “immense number” of steel engravings the annuals include (*LY* 593). Steel plate engravers, for example, were

themselves paid well while it was the writing, Wordsworth implies, that would contribute to the annual's cultural importance.

The "value of works of imagination" is in constant flux and ultimately unpredictable, so the poet and the poem must, as Wordsworth notes, maintain the upper hand by being able to engage the literary marketplace's fluctuations of value (LY 381). Although the *Keepsake* offered the highest economic return on his contributions as well as the most aesthetically attractive packaging and the maximum number of new readers, Wordsworth needed to create a literary practice that would ensure that he would get the most out of the literary marketplace. In his *Keepsake* poems, Wordsworth mirrors his choice to publish in the *Keepsake* with the individual reader's choice to purchase the annual and read his poems. Wordsworth further develops the pleasures and the labour that this choice involves as well as his reader's skills at making those choices in his poem "The Country Girl."

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of Wordsworth's participation in the *Keepsake* is his agreeing to produce a poem according to an already completed illustration titled "The Country Girl" by James Holmes.<sup>28</sup> In a letter to Mary and Dora Wordsworth, Wordsworth states:

I have written one little piece, 34 lines, on the Picture of a beautiful Peasant Girl bearing a Sheaf of Corn. The Person I had in mind lives near the Blue Bell, Tillington—a sweet Creature, we saw her when going to Hereford. (LY 590)

In this quotation, Wordsworth personalizes the illustration to meet with his own experience. Wordsworth plays with a definition of literary “inspiration” as something that is spontaneous and effortless and something that can be produced through work. The work of writing in “The Country Girl” becomes a pleasurable exchange of memory, imagination, and of seeing the “beautiful Peasant Girl” (*LY* 590) in the illustration gathered within the form of the poem by the poet.

When Wordsworth reprinted “The Country Girl” in his collected works, he changed the name of the poem to “The Gleaner,” thus bringing attention back to the poem’s concern with labour that is lessened without the accompanying illustration.<sup>29</sup> A gleaner, however, is someone who is allowed to enter the fields after the reapers and gather the corn that has been left behind. Although the gleaner’s work is secondary, like that of the reader, and is unproductive, in that it doesn’t generate a marketable commodity such as that of the men in the fields, it will provide nourishment for the girl in the illustration and those who “give utterance to the prayer/That asks for daily bread” (33-4) as well as for the poet and the reader.

The illustration itself faces the poem and focuses on a young peasant girl leaning against a fence with her head resting on her hand, her sidelong gaze directed at the viewer and her apron lifted to hold a sheaf of corn. She looks as if she is waiting for the reapers in the fields that make up the background of the illustration to finish their work. In the poem, the poet-narrator describes the illustration as an “Arcadian” space and the girl’s erotic posture as drawing the

viewer-poet into a youthful engagement with classical mythology and a pastoral idealization of rural life:

That happy glean of vernal eyes,  
Those locks from summer's golden skies,  
That o'er thy brow are shed;  
That cheek—a kindling of the morn,  
That lip—a rose-bud from the thorn,  
I saw; and Fancy sped  
To scenes Arcadian, whispering, through soft air. (1-7)

In this stanza, the painting of the girl stimulates desire and tempts the reader with the abandonment of reason and truth for the sensibility of the poetic. The world of the poem is one filled with “bliss that grows without a care;/Of happiness that never flies” and where “love never dies” (8-10). The poet is no longer speaking about the illustration, however, for his “Fancy” has sped away from the portrait to “scenes Arcadian” that exist within his cultural memory.

The poet describes a process of producing art that idealizes the artistic subject and of consuming art that can only perceive what should be instead of what is. As I will show, this process is mirrored in the youth of “The Triad,” whose “trembling fancy” renders him an insubstantial participant in the poetic vision. In “The Country Girl,” the poet’s enactment of poetic sensibility as he encounters the illustration of the peasant girl leads him away from the illustration itself to clichéd perceptions and desires that evade the work he needs to do to translate the girl in the illustration into words.



In the first line of the second stanza Wordsworth turns, as if turning a page, from the depiction of the maiden of the first stanza towards the young woman on whom the artist has based his illustration. Wordsworth asks, “[w]hat mortal form, what earthly face,/Inspired the pencil, lines to trace” (17-18) and points the reader to the realities of the girl’s situation. She must work and she is weary. He thus pulls the poem’s reader away from an engagement with the illustration that is concerned only with pleasure and that separates the reader from the work that Wordsworth’s poetry demands and the country girl implies. Wordsworth writes, “had thy charge been idle flowers,/Fair Damsel, o’er my captive mind,/to truth and sober reason blind,/Mid that soft air, those long-lost bowers,/The sweet illusion might have hung for hours!” (22-25). The girl’s “charge,” however, is not “idle flowers” but is the “tell-tale sheaf of corn” (26) that awakens the viewer-poet, and now reader, to a system of exchange between labour, economics and aesthetic value:

----Thanks to this tell-tale sheaf of corn,  
That touchingly bespeaks thee born  
Life’s daily tasks with them to share,  
Who, whether from their lowly bed  
They rise, or rest the weary head,  
Do *weigh* the blessing they entreat  
From heaven, and *feel* what they repeat,  
While they give utterance to the prayer  
That asks for daily bread. (26-34)

The corn that the girl-gleaner holds reminds the poet and the reader of the work that they must do as create meaning and worth in both the work of art and their own activities in the literary marketplace. The poem is as vital as corn to the life and health of the nation. Both the sheaf of corn and the blessings asked for by the peasants can be “weighed” (29) and measured according to the daily bread it provides and so can the poem itself. The poem’s profits depend on how many pages of the annual it can fill and how successful it is in distributing its literary work but most importantly, on how it is valued by those who receive it.

The result of the poet’s awakening in the second stanza is a poem that depicts both the work of its creation and its value. This poem is offered as the form in which the work of producing value can be done. Such work is explicitly connected to the “daily tasks,” (28) “weary head[s]” (30) and prayers for “daily bread” (33-34) of the girl and the peasants in the field behind her. Wordsworth opens the reader to the stakes of literary work and the potential of the illustration itself to generate meaning and worth. The poet will shape the poem and the reader will process the poem to generate the “daily bread” by which the poet will be able to continue. By centralizing the image of corn in “The Country Girl”, Wordsworth indicates that the full resonance of the artistic product can only occur when the poem is read in tandem with the illustration. The poet’s address to the girl herself—“bespeaks the born”—also creates a direct and intimate exchange between the subject of the poem and the poet and reader.

The poet and reader must remain flexible within the exchanges and collaborations the work of producing and reading the poem require. The reader

must be able to rely on the poet to teach him or her how to manage the desires and the pleasures offered by the poem and to make the right choices in the literary marketplace. “The Country Girl” takes the reader through the pleasurable work that will be needed to mobilize the value of Wordsworth’s poetics.

### **Pleasure and Choice**

The form and content of the *Keepsake*, as it manifests the variety of new and emerging literary forms and attendant pleasures circulating in the literary marketplace, allows Wordsworth to explore choice as the specific kind of work that will come to regulate the literary marketplace itself. In this section I will look at how Wordsworth’s *Keepsake* poems explore the ways in which the *Keepsake* can bring together the desires of the annual’s readers and their conscious discernment or what he calls “a taste for Poetry” (“Preface” 257). Although this is true of all of his contributed poems, “The Triad” and “The Wishing Gate” exemplify the literary pleasure that Wordsworth suggests is essential to the work of choosing well. In “The Triad,” for example, Wordsworth highlights the importance of pleasure for both the reader and the poet in his delineations of taste and enactments of choice.<sup>30</sup>

“The Triad” was originally titled “The Promise” (a title that evokes the same suggestions of intimacy and obligation as the annual titles such as the *Keepsake*, *The Forget-Me Not*, *The Souvenir* and *The Anniversary*). The women in the poem are modeled on Edith Southey, Dora Wordsworth and Sara Coleridge and “The Promise” was meant to be a tribute to these three important women in

Wordsworth's life. Most critics have read this poem as Sara Coleridge did thirty years later: "It is just what he came into the poetical world to condemn, and both by practice and theory to supplant; it is, to my mind, *artificial and unreal*. There is no truth in it as a whole...The poem always strikes me as a mongrel and amphibious thing, neither poetical nor ideal" (*Transactions* 117-118). That "The Triad" read for Coleridge as something unqualifiable and without an identifiable form reflects the poem's exploration of desire and choice, pleasure and work in the production of an idea of literary value and commercial practice that would ensure the legacy of Wordsworth's poetry in terms of economic and cultural longevity. The indecisiveness of the poet's protagonist is reflected in the form of the poem as it manifests the varieties of the literary marketplace.<sup>31</sup> Choice in this poem is a complex and contradictory process that responds to the particular pleasures of the moment in which it is engaged.

The poet of "The Triad," for example, asks to be shown "the noblest Youth of present time/Whose trembling fancy would to love give birth" (1-2) so that he can mate him with the best of British femininity. The poet, however, immediately turns away from the present to masculine ideals of the ancient past and distant future. He asks for a young, virile "God or Hero" who has "[r]eturn'd, to seek a consort upon earth" (4), or "[t]he brightest Star of ages yet to be" (6). As a result, the youth in the poem is as insubstantial as the "half...image" and "half...abstract meaning" (390) that Coleridge complained in the *Biographia Literaria* made up the modern, ornamental, commercial poetry. "The Triad" is also an obvious reference to the classical Greek myth of "The Judgment of Paris" with its themes of display

and choice as well as its reference to the enduring importance of classically mythology to Western culture.<sup>32</sup> The poet in “The Triad” first conjures the vision-like youth and then brings before the youth a vision of three different women whose characteristics and personalities he, one by one, describes for the youth.

Unlike the mythical figures that they reference, or the youth himself, these three women could be someone that the poem’s reader knows or could touch and possess, like the annual. All three combine physical beauty with intelligence, wit, emotional depth and “insight as keen as frosty star” (146) and all three are skillful participants in culture through music, dance and literature. Although these women are not goddesses and do not have mythical powers or magical promises to offer the youth, they have other mortal gifts and talents:

I will not fetch the Naiad from a flood  
Pure as herself—(song lacks not mightier power),  
Nor leaf-crown’d Dryad from a pathless wood,  
Nor Sea-nymph glistening from her coral bower;--  
Mere Mortals, bodied forth in vision still  
Shall with Mount Ida’s triple luster fill  
The chaster coverts of a British hill. (8-14)

The poet/match-maker of “The Triad” displays three modern versions of ideal femininity grown not out of classical mythology but “the chaster coverts of a British hill” (14). The poet displays a modernized beauty to the youth and the reader (instead of the idealized and inaccessible beauty of myth) and allows them to experience this beauty up close and in a personal way.

The poet attempts to facilitate an emotional and physical connection between the youth and the maidens. He encourages the youth's "[b]reathless" and "unabated craving" (26) much as the annual editors works to heighten the desires and cravings of consumers. The poem's readers are on the other hand encouraged to moderate their reactions to the pleasures of the literary marketplace through the work of reading the poem and the judgment-making skills that the poem cultivates in them. Although the women in the poem are "mute" and their subjectivities restricted to the descriptions of the poet narrator, for example, and although they "Appear!" by obeying the poet's "command" (13) there is no guarantee that any of them will accept the youth. It isn't only the youth and the reader who have the power to choose in the poem. The role of the women in the poem comes down to their making a choice independent of the authority of the poet. Wordsworth suggests that it is this independence of choice that the poem works to develop in the annual readers. In this way, once the poem is released to the fluctuations of the literary marketplace, readers will be able to engage the processes necessary to activate the idea of value by which the poem will regulate the literary marketplace itself.

### **Choice and Wordsworth's Literary Legacy**

Wordsworth criticism assumed that Wordsworth's publication in the *Keepsake* was a momentary weakness before the overwhelming promises of editors for fame and wealth, basing this assumption on the poet's contradictory representations of the annuals and of his own publication in the *Keepsake*. For

example, in a letter to Jane and Dora Wordsworth Wordsworth claims that “his main inducement for closing with Mr. Reynold’s offer for the *Keepsake*” (LY 590) was the substantial expenses generated by his brother John. Wordsworth’s earlier claim in a letter to Alan Cunningham that he only submitted to the *Keepsake* because he was obliged to Reynolds for providing him with effective eye-drops (LY 584) as well as his insistent request that Cunningham keep Wordsworth’s deals with the annuals out of any public discussion—he writes, “[a]ll...my natural feelings are against appearing before the Public in *this way*” (LY 593)—also seems to support an understanding of Wordsworth’s fundamental aversion to having his work aligned with commercial concerns.

Peter Manning points out, however, that Wordsworth was revitalized by his participation in the *Keepsake*. As Wordsworth claims in a letter to Reynolds, “I am rather rich, having produced 730 verses during the last month [November]—after a long fallow” (LY 692). Some of these poems, including *The Egyptian Maid*, went on to make up the bulk of *Yarrow Revisited, and Other Poems*, while others, including those submitted to the *Keepsake*, were revised and included in his *Collected Works* of 1845.<sup>33</sup> The literary marketplace could both inspire productivity for Wordsworth and extend the longevity of his poems as they moved through the literary marketplace in different books and collections to embody the Romantic literary canon itself.<sup>34</sup> The choices that the annual readers made in the literary marketplace would have a lasting effect on Wordsworth’s literary legacy.

“A Tradition of Darley-Dale, Derbyshire” and “Messimerus” are both poems about choices and their lasting effects. “A Tradition” is a sonnet about two

brothers who separate from one another to pursue their life's "courses" (6). Before they leave, the brothers climb a local hill and "Nor one look more exchanging, grief to still/Or feed" they each plant "A chosen tree" (5). The brothers never return either to one another or to the area in which they were born but the tree stands as a "fond memorial" (9) of their lives.

"A Tradition" could be interpreted as a story about the loss of a rural form of life that has forced these young men to leave. The eagerness with which the brothers "like two newborn rivers" and "in opposite directions urged their way/Down from the far-seen mount" (7-8) belies such an interpretation. The trees that they chose and that they planted then stand as a material expression of their life and their relationship as well as their choice of tree and life path. Although the brothers die without seeing one another again and are only reunited "in the sea/That to itself takes all-Eternity" (13-14), the trees grow "[a]nd now entwine their arms" (10) in a positive memorial of how their lives and their choices have affected the landscape over their lifetimes and after their deaths.

Wordsworth describes an entirely different memorial in the sonnet "A Gravestone Upon the Floor in the Cloisters of Worcester Cathedral," written after he and Mary Wordsworth had visited the Cathedral (Curtis, *Last Poems* 436). The sonnet begins with the word "Messerimus!" engraved on a real gravestone in the walkway of Worcester Cathedral. The word and its negative meaning are described as standing "to separate/From all" (4-5) the person "who lies beneath" (6) both in death and, it is implied by both the epitaph and the poem, in life. Like the brothers in "A Tradition," however, this isn't a fate or a memorializing imposed



by others. Only the one buried underneath the stone “[c]ould thus have dared” to chosen such a terrible epitaph and unfortunate “burial place” so close to the “cloistral steps” that “ever foot might fall with heavier tread,/Trampling upon his vileness” (12-13). Although this monument to the life of the “wretched One” who lies beneath is negative in its connotations it is also a positive manifestation of the dead man’s own choices. He both chooses how he is remembered and controls how others receive--“with heavier tread”--his legacy.

The legacy of literary work that Wordsworth builds in the *Keepsake* attempts to cultivate the pleasure of the marketplace and the desires of his readers through the work involved in making good choices. Pleasure, however, can play a passive as well as an active role in readers’ experience of Wordsworth’s poems in the *Keepsake*. “The Wishing Gate,” for example, as a poem and as a real gate in “the vale of Grasmere,” acts as a sanctuary for the solitary reader in the middle of the *Keepsake*. In “The Wishing Gate,” the wishing gate and the land around it, an area often visited by the Wordsworths between Rydal and Grasmere “also known to the Wordsworth as ‘Sara’s gate’” (Curtis, *Last Poems* 437), materialize what Wordsworth depicts as poetry’s timeless and universal role as a space of hope, imagining and restitution. The pleasures offered by “the land of Wishes” are mired in the superstitious thinking of the past. They endure, however, even after “magic lore” has “abjured its might” (13) and the rational, scientific thinking of the modern age has gained dominance. If these “superstitions of the *heart*” no longer played a part in our experience and representation of the world “[h]ow poor, were human life!” (12).

The poem draws the reader into its pages in order to receive their “Wishes” (7) and “Desires” (41) just as the wishing gate entices “even the stranger” to recline on the nearby grass and hope and dream of “his Belov’d” (36). The pleasures it offers are infectious—“The infection of the ground partakes” (34)—and infuse every reader and person who enters its landscape. Even though these pleasures are ultimately unproductive in terms of the rapid pace and “turmoil” (56) of modern life they are vital to the emotional and intellectual vitality of the reader.

In a reflective response to disparaging criticisms of modern poetry and other forms of literary publication such as the *Keepsake* as overly concerned with pleasure, Wordsworth defends pleasure as a positive channel for the reader to access their deeper desires and thoughts. “[W]hy,” Wordsworth asks, “should conscious spirits fear/The mystic stirring that are here,/The ancient faith disclaim” (37-39) or “scorn” those who if “by ceaseless pains outworn,/Here crave an easier lot;/If some have thirsted to renew/A broken vow, or bind a true/With firmer, holier knot” (43-48). The wishing gate and “The Wishing Gate” act as a neutral space in which people can share and be bound together by their desires, emotions and thoughts as well as the act of reading. The “conscious” and educated reader of the *Keepsake* can participate in these pleasures without fear because, Wordsworth assures them, “[t]he local Genius” of the space, “ne’er befriends/Desires whose course in folly ends,/Whose just reward is shame” (40-42).

In "The Wishing Gate" Wordsworth articulates choice as a labour that engages the pleasures of the popular literary marketplace. This choice is manifested in the *Keepsake* and the restorative qualities of Wordsworth's poems. Readers are given permission to explore their own desires and to experience the imaginative and material pleasures offered by the poem and in exchange situate Wordsworth and his poem's modeling of value as the organizing centre of the literary marketplace.

## Chapter Two Sensory Exchange and Debt in Scott's *Keepsake* Stories<sup>35</sup>

The premise of this chapter is that Scott's publication in the *Keepsake* is a part of his experiments with technologies of representation already available in the literary marketplace. These experiments include the alignment of different kinds of print and multiple sensory modalities in both the production and consumption of writing. The ways in which the *Keepsake* interfaced forms of writing and illustration with the tactile qualities of silk and embossed leather created the ideal venue for the expression of what I call Scott's multisensory writing; that is, Scott uses the annual to experiment with the potential of print to support a multimodal process of reading and writing that incorporates a range of sensory stimulations. I also argue that the idea of literary value that Scott explores through this multisensory writing is developed in relation to the *Keepsake's* very particular economic and artistic circulations.<sup>36</sup> In other words, this chapter approaches Scott's multisensory *Keepsake* stories as embracing the economic and technological forces that influenced their creation.

In particular, I suggest that Scott, his stories in the *Keepsake* and their readers are bound by a virtual exchange of investment and return, debt and repayment that is facilitated through the stories and instantiated by the annual. These are investments of intellectual and creative labour that will fulfill the demands of both the literary marketplace and the writings themselves. The experimental literary community and practice that I see Scott gathering through the virtual exchanges enabled by the annual and the multiple modalities of his

*Keepsake* stories is drawn from the popular marketplace and its more sensational, tendencies but works to ensure the centrality of literature as the embodiment of value in the cultural life of Britain.<sup>37</sup>

In this way, Scott reflects Wordsworth's incorporation of readers and the pleasures of commerce into the poetic processes (of work and choice) by which he hopes to establish his poetry as a stable model of value in a volatile literary marketplace. Whereas Wordsworth's poems in the *Keepsake* engage in a kind of poetic disciplining of his readers, however, Scott's emphasize the mutual engagements of writers and readers in the production and consumption of writing and of value. Scott's stories work to stimulate the physical and cognitive responses of annual readers through a writing that is distinguished from other kinds of print in that it requires an intellectual processing of sensory stimulation. These definitions of literature and literary value are regulated by the collaboration between the aesthetic of the annual and the commercial, credit economy in which Scott was immersed.

As Caroline McCracken-Flesher points out, Scott knew that these were dangerous speculations that could ultimately lead to his devaluation (65). I argue that Scott answered this risk by positioning himself as a model of the author and publisher best able to manage the collaboration above. To do so, Scott maintained an active participation in all levels of the literary production process. This made it possible for Scott to experiment with different forms of writing as well as saturate the available literary markets from the most popular to the most exclusive. It is through the *Keepsake*, however, that Scott completes the model of a reading

community and mode of reading that were receptive to the innovations of the marketplace and that would ultimately shape the marketplace according to their own values and desires. The receptivity that was key to the effectiveness and the longevity of this reading community and its literary practices depended upon the openness of Scott's writings to a range of readers and their different engagements with texts. Scott's enthusiastic participation in the production of good quality but cheap editions of his work, such as the illustrated Magnum Opus editions of his Waverley novels, as well as his staggering ability to produce publishable work in short periods of time is, I argue, a part of his continued engagement with the popular literary marketplace and its readers as a site of value.

The opportunities of Scott's multisensory writing also included a freedom from that which Scott portrays in his *Keepsake* publications as the limitation of writing and its effects to the page. Katherine Sutherland argues that Scott turned to the affective "primitivity" of music and poetry to escape the clinical modernization of literature. According to this argument, Scott was concerned that "the restricted (and written) language of prose loses in passion and social cohesion what it gains in reason and specialized precision" (Sutherland, "Fictional Economies: Adam Smith, Walter Scott and the Nineteenth-Century Novel" 121). Although my reading of Scott as a self-consciously modern writer is at odds with Sutherland's description of a historical Scott, her argument is helpful in understanding why Scott was drawn to multisensory writing and why he would use his multisensory, popular publications to define his career. By tracing Scott's blending of the oral, the visual and the written in terms of the form and content of

his stories in the *Keepsake*, this chapter will explore the significance of Scott's definition of literature and his establishment of literary value as a multisensory process.

### **The *Keepsake* and the Magnum Opus: Experimental Reading Communities**

I argue that it is through the openness of his multisensory writing that Scott creates a different kind of hierarchy than one based on a classed segregation of the literary marketplace.<sup>38</sup> Accessing Scott's publications, for example, would have required a basic reading education. Although Scott would have been able to depend upon a fairly large number of skilled readers, there was another large group of non-readers who would have known his poems, stories and novels through recitation or annotated and illustrated chapbooks.<sup>39</sup> Most important to Scott's multisensory writing, then, was not so much the ability to read as the ability to process and interpret the diversity of print available in the marketplace as well as the new kinds of cultural events and spectacles in the public sphere.<sup>40</sup> Scott can be seen as exploring a literacy that could capitalize on the creative and social possibilities of his multimodal writing in the service of literary value. Scott further develops this multisensory literacy or reading practice in the Magnum Opus edition of his Waverly novels. The following section reads Scott's *Keepsake* writings in relation to the illustrated and extensively annotated Magnum Opus.

I want to propose that Scott's consistent engagements with the literary marketplace are related to his just as consistent experimentation with the multimodal potential of writing and print. Scott constructed his career through

lucrative literary speculations and risky experimentations with print that led to his firmly established celebrity as a Scottish man of letters.<sup>41</sup> When Robert Cadell convinced Scott to republish and remarket the Waverley novels in a cheaply priced but lavishly illustrated edition, the results not only made the Waverley novels more accessible for the average consumer but also encouraged the same kind of sensory interactions and virtual sociabilities as the *Keepsake*. The added annotations also invited an intellectual work that would more closely meet the literacy that Scott introduces in his *Keepsake* publications.

The Magnum differed in form and price from Scott's previous novel length publications. Its volumes were to be issued on a monthly basis from 1829-1831 and sold at vastly below the cost of previous novel-length publications.<sup>42</sup> As Jane Millgate observes, Robert Cadell's five shilling editions of Scott's novels created a situation in which "ordinary readers could hope to become owners of their own sets of the Waverley novels" (2). Ian Duncan's argument that to purchase a Waverley novel was to purchase one's historical identity in the British nation is particularly relevant here. According to Duncan, in Scott's novels "historical being can only be rationally possessed, recognized *as romance*--as a private aesthetic property, in the imagination, materially signified by the book we are holding" (Duncan, *Modern Romance* 61). This claim can be extended to include not only the content of the Waverley novels but also the multisensory aspects of their manifestation in the Magnum edition. The Magnum's saturation of the literary marketplace worked to position Scott's definition of literary value in the void opened by the decline of the landed aristocracy and primogeniture.



We must ask if and how these publications differ from the similarly-oriented and-marketed *Keepsake*. Like the Magnum editions, the annuals manipulated a desire for novelty by focusing on the visuality as well as the originality of their literary contributions.<sup>43</sup> At thirteen shillings or two pounds, twelve shillings, the *Keepsake* was more expensive than a Magnum edition and, as a gift-book and commodity, involved a very public economic and social exchange. Reader reception and use of Scott's illustrated, multisensory writings is difficult to document. Scott's emphasis on both the private and public circulation of stories in his *Keepsake* writing, however, indicate that he encouraged a range of reading practices that included performing or reading aloud in the family home as well as the attendance of public cultural events. Scott encouraged this kind of function for the Magnum as well. Although the *Keepsake's* sales were less than the thirty-to thirty-five-thousand-a-month sales of each Magnum volume, they still sold over 15,000 copies on their first run. The *Keepsake* was clearly a part of the same marketing and publishing stream as the Magnum.

Both the *Keepsake* and the Magnum were published to make money, but the authority and position that Scott worked to establish as a novelist and public figure as well as the tone and direction of the Magnum's annotations are at once strengthened by and lend legitimacy to his collected novels in ways that the *Keepsake* and its unconnected bits and pieces of writing and illustrations could only recreate through an aura of aristocratic exclusivity. According to Millgate, Scott's hands-on annotation and organization of the Magnum Opus "was implicitly assigning to fiction a status previously reserved for poetry and drama, and to the

productions of a living author a treatment normally accorded only to the achievements of the great masters of the past” (vii).

Scott thus created a pre-emptive distinction between his participation in the literary annuals and his publication of the *Magnum*. In so doing, he generated a difference in value between his own multisensory writing and the annual as a whole. Nevertheless, the content of the *Magnum* consisted of illustrated novels and tales, intensively revised and annotated by the author himself. The annual was made up of a collection of unconnected short stories, poems, essays and illustrations over which the editor and not the author had control. Scott’s own critical assessment of the annuals were that their prints were “beyond comparison beautiful” but that the “letterpress [w]as indifferent enough” (*Journal* 421) as opposed, we can assume, to those works over which he had authorial and editorial control.<sup>44</sup>

In his January, 30<sup>th</sup> 1828 journal entry, Scott also describes a visit from Heath and Reynolds. Their object, Scott explains, was to offer him an eight-hundred-pound-a-year position as contributing editor of the *Keepsake* literary annual and a four-hundred-pound-a-year salary if he submitted seventy to one hundred pages of text. According to Scott, however, “to become a stipendiary Editor of a Newsyear gift-book is not to be thought of, nor could I agree to work for any quantity of supply to *such* a publication” (Scott, *Journal* 421, emphasis added). Scott’s tone suggests that the annuals were of a different class of publication than his own work, and he supplements this suggestion with a calculation. The profit offered by the annuals, in terms of economics and cultural

capital, is considerably less than what he could accrue in publishing a novel. I suggest that Scott distances himself from the figure of the annual editor and draws a line between his own literary activities and those of Reynolds and Heath in a move to ensure the continued success of his unique embodiment of value.

Although Scott worked to portray himself as an antiquarian, collector and recorder of the past, his multisensory writings provide evidence that Scott was just as invested in the shaping of a modern culture as the *Keepsake's* editors. I claim that Scott's *Keepsake* stories actually worked to prepare the precedent for the *Magnum* and the edition's desired effects. According to McCracken-Flesher, one of these desired effects was the openness that multimodal writing created between Scott and his readers (*Possible Scotlands: Walter Scott and the Story of Tomorrow* 181-184). It is through this writing that Scott establishes an entirely modern literary aesthetic and value.

### **Investments and Returns: Models of Exchange**

In this section I will build upon my suggestion in the introduction that Scott's experiments with definitions of value in his multisensory writings are connected to his exploration of economic exchange, such as debt and return, as a mode of community formation. The aesthetic embodied by the *Keepsake* in particular is created out of disparate pieces of writing, print and illustration that model the circuit of exchange, debt and obligation between the author and reader and text Scott strives for in his multimodal writings. The fragmentary nature of the form and content of both the *Keepsake* and Scott's *Keepsake* stories is able to

recreate and then continually disturb and break open this circuit so that it can be reset in new contexts and situations. Scott's stories in the *Keepsake* reveal a fascination with how the exchanges created by multisensory writing mirror those of debt and credit in the configuration of a new reading community.

According to Yoon Sun Lee, for example, Scott's conceptualization of "the Nation" in his historical novels is one of sociability generated by debt and sympathy. Scott represents communities that are bound together by a continual accumulation and multiplication, partial payment and collection of debts. Lee argues that Scott "describes his relationship with the reader as the payment of a debt. But rather than paying it off as efficiently as possible, Scott defers and draws attention to his tardy, incomplete payment"(237). If we extend this argument to the terms of Scott's *Keepsake* publications, literature and its readers are a part of a system of investment, credit and repayment that represents itself in the terms of a gift economy. This is an economy that can continually adapt itself to the changing dynamics of debt, of giving and receiving.

To further develop this reading of debt and community in Scott's multisensory writings we must turn to Scott's identification of the link between the domestic debts that he has accumulated over the Christmas holiday season and his contribution to the *Keepsake*. This link exemplifies what Scott configured as a cycle of private making and spending and public credit and debt on the level of both economics and his own relationship with his readers. Scott didn't want to become indebted to the annual's editors but he did frame his eventual agreement with Heath and Reynolds with the claim that he would consider gifting them "a

trifle for nothing" (*Journal* 421). Even though he decided to "sell them an article [or five] for a round price" (*Journal* 421), he modeled the exchange on the type of gift giving used in the marketing of the annual. A cycle of indebtedness and repayment was designed to bind Scott both to the annual and to its readers as well as to create value out of their investment of time, money and intellectual energy.

Scott's calculation of the profits from the imaginative energy and effort invested in his multisensory writings is not only configured in monetary terms, such as the end cost of the publication or its economic return, but upon his sense of accomplishment and, most importantly, his success in pleasing the public. Before he agrees to contribute to the *Keepsake*, for example, Scott reflects on his recently written *Chronicles of the Canongate* and the state of his own value in the marketplace. He writes:

The 1<sup>st</sup> Volume of the *Chronicles* is now in Ballantyne's hands all but a leaf or two. Am I satisfied with my exertions?—So so—Will the public be pleased with them? Umph. I doubt the bubble will burst. While it is current however it is clear I should stand by it (*Journal* 421).

Scott seems to be making what Kathryn Sutherland describes as a conflation of "the artistic process with the production process" and so an equation of "the labour investment of the imagination with the economic value of the produced commodity" ("Fictional Economies" 101). Scott identifies the power of the reading public over the success or failure of his literary career and emphasizes the exchanges between author and reader in the production of literary value.

Although Scott acknowledges his vulnerability before the public in this diverse field he also displays a confidence not only in his ability to influence the opinions of his readers but also in their ability to discern whether what he gives them is good enough. He indicates a belief that the quality of his exertions will have a direct effect on the quality of the public's reception and so on the quality of the work's critical and economic success. He will unconditionally "stand by" the work and assert his paternal authority throughout the work's production, distribution and reception despite his reservations about his "So, so" creative investment and the possible "Umph" of the reading public.<sup>45</sup>

According to Scott scholars such as John Sutherland and Jane Millgate, debt not only inspired a whole new level of creativity and productivity for the writer but also produced a confidence in his own ability to generate a literary value that will, in McCracken-Flesher's terms, be both responsive to the future and moderate its direction (*Possible Scotlands* 61-113).<sup>46</sup> The economic crisis of 1825 that sent Scott's estate into insolvency and set his resolve to write and publish himself out of debt has been well documented and analyzed (Sutherland, *The Life of Walter Scott: A Critical Biography*; Millgate, *Scott's Last Edition: A Study in Publishing History*). Scott's own portrayal of his publication in the highly successful *Keepsake* literary annual as an opportunity to "settle the few accompts which, will I nill I, have crept in upon this new year" (*Journal* 421-22) is just one of the many references to debt and its consequences that saturates Scott's writings from the 1820s. Scott's suggestion that he would never "agree to work for any quantity of supply to *such* a publication" (*Journal* 421) as the *Keepsake* is complicated by the

fact that he actually did contribute a “quantity of supply” and original work to the annual and that he embraced his encounters with the popular marketplace through the annual. It is through the *Keepsake*, after all, that Scott was able to publish his writings without being financially responsible for their success or failure. The annual also allowed Scott to write outside of the expectations and demands of his large estate and to explore the level of debt and return that he had the potential to generate with readers.

The reluctance that Scott displays in his exchanges with the *Keepsake* editors seems to be rooted in an awareness that his economic and cultural profit in the annual is the direct result of his obligations to a third party that is not his reader. Like Wordsworth, Scott struggles to maintain some control over his works and to enforce his literary authority as he conducts trade with Heath and Reynolds. Also like Wordsworth, he explores and transforms definitions of literary value in the process. After revising the terms of their contract so that it was made clear that the editors were indebted to Scott for entertaining their proposal, Scott agreed to give the editors one hundred pages of “some trifling thing or other” (*Journal* 421) in exchange for five hundred pounds. Scott also insisted that the copyright devolve to him after three years and that he would have the final say in how the pieces were handled. This agreement was forged during three days of Scott’s baiting and evading of the two literary speculators, after which Scott appeared to be impressed with the persistence and business-like ingenuity of the pair.<sup>47</sup> The “trifling thing or other” that Scott promised Heath and Reynolds came to include two stories ejected by Robert Cadell from the *Chronicles of the*

*Canongate* series that Scott considered to be good, “My Aunt Margaret’s Mirror” and “The Tapestryed Chamber”, as well as the “Description” described above and two original “sketches” of “Scottish stories for subjects of art” (*Journal* 442) titled “The Death of the Laird’s Jock” and “A Highland Anecdote” (1832).<sup>12</sup> Scott includes the dramatic piece *The House of Aspen: A Tragedy* (1830) after Heath continues to badger Scott for the required number of pages to fulfill the deal.

In both the negotiations around his submissions and the works themselves, Scott’s publication in the *Keepsake* forces himself and his readers to look at the effects that their engagements with different print forms have on their subjectivities and literary practices. This claim takes on a particular significance when we look at the origins of “My Aunt Margaret’s Mirror” and “The Tapestryed Chamber” in the *Chronicles of the Canongate* series. I turn to this collection to understand Scott’s configuration of literary value out of the exchanges of debt and the sensory experiencing of print.

### **Debt and the *Chronicles***

The debt that forces Scott’s hand in his writings and publications after 1825 results in worthwhile and genuine offerings to the public. Included in these offerings is the tale of Chrystal Croftangry, the framing narrative intended for “Mirror” and “Chamber.” Croftangry’s story articulates a connection between debt and multisensory writing as a redefinition of a modern literary value that is more fully developed in the *Keepsake* and then in the *Magnum*. Scott’s *Keepsake* stories and essays build upon the Croftangry narrative to play out the possibilities of



multisensory writing and the giving and receiving it involves on an intellectual and emotional level and one that involves the imagination and the economic arena. In this way, Scott's multisensory writing models a visionary and radical Romanticism that I argue in my dissertation introduction is a part of the *Keepsake*. Scott plays out the potential of this Romanticism in his multisensory writings and also its dangers if not controlled or confined within hierarchies of value.

Neither Robert Cadell nor James Ballantyne liked "Mirror" and "Chamber" and they encouraged Scott to include a short novel in the *Chronicles* instead.<sup>48</sup> Heath and Reynolds' offer created an opportunity for Scott to make money from the stories as well as to rework and reframe them within a publication that could sustain their explorations of literary form and value. Scott depicts his "converting the Tale of the Mysterious Mirror into 'Aunt Margaret's Mirror'" as an amusement that will serve to unload "goods" that he cannot "afford to have...thrown back upon...[his] hands" (*Journal* 457). Instead of reclaiming the obligation of the stories, Scott uses them to pay off more debts and so makes good on his investment. Still, Scott claims that the "tale is a good one and is said actually to have happened to Lady Primrose, my great grand-mother having attended her sister on the occasion" (*Journal* 457). Croftangry also mirrors Scott's personal experiences and his construction of the modern author.

Croftangry's life story begins with the classic tale of a young lord who, through a wild and dissipated life, drags his family estate into debt and foreclosure. Croftangry is forced to flee to the Holyrood, Canongate area of Edinburgh, a section of the city retained as "an asylum from civil debt" (Scott,

*Chronicles* 15). Young Croftangry, frustrated and suffocated by his confinement, waits while his only remaining benefactor, a barrister who is aided by a sympathetic solicitor, sells off the estate, disentangles Croftangry from his debts and liberates him once again. Croftangry leaves the country and spends the middle years of his life conducting mysterious overseas ventures that make him rich. On his return home, Croftangry finds his benefactor senile and unable to recognize or engage with his old friend. Cut off from his one meaningful relationship, Croftangry seeks out old friends and acquaintances who he finds have taken up a range of contemporary interests, from reliving their youth and embarrassing themselves in “public assemblies” to engaging in “science and letters,” philosophy and “the fashionable experiments of the day” (22). “Some,” claims Croftangry, “took to reading, and I was one of them” (22).

Linked to this taking up of reading is a retreat from fashionable society and a turn to antiquities or a “study of the olden times” (Scott, *Chronicles* 22). Croftangry claims that his antiquarian interests were sparked by the return of remnants of his family estate-- “the old family-bible. . . two or three other mouldy volumes, a couple of sheep-skin bags, full of parchments and papers, whose appearance was by no means inviting” (23). Within the volumes and parchments and papers is the narrative of Croftangry’s grandfather on the history of his family name and estate. Croftangry is left feeling guilty and ashamed at having been the medium through whom his family line and its ties to the land were lost. Croftangry’s interest in the recuperation of his family history and home is thus revived. Croftangry attempts to repurchase the estate. Upon visiting the area and

finding the occupants less than hospitable to the memory of the young lord who left them without income and proper management, he realizes that a life in the country will not fulfill his current interests and ambitions. Instead of returning to the path and plan of his ancestors, Croftangry retraces his own steps to the Canongate and settles there to read, set up an antiquarian shop and to write.

Debt doesn't destroy Croftangry's ancestral past but it does force him to break the lineage and to forge a new future that is distinctly tied to the literary. Croftangry describes his particular suitability for literature in the following terms:

I am a borderer also between two generations, and can point out more perhaps than others of those fading traces of antiquity which are daily vanishing; and I know many a modern instance and many an old tradition. (50)

The writer is a rogue figure who has the perspective, knowledge and talent to pick and choose the "traces" of the past and the "modern instance" to create an anthology of literary history. But not all publications have an affinity for this particular "borderer." Croftangry rejects the possibility of publishing a periodical because the form is not "easily extended in circulation beyond the quarter in which it was published" (52) and his ambition is that his "compositions, though having their origin in this Valley of Holyrood, should not only be extended into those exalted regions. . . but also that they should cross the Forth, astonish the Long Town of Kirkaldy, enchant the skippers and coalliers of the East of Fifth, venture even into the classic arcades of St Andrews, and travel as much farther to the north as the breath of applause will carry their sails. As for a southward

direction, it is not to be hoped for in my fondest dreams” (52). The perfect medium for such an ambitious reach is the “compact book” whose advantages are like “the range of a gun loaded with hail-shot, against that of the same piece charged with an equal weight of lead consolidated in a single bullet” (52). Books are better because they can spread further. Instead of locating value in a deeper infiltration of one reader, Croftangry situates literary value in the wide reach of his books as well as the expansive, multisensory reading process necessary for his writings. There is a richness to Croftangry’s ambition that reflects Scott’s use of the “compact book” and the illustrated, condensed, cheap, rapidly flowing, flipping, passing and sharing of the writing forms he created to reach every nook and cranny, hearth and study, shack and castle of the British nation.

This reach and the ability to entertain and influence his readers came about in the *Canongate* through a series of debts that force the writer out of the past. These debts are repaid through the reciprocal relationship between the reader and author, as well as the author and those who provide him with the tales that make up his book. Reading in the *Canongate* is itself privileged as the central modern activity, along the lines of discoveries in science and technology, through which the past will be translated and the future ensured. Reading and writing are equalized in Croftangry’s ironic description of modern storytelling:

I am glad to be a writer or a reader in 1826, but I would be most interested in reading or relating what happened from a half a century to a century before. We have the best of it. Scenes in which

our ancestors thought deeply, acted fiercely, and died desperately,  
are to us tales to divert the tedium of a winter's evening" (54).

Modern comforts and modern printing and distribution abilities turn the past into stories that can be told by and enjoyed by those whose daily work is done and who have more leisure time than their deeply thinking and fiercely acting ancestors. The relationship between the author and the reader as well as the success of the book depends, however, upon the reader's assessment of the value of the book that the author has offered him. This reader has the power to "judge for himself, and proceed, or send back the volume to the bookseller, as his own taste shall determine" (55). Scott's framing narrative forces us to look at the ways in which the effects of writing and reading are limited by the reader's power of understanding and discernment. He also illustrates how writing's dependence upon those powers endangers the autonomy and the effectiveness of the writer, unless they are put to the service of value. Even if Scott's stories reach beyond the seas, the history they recreate can be reduced to "tales to divert" and kitsch in the solitary moment of reading. The ironic tone in which Croftangry writes this passage points to both the whimsy of the modern reader and Scott's intention to establish a value and a role for literature that would both expand and channel the reader's powers of discernment as they look both at the past and into the future.

### **Multisensory Writing: "Death of the Laird's Jock"**

In Croftangry's narrative as well as his writings in the *Keepsake*, Scott grapples with the potential of new technologies of representation to generate

more dynamic interactions between print and writing. I will now move to a reading of what Scott called one of his “literary sketches,” in which he transcribes an oral tale or illustration, or sometimes both, into writing. It is important to note that many of the stories and poems in the *Keepsake* were accompanied by illustrations that authors were given ahead of time and asked to use as the inspiration for their writings. Scott, however, wrote “the Laird’s Jock” on a request from editors Charles Heath and Frederick Reynolds to “point out a subject for the pencil” (186). That Heath and Reynolds asked Scott to provide them with a piece of writing from which an artist could then produce an illustrated work suggests that Scott’s writings were recognized as being particularly receptive to other technologies of representation. Heath and Reynold’s request also suggests that Scott was recognized as being capable of not only producing but also managing a unique sensory exchange between these technologies as well as between the annual and its readers.

For this sensory exchange to succeed, however, it had to overcome what Scott describes in “the Laird’s Jock” as the specialization of the senses and their separate functions in the processing of information. Scott’s multisensory writings work to pull together already formed sensory modalities as well as to generate more in a process that involved stimulating the senses and imagination as well as the memories and desires required by the act of reading. In this way, Scott awakens the reader to their role in a multisensory practice of reading and value.

The historical subject of “the Laird’s Jock,” is the Laird of Mangerton or John Armstrong, who is described as entrenched in the clan system of Scotland and

determined to create a legacy out of his ideals. For the Laird these ideals include a violent masculinity, “the warlike renown” of the Scottish clans materialized in his powerful body and in his infamous two-handed sword (Scott, “the Laird’s Jock” 190-191). The story that the sketch tells is of a famous duel between a skilled English swordsman named Foster and the Laird’s son, the young brave Armstrong.

According to Scott’s telling, when the Englishman challenges the clan to send him their best swordsman for a duel, the young Armstrong accepts. The Laird is so overcome with “joy” at the prospect of defeating the English that he gives his son the “celebrated” sword. The Laird does so even though he knows that his son was “scarce yet entitled by age and experience to be intrusted” (190) with such a responsibility. Although the sketch includes extensive detail on the desires and emotions of the Laird both before and after the duel, the duel itself is swift. The young Armstrong is unable to manage the sword or fulfill the Laird’s legacy and is killed in one short sentence. “It is needless to describe the struggle,” writes Scott, “the Scottish champion fell” (191). The central moment of the tale is the Laird’s reaction to the death of son and the defeat of the clan as seen in the illustration by Henry Corbould that accompanies the tale.

In Scott’s multisensory writings how one reads has repercussions in terms of the reader’s memory and subjectivity. In particular, Scott suggests that how we see, hear and process information from the past will have significant effects on how we shape the future. In the introduction to “the Laird’s Jock,” Scott compares oral and visual communication:

although poetry and painting both address themselves to the same object of exciting the human imagination, by presenting to it pleasing or sublime images of ideal scenes; yet the one conveying itself through the ears to the understanding, and the other applying itself only to the eyes, the subjects which are best suited to the bard or tale-teller are often totally unfit for painting, where the artist must present in a single glance all that his art has power to tell us. (186)

Scott supplements this discussion of the power of the heard and the seen with instructions for the story's illustrator, Henry Corbould, on how to compose the drawing so that the emotional response of the Laird to his son's death will be highlighted and made "sufficiently intelligible at the first glance" (192). If Corbould still doesn't think that the reader will comprehend "the nature of the conflict" Scott suggests he might include "the pennon of Saint George being displayed at one end of the lists, and that of Saint Andrew at the other" (192). In the earlier passage, the emotion of the moment can be conveyed through the eye more quickly and in a more concentrated form than through the ear. Hearing is associated with the understanding and seeing with emotion. "The artist," claims Scott, "can neither recapitulate the past nor intimate the future" (186). In other words, our eyes can only grasp, just as the artist can only convey, "[t]he single *now*" (186). The illustration is trapped in the static dimensions of the page, unlike the bard's oral telling of the same scene. The bard can extrapolate from the



arrested moment to create an experience that will meet the desires and the understandings of his listeners across time.

This description of the different senses and their processing of information calls attention to its own contradictions in that reading and writing are notably absent. The readers are left asking how seeing, including the “single glance” and its subsequent emotional reaction, is related to the seeing and understanding involved in the writing and reading of “the Laird’s Jock.” They are also left asking how hearing’s production of understanding is related to the silence of the printed page and the written tale. The answer, implicit in this passage and detailed in the following literary sketch is a multisensory literary practice that liberates writing and print from representations of the past that limit their potential to shape a modern sensibility.

The literary sketch itself emphasizes the physical and emotional responses of the characters to one another and the importance of the senses, particularly seeing and hearing, for communicating emotional experience and for the processing of the present in relation to the past (191). The Laird, for example, insists on attending the duel, despite his age and ill health, and presents himself to the Scottish and British soldiers who provide the “list” or ringed barrier for the space within which the duel will take place. All eyes turn to the Laird as he sits swathed in blankets on the rock that overlooks the scene just as the reader’s eyes are drawn to the image of the Laird in the illustration. The visual image of the Laird’s shrunken and “wasted frame” doesn’t match “the paragon of strength and manly beauty” that the old men remember. For the new generation of Scottish

youth, the Laird is a living monument of the past. They “gazed on his [the Laird’s] large form and powerful make, as upon some antediluvian giant who had survived the destruction of the deluge” (191).

It is sound that draws the soldiers and other spectators, including the reader, back from the figure of the Laird and a contemplation of the past to the present moment—“the sound of trumpets on both sides recalled the attention of every one to the lists” (191). It is also sound that then breaks the bounds of time and space as well as human emotion and expression. When his son falls Armstrong “uttered a cry of indignation, horror, and despair, which tradition says, was heard to a preternatural distance, and resembled the cry of a dying lion more than a human sound” (191). In the terms set out by Scott in the story’s introduction, this sound will also extend a preternatural distance out of the printed page into the reader’s understanding. The knowledge produced through the combined processes of reading the tale and of looking at the illustration will manage this extension. Just as there is a schism between memory and reality, past and present in the Scottish soldiers and citizens seeing the Laird, there is a disjunction between the information that the Laird’s cry as well as the illustration and written story convey to the reader. This disjunction creates an ambiguity around the message of the piece as a whole that requires sensory work on the part of the reader to resolve.

The illustration, combined with the accompanying “explanation, that the piece represented a soldier beholding his son slain, and the honour of his country lost” (192), will guide the viewers to the conclusion that they are witnessing a

poignant scene of Scotland's loss at the hands of the English. The written story, however, emphasizes the Laird's obsession with military honour and violence and links it to a pattern of paternal abuse and misuse of authority. Although the Laird is described as dying of heartbreak three days after the event, it becomes clear only through the combined reading of the story, studying of the dramatic illustration and hearing of the Laird that the passion conveyed in the single moment of the illustration is the despair of a man "who saw his country dishonoured, and his sword, long the terror of their race, in possession of an Englishman" (191) and not the despair of a man whose only son has been killed. The dynamic sensory experience created by "the Laird's Jock" as "literary sketch" extends the reader's understanding beyond conventional expectations of the Scottish tale and writing itself. "Death of the Laird's Jock" becomes not a romantic portrayal of Scottish traditions, but a pointed sensory disruption of such a portrayal itself.<sup>49</sup>

Although historical moments are consistently presented in Scott's *Keepsake* publications as well planned and performed spectacles, they are so presented as to disturb the façade of print and to open the reader to the complexities underlining the narrative of the spoken, written and illustrated moment. Scott's "Description of the Engraving Entitled a Scene at Abbotsford," for example, is a literary interpretation of Landseer's still-life painting of the dog Maida. The Scottish hybrid dog is surrounded by the "armour and military weapons...characteristic of the antiquarian humour of the owner of the mansion" (260). Scott's love and desire for his dog is a part of his love and desire for antiquarian relics of the

Scottish tales upon which his literary career was founded. A sense of Scottish identity as history is gathered within the hearth of “The Author of Waverley” and on the wall of the painting’s owner “the Right Honourable William Adam, Lord Chief Commissioner of the Jury Court in Scotland” (261). It is through their possession that Maida, Abbotsford and the painting become symbols of Scottishness. Heath and Reynolds knew that their acquisition of the painting would contribute to the authority of the annual simply because of the prestige associated with Scott’s role in the gathering, preserving and telling of Scotland’s history.

This history, however, is shown in its slow deterioration. The accompanying literary sketch reveals that the portrait is of an aged Maida who dies six weeks after its rendering and that not all of the antiquarian objects, described through the words of Burns as “nick-nackets,” are authentic. “The hawks,” writes Scott, “are the gratuitous donation of Mr. Landseer whose imagination conferred them on a scene where he judged they would be appropriate; as that of the artist liberally added a flock of sheep to attend the shepherdess in the Vicar of Wakefield’s family picture” (261). The supposedly stable representations of Scottish history, its families and objects, are produced out of a manipulation of the senses and understanding. By translating Landseer’s painting into print both as a visual object and literary subject, Scott links his antiquarian and authorial activities as well as the images and objects of the past with a modern cultural practice and definition of value based on the form and effects of his multisensory writing.

It is interesting to note that the multimodal aspects of Scott's *Keepsake* stories have a precedent in the earlier-published *The Bride of Lammermoor*. In the prefatory framing of this novel, the narrator describes the written and printed tale as a translation of rough sketches made by the mediocre artist Dick Tinto. These sketches were themselves a visual "manuscript" of an oral tale told to Tinto by an old woman of the Lammermoor region. The gothic romance of the subject and the orality of the tale make it particularly suited to the medium of the pencil, but the intentions and effects of the tale changes as it adapts to the abilities and needs of each new form. Tinto himself notes the difference when he claims that the author's page is filled with "mere chat and dialogue" (8) as opposed to scene and action. In this way, Scott continues to highlight both the possibilities and the difficulty in the production of a form of writing that could combine the features and effects of a range of sensory responses.

Scott's continued description of his stories as literary "sketches" that have been transcribed from the oral by the pencil adds to the multisensory modalities of his work.<sup>50</sup> The absence or silent inactivity of writing and reading in the introduction to "the Laird's Jock" is interrupted by writing's ability to incorporate sound and other technologies of representation and print's ability to extend the range of its effects. Scott produces a literary spectacle and reading practice of continual dissolution and resolution that stimulates the full range of the reader's capabilities. Scott exploits the annual's bringing together of different forms of exchange and representation and the different senses they evoke to create a

modern sensibility that is released from the “single now” and allowed to move into the future.

### **Cooperating Senses: The Building of a Reading Practice**

The building of a modern literary practice and value in Scott's *Keepsake* writings involves a system through which the senses will be brought into a cooperative relationship. Sound in these writings opens the mind to a new processing of the visual but the visual can only be experienced as illusion until it is completed by the rationality and reality of the written.<sup>51</sup> Scott assumes responsibility as the mediator of this system and imbeds the reader in a powerful sensory experience that is contained by the written but that allows, through the reading process itself, for the reader's self expression. The reader's ability to discern and interpret the information received through the multimodality of Scott's *Keepsake* stories comes from an inner resource that combines the reader's imagination with the reader's memories and is receptive to changes in the reader's life and environment. In *Canongate* and “My Aunt Margaret's Mirror,” Scott calls this inner resource “taste” and suggests that it must be shaped by Scott himself and practiced through the reading of his works.

Croftangry points out that in his younger days his relationship with the land was based on how it could serve his interests and it was this relationship that dictated what and how he remembered. As his education and maturity increase, his memories change, “these ideas recalled, by degrees, pictures, of which I had since learned to appreciate the merit” (26), and new memories are created. The

traditional stories and legends that Croftangry accesses through his antiquarian pursuits colour the spaces and places where he spent his youth. "It is not," writes Croftangry,

to be supposed that these finished landscapes became visible before the eyes of my imagination, as the scenery of the stage is disclosed by the rising of the curtain. I have said, that I had looked upon the country around me, during the hurried and dissipated period of my life, with the eyes indeed of my body, but without those of my understanding. (27)

The understanding is a process of constant change as the physical act of seeing merges with that of memory and imagination. Scott hints that this merging is manifested in the reader's taste, which is awakened by the senses and then reconstructed "piece by piece, as a child picks out its lesson" (27). The process by which Croftangry's memory is revived and restored is the same process by which Croftangry will gather, select, edit and "complete" the stories of Scotland's past. These stories, in their otherness as well as their disparateness and individuality, will be made whole and complete through the natural taste of the author-editor. A value is thus established by which the past will be reconstructed and the present and the future represented. As Scott points out in "Mirror," however, one sensory modality can enhance or destroy the effectiveness of the other through a blurring of perception.

"My Aunt Margaret's Mirror" consists of three narratives arranged like concentric circles with the mirror and its vision at the centre. I will call the first

narrator Croftangry as it was his narration that Scott originally intended to encompass those of Aunt Margaret who recalls the story of the mirror as originally experienced in the seventeenth century and told by the third narrator, Lady Margaret Bothwell. The tale of the mirror is of a dissolute husband, Sir Philip Forester, an abused and desperate wife, Lady Forester, nee Falconer, and her bold and audacious sister, Lady Margaret Bothwell. Debts from his dissipated activities lead Sir Philip to volunteer like his brother-in-law Captain Falconer for the allies in the War of Spanish Succession despite the pleadings of his wife to remain safely in Scotland. When Sir Philip fails to send news to his anxious wife as to his well-being she seeks out the services of the newly arrived Doctor Baptista Damiotti who, it was rumoured, could for a not “inconsiderable” sum “tell the fate of the absent and even show his visitors the personal form of their absent friends, and the action in which they were engaged at the moment” (24). Although Lady Bothwell discourages her sister from associating with Damiotti, Lady Forester insists and so Bothwell accompanies her to Damiotti’s chambers. The vision that is revealed in Damiotti’s mirror and that is later corroborated by a letter from the Earl of Stair is of their brother interrupting the marriage of Sir Philip, who has quit the army because of debts accrued through gambling, to a young Dutch woman and of his being killed by Sir Philip in a subsequent duel. Lady Forester never recovers from the shock of this information and although Sir Philip makes one last appearance before the unforgiving Lady Bothwell he dies in exile.

Croftangry introduces the story through a reflection on how on visiting his Aunt Margaret on their familial estate one day he experiences a crisis of identity



and understanding. This pasturage once owned by Croftangry's father has been "sold by patches to remedy distresses" and debts that were accumulated during "an attempt by commercial adventure to redeem his diminished fortune" (2-3). The subsequent leveling of woods, digging of holes and constructing of buildings interrupt Croftangry's ability to "look back on the past" as it is preserved in the land "without interruption" (3). Only a small "woodland foot-path" remains untouched and it is this path that Croftangry describes taking three times a week to the home of his Aunt Margaret.

The associations and memories of the walk overwhelm Croftangry on this day and he states, "that species of comparison between the thing I was and that which I now am,--it almost induces me to doubt my own identity" (4). There is an impossible disjunction between the past and the present and between the changes to the landscape around him and his memories of friends and family (4). The disjunction threatens to trap Croftangry in memory and an endless loop of past events and emotions that will overlay the present moment. The mirroring that occurs in this story between the past and the present (Aunt Margaret) and the present and the future (the tale of the mirror as told by Lady Bothwell) creates a setting in which the present dissolves and so dissolves those within it.<sup>52</sup> The environment, and the stories imprinted upon it by the memory, communicates identity to Croftangry as he moves within it. As the mirroring between his memories and the real is distorted, this communication is threatened, until he comes to a physical remnant of the past, the "honey-suckle porch of Aunt Margaret's dwelling" (4). Although seeing Aunt Margaret and her home restores

Croftangry's subjectivity, it is seeing itself that threatens the dissolution of both memory in the loss of landscape and the present moment in a non-existent, idealized past. Aunt Margaret's manor house, set in the middle of a transforming landscape, has only the longevity of Aunt Margaret to secure it.

The house and its occupant are living relics of the past upon which the events of history have been marked. Aunt Margaret, however, doesn't embody a particular stereotype of Scotland or Scottish history, as an era, age or fashion, but instead retains "a style peculiar to the individual Aunt Margaret" (5). She is described as a "well-constructed piece of mechanics" (5) that undertakes, day after day, the domestic actions and operations for which she was intended. Like a gothic automaton, she functions as "the prop of a fallen family" (6) or an intermediary between better days and the present, as she sits in the window of the manor house. Her automatic and unwilled routines and sensibilities remain unaltered by the changes to the family and the family land around her. These actions sustain and give her purpose but they also indicate the inflexibility and rigidity of a mechanical reconstruction and replaying of the past as it encounters the present and the future. As both Aunt Margaret and the narrator have no interest in stopping the present deterioration of the family name and estate and have no prospects for the future they spend their time reliving memories of days gone by. The endurance of these memories is entirely dependent upon the environment and the maintenance of particular forms of architecture, cultural expression and social organization. Because familial debts have rendered this maintenance

impossible, the story begins to explore different ways of inhabiting memory and the self.

It is the discovery of a gravestone bearing the name of “Margaret Bothwell, 1585” by a local farmer that interrupts her nostalgia and reveals a distinction between Aunt Margaret’s rational and emotional knowledge. The discovery of this gravestone invokes Aunt Margaret’s superstitious sensibilities and an emotional unearthing of her intense Scottish nationalism (7). Margaret Bothwell is Aunt Margaret’s “namesake” as well as the namesake of her grandmother and narrator of the “tale of the MYSTERIOUS MIRROR.” Aunt Margaret is inspired to recall this story as well as the romantic narratives “full of plaids, pibrochs, and claymores” (9) that have defined her later years. Aunt Margaret’s attraction to an idealized Scottish past is beyond her control and seems to reflect the state of the general reader as “they were sometimes operated upon by feelings, sometimes by principle” (9). This state naturally progresses to the heightened senses and emotional responses of telling, hearing or reading a ghost story.

According to Aunt Margaret the “female imagination” is hard wired to respond to these conditions as illustrated by women’s sensitivity to the physical and emotional sensations evoked by a ghost story (11). Aunt Margaret claims that there are times when the past creates a crisis in the experience of memory that is both enjoyable and painful. Ghost stories can generate this crisis by allowing for a heightened physical experience of the past as it enters the imagination. The narrator interprets Aunt Margaret’s daily immersion in the “waking dreams” of her memories as a preference for “the twilight of illusion to the steady light of

reason” (10). Aunt Margaret’s description of superstition and its effects suggest that she is describing a multisensory receptivity to the constructedness of all moments across time. Aunt Margaret links this receptivity to women’s complex relationship with modes of self-reflection, particularly with mirrors and mirroring (11), as they relate to the construction of identity.

Women, according to Aunt Margaret’s formulation, both desire and fear reflections because they are attuned to the resonances of experience beyond the present moment and the single act or event. “All women consult the looking-glass with anxiety,” she claims, “before they go into company; but when they return home, the mirror has not the same charm. The die has been cast—the party has been successful or unsuccessful, in the impression which she desired to make” (11). Mirrors not only aid women in their shaping of themselves for public consumption, they are constantly threatening to reflect something that is unrecognizable and out of one’s control. Aunt Margaret states:

I, myself, like many other honest folks, do not like to see the black front of a large mirror in a room dimly lighted, and where the reflection of the candle seems to lose itself in the deep obscurity of the glass, than to be reflected back again into the apartment. That space of inky darkness seems to be a field for Fancy to play her revels in. She may call up other features to meet us, instead of the reflection of our own; or. . . some unknown form may be seen peeping over our shoulder.” (12)

It is important to notice that this moment of unwilling scrying or fortune telling is inextricably tied to the “mysteries of the dressing-table” (11). The dim lighting that would be most flattering to the female face could also result in a distortion so strong that one could no longer be recognized as one’s self.

The concentric reflections created by the candle light in the mirror, like the concentric narratives of the story itself, trigger a response in the imagination to range beyond the boundaries of the drawing room to the unknown “space of inky darkness” that both terrifies and demands the occupation of its viewer. Rationality alone cannot contain the sensory effects of this experience and so the author must both evoke and take control of the potential of such effects to liberate the reader’s understanding from the stasis of print. Scott must re-border the stimulated imagination with his multisensory writing and definition of literary value. “My Aunt Margaret’s Mirror” is concerned with the channels by which information is conveyed and regulated. When women are forced to open themselves to these secret channels they are corrupted or rendered unconscious. It is then the job of the written to bring them back to their senses.

Scott’s portrayal of the role of Doctor Damiotti is of a kind of multisensory mediator of information and author-like facilitator of communication between different worlds and times. A finely tuned manipulation of sensory stimulation is integral to Damiotti’s psychic practice just as it is to Scott’s writing. Celeste Langan points to the unique role of silence and sound in Damiott’s conjuring of the vision in the mirror. Although the Doctor appears in the dress of a professional man of medicine and receives the Ladies Forester and Margaret Bothwell in a brightly lit

apartment, Damiotti has them led through a series of passages and entrances and half dark apartments to the inner sanctum of “the man of art” (26). They are then given a mysterious warning on the dangers of speaking during the vision and are forbidden from uttering even “a single word” (27). The evocation and then translation of the vision will require the same silent concentration that reading demands of its participants.

An unrecognizable “strain of music,” however, sets the stage for the arrival of Damiotti in exotic costume and the mirror in which is reflected a strange trio: “two naked swords laid crosswise; a large open book, which they conceived to be a copy of the Holy Scriptures, but in a language to them unknown; and beside this mysterious volume. . . a human skull” (32). That a book should be involved in the magical transcendence of communication out of the ordinary realms of human possibility recalls the book of the wizard Michael Scott in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. The book of Michael Scott overpowers the affects of everyone who looks at or touches its cover and renders them insensible. Its contents can also bestow its possessor with the ability to shape-shift and take on the identity of others. In much the same way, the content of the mirror, both when empty and filled with a vision, threatens to stretch the identity and the sensibility of the reader-viewer beyond the point at which it could return to the present time and space. Lady Bothwell describes the vision as blurring the division between the piece of art and the real and of bringing artistic representation to life (34).

Orality endangers a print experience generated through the written and manifested in the visual. When Lady Forester is unable to control herself and

makes an exclamation the vision reacts like a “reflection offered by a deep and calm pool, when a stone is suddenly cast into it, and the shadows become dissipated and broken” (34). The exclamation, as an “imperfect utterance,” fails to completely destroy the resolution of the vision, but causes the mirror to become a fragile portal to an interiority that, like reading, is reliant on complete environmental stillness. The glass of the mirror has transformed from something reflective into a substance both liquid and solid that can be entered into, not only with words, but also with the body. It threatens the complete submersion of the reader-viewer.

The depiction of this moment in the accompanying illustration suggests that the vision is an illusion orchestrated by Damiotti. The reflection literally becomes “smoke and mirrors” as a mist or smoke frames its form. Damiotti gestures and glares warningly at the two women who are in the physical posture of shock and surprise. The sword and human skull takes a centre point in the illustration and evoke either the dangers of learning too much, too fast and without the proper contextual information and emotional preparation or the dangers of repeating the violent legacies of the past. The reader of the annual, who has access to the vision in both its visual and textual forms, models a mode of interpretation and understanding that involves the processing of information through multiple sensory modalities that are themselves refined through the act of writing and reading.

Rational explanations of the vision, such as that Damiotti was a spy and was able to access the information in the vision before Lady Forester, work only to

“strain *incredulity*” (Celeste Langan, “Telepathos: Medium Cool Romanticism” 21). Even the most rational and firm mind of Lady Bothwell “remained in great doubt on the subject, and much disposed to cut the Gordian knot by admitting the existence of supernatural agency” (“Mirror” 40). To process multisensory representations, the mind must reach outside of the rational to something beyond articulation. The dangers of such an experience are exemplified by the “violent and sudden shock on the nerves” that Lady Forester’s body and mind undergo upon experiencing the vision in the mirror. Are the effects a result of the “unnaturalness” of the transmission? Are they simply, as Damiotti suggests “the consequence of seeking knowledge by mysterious means” (“Mirror” 36)?

The form through which information is transmitted takes on a magical power in this story. How the subject sees, hears and reads will be challenged and time itself blurred so that reader will be opened to a multitude of events passing through time. The reader’s understanding will not hold together on the imagined simultaneity of reality, but on the opening of the present to alternative dimensions of experience. Scott’s disruption of simultaneity draws upon what Damiotti describes as an exchange and shared experience between the author of the vision and the viewer. Damiotti refuses to take responsibility for this exchange by claiming that he never seeks out his clients but responds “to those who invite and call upon him” (“Mirror” 36) and that he only accepts monetary payments so as to give alms to the needy. The visions and his clients’ gratitude are depicted as a mutual giving of gifts. Damiotti’s representation of his activities mirrors the debts and obligations that circulate around Scott’s formulation of the production and



reception of literature. Scott's authorial activities, however, include a careful reconstruction of the reader's sensibility as receptive to the effects of the multisensory experience. Scott then trains this sensibility to use these effects according to the boundaries of value. The form of the story itself, with its three narrative frames that work to both represent and contain the mirror at their center, takes the reader on an educational journey that mirrors the reading practice they will be intended to take with them into the future.

### **Telling Ghost Stories: "The Tapestryed Chamber"**

Scott struggles to generate a multisensory experience of print that will ensure literature's value, particularly when aligned with the unexplainable events that are necessary for the sensory and intellectual stimulations of multisensory writing. In "The Tapestryed Chamber" Scott plays with what he depicts as the something that is lost in the translation of the orally told story to writing. Scott prefaces the central ghost story with a discourse on the benefits of the oral over the printed in the telling of supernatural events in particular. In "The Chamber" Scott initially overemphasizes his role as a detached medium and his work as a transition point between a story told (124) and a story written. In the end, multisensory writing generates a reading process of continual resolution and dissolution that liberates writing from the grip of an aesthetics and understanding confined to a false perception of the past.

Although Scott claims that "[t]he following narrative is given from the pen, so far as memory permits, in the same character in which it was presented to the

author's ear" (123), he also admits that "the particular class of stories which turns on the marvelous, possesses a stronger influence when told, than when committed to print" (123). The communal dimensions of "a circle of fire-side auditors" who respond to the strong "impression" of the tale and that sustain and contribute to the energy of the story-teller are not sustained by print. Also lost are the teller's physical manipulations such as the lowering of "his voice with an affectation of mystery while he approaches the fearful and wonderful part" (123) that strengthen the impressions that the material makes on the listener. The solitary reading of a "volume taken up at noonday, though rehearsing the same incidents, conveys a much more feeble impression" (123). In a back-handed compliment, Scott describes oral storytelling as a powerful mode of communication that is limited in its effects to ghost stories. Scott takes hold of these effects and expands them through a multimedia written and printed form.

Scott's claim that he is acting as a neutral translator of the oral takes an interesting turn when the reader realizes that the tale Scott has recorded was told to him in private by the poet Anna Seward with all of the dramatics and intonations he has just described. Seward provides Scott with the model of the ideal storyteller. Her extraordinary "power of narrative in private conversation" (124) becomes the means by which Scott's writing will achieve its full effect. The "powerful" influence of her narration within a private conversation, abstracted from a community of auditors and ensconced in the domestic, begins to shape the one-on-one relationship that Scott hopes to establish between himself, his writings and the solitary reader. Scott may have "studiously avoided any attempt

at ornament" (123) in his retelling but he is going to "rehearse" the oral experience through his pen so that "read aloud, to an undoubting audience by the doubtful light of the closing evening, or, in the silence, by a decaying taper, and amidst the solitude of a half-lighted apartment, it [the story] may redeem its character as a good ghost story" (124). Through this tongue-in-cheek depiction of the scene of reading, Scott deliberately draws attention to reading as a multisensory event, even when alone.

The setting up of the solitary, although climactic, scene in the story's tapestried chamber, takes the reader on a journey that challenges not only their senses and perceptions but also the reading practices with which they approach the story. The reader in "Chamber" is aligned with the character of General Browne, a "gentleman of high consideration for family and attainments" (125) and veteran of the American war. Browne travels through the British countryside to reacquaint himself with the land from which he has been so long removed. These travels eventually take him to a "small country town, which presented a scene of uncommon beauty, and of a character peculiarly English" (125). As Browne's eyes range over the buildings and landscape before him, the picture forms into an almost perfect representation of the picturesque. The buildings and the landscape "intimating neither the solitude of decay, nor the bustle of novelty," with "few marks of modern improvement" such as dams and "towing-path[s]," starts to appear suspiciously staged. It as if the perfect tranquility of the scene, such as the blending of the ancient and the new, is a façade, smoothing over the blemishes and irregularities of the past.

The architecture of a castle that Browne spots peeking out of the trees embodies the various stages of English history. The castle is “as old as the wars of York and Lancaster, but. . . seemed to have received important alterations during the age of Elizabeth and her successor” (125). The towers are “rich in all the bizarrerie of the Elizabethan school, while the simple and solid strength of other parts of the building seemed to show that they had been raised more for defence than ostentation” (126). The castle is a physical manifestation of the progression of the nation through several eras to the present and bears the physical impressions of the different concerns of various owners (125-26). Browne’s sensibilities are aroused and he decides to “inquire whether it [the castle] might not deserve a nearer view” (126). The castle could contain some art or antiquities of interest to the curious tourist.

Browne is pleased to discover that his young school friend Frank Woodville has become Lord Woodville of this very castle. Woodville doesn’t recognize his friend at first and it is here that we get our first suggestion of a possible disconnect between depth and surface, representation and reality in the story. Lord Woodville stares at Brown “as at a stranger, upon the countenance of his friend, on which, war, with its fatigues and its wounds, had made a great alteration” (127). It is Browne’s voice and not his face that signals his identity. Once their friendship has been renewed, Browne entertains and impresses Woodville and his friends with stories of his days of military action. Browne displays himself as “the brave officer and the sensible man, who retained possession of his cool judgment under the most imminent dangers” (129). Both Woodville’s delayed recollection of his

friend and the consistent emphasis by Scott on Browne's rational sensibility and bravery hint at the events to come.

At the end of the evening Browne is situated in a "comfortable, old-fashioned room" (128) that unites "a modern air of comfort with. . . venerable antiquity" (130). The room is the perfect balance between the character of the old and the convenience of the new. Used to sleeping on the cold, hard ground, "[t]he general once more looked round him, and internally congratulating himself on his return to peaceful life, the comforts of which were endeared by the recollection of the hardships and dangers he had lately sustained, undressed himself, and prepared for a luxurious night's rest" (131). The setting for Browne's night of supernatural horrors is in this way set. By the morning, the façade of the perfectly preserved past has unraveled. Browne does not experience a "luxurious night's rest" and later reveals to his host a night of terror.

Browne narrates a story of extremes between tranquility and overpowering emotion. Browne's peace is initially disturbed by the form and movement of a woman dressed in an old-fashioned dress or *sacque*. As Browne makes himself known to the woman, she slowly turns and reveals herself to be a ghost on whose face "were imprinted the traces of the vilest and most hideous passions which had animated her while she lived" (136). The accompanying illustration captures this scene as its most highly charged and concentrated moment of suspense. As the woman turns her face to Browne, he is transformed from the stolid soldier into the quintessential gothic hero, physically overwhelmed by terror.<sup>53</sup> The officer is paralyzed and rendered powerless before a diabolical,

supernatural force. The woman makes “as it seemed, a single and swift stride to the bed” and crouches there, mirroring the general’s posture and pushing “her diabolical countenance within half a yard” (136) of the general’s face “with a grin which seemed to intimate the malice and the derision of an incarnate fiend” (137). Although the woman never speaks, she communicates through the mute contortions of her face and body.

Surprised by the emotional and physical violence of the apparition and gripped within her gaze, Browne states, “all firmness forsook me, *all manhood melted from me like wax in the furnace*, and I felt my hair individually bristle” (137, emphasis added). Browne is confronted with a telepathic communication from the past in the form of the woman and it has dissolved his identity and ability to process the moment. Browne faints and on awakening to the sound of the castle clock striking one, he spends the rest of the night tormented and haunted by the rawness of his senses and his physical and emotional perceptions:

I will not pretend to describe what hot and cold fever-fits tormented me for the rest of the night, through broken sleep, weary vigils, and that dubious state which forms the neutral ground between them. An hundred terrible objects appeared to haunt me; but there was the great difference betwixt the vision which I have described, and those which followed, that I knew the last to be deceptions of my own fancy and over-excited nerves. (138)

Like a young reader of the gothic novel (recalling the experience of Catherine Morland in *Northanger Abbey* and William Lovel in *The Antiquary*), Browne is so

paralyzed with fear that he cannot leave his bed until the morning light. It is then that he attempts to calm his nerves with fresh air and the prospect of escaping the Woodville estate.

Browne's self-assured engagements with the landscape and with others are "melted" in his encounter with the ghost. All at once, Browne's, as well as the reader's, assessments of his friend, the castle and the town are transformed. Lord Woodville, on seeing his friend's distress, confesses that he had deliberately placed Browne in that particular room. He tells Browne that the chamber had been boarded up for over a hundred years due to the general belief that it was haunted. Armed with rationality and in need of more space for entertaining, Woodville had reopened the chamber. Browne's visit was "the most favourable opportunity of removing the unpleasant rumour which attached to the room" (139) and so Woodville used Browne as the unwitting subject of an experiment that would benefit Woodville himself.

Although Woodville can see Browne's impatient desire to leave the castle that has so unsettled his masculine "firmness and courage" (140), he insists that Browne visit the castle's gallery. Again, an ulterior motive is revealed, as Woodville coaxes Browne towards a particular portrait. The truth of Browne's story is confirmed for he identifies the woman in the portrait as the woman who visited him the night before. She is an "ancient ancestress" of the family, of "whose crimes, a black and fearful catalogue is recorded in a family history" sealed within the young lord's "charter-chest" (142). The echoes of these crimes, including

“incest, and unnatural murder” (142), find an outlet only in the sealed writing and “fatal apartment” in which they were committed.

General Browne has been rendered a conduit for the powerful desires of the past to overcome and control the present. These desires, like Lady Forester’s imperfect exclamation, disturb the surface of perception but are unable to fully take hold. This past, in the monstrous form of one of Scott’s evil and “unnatural” women, creates a sensory interface with the real of history that, as in “Mirror,” challenges and almost destroys the understanding of its receiver. She serves to shock and awaken the viewer-reader to the realities behind a romanticized history. Scott then contains these awakening senses within the limits of the multisensory short story.

The narrative concludes with General Browne seeking “in some less beautiful country, and with some less dignified friend, forgetfulness of the painful night which he had passed in Woodville Castle” (142). Even though Woodville has the chamber dismantled, Browne, like the reader, won’t forget. The process of his understanding and his mode of seeing, hearing and feeling has been imprinted with the sensory and affective form of the woman. The aesthetic allure of the picturesque and legacy of aristocratic sociability will always include the horrors of the Woodville ancestress. As the reader of the *Keepsake* draws back from the story, her nerves on edge and hair on end, she will become attuned to Scott’s indication of the necessity of an authority and aesthetic created out of new modes of perception. These modes of perception will not require the masculine rationality or courage of General Browne but the authorial handling of Scott and the



receptiveness of the female reader. Through literature, an aesthetics and cultural authority gripped by a false perception of the past and its constructions of value can be destroyed in a multisensory process of continual resolution and dissolution.

### **Multimodal Economies**

The debt that forced Scott to experiment with new forms of writing was both an inspiration and a source of irritation to Scott. The aesthetic he works toward in his *Keepsake* stories is a phantasmagoria of sensory experience that is legitimized and controlled by his specific definition of literature. The difference between literature and other forms of writing is established by the way in which the media experience is handled by the author or editor of the work. Heath and Reynolds, on the other hand, utilize the economic opportunities of the cultural marketplace without taking responsibility for the cultural experience generated by their actions. They fail to acknowledge the potential of their readers, other than as necessary for the generating of a profit.

Although the *Keepsake* resembles other publications that Scott was involved with at the time, Scott's writings suggest that he believed the intentions of the authors and the authenticity of the project were what established the foundation of a cultural value upon which the reading public would build. Scott was annoyed by Heath's proposal that they "set off his engravings for the magnum opus against my contributions for the *Keepsake*" (Scott, *Journal* 524). The thought that his work should even compare in effort or value to Heath's engravings sent

Scott into an indignant rage: “A pretty mode of accounting that would be—he be damnd” (Scott, *Journal* 524).

Heath and Reynolds were men grown out of the new opportunities of the literary marketplace and they contributed to the growing celebrity and authority of artists, particularly writers. Heath’s aforementioned suggestion that the success of Scott’s *Magnum* was due to the illustrations and plates and not the novels themselves “touches,” Scott claims, “a point which alarms me” (*Journal* 525). Heath has critiqued a portrait of Scott that Sir David Wilkie has painted and originally intended for the *Magnum*. It does not, according to Heath, meet the visual standards that the *Magnum* should strive for. Scott is forced to look again at the painting with newly critical eyes and is highly resentful. The friendship between Scott and Wilkie, as well as Wilkie’s gifting of the painting to Scott, created a value that was generated out of a personal yet economically and culturally profitable exchange of indebtedness:

Wilkie behaved in the kindest way considering his very bad health in agreeing to work for me at all and I will treat him with due delicacy and not wound his feelings by rejecting what he has given in such kindness. (*Journal* 525)

In the end, despite Scott’s defense of the painting and his friend, Wilkie’s portrait was consigned as the “frontispiece to the 1820 reissue of Scott’s *Poetical Works*, an edition with a far smaller circulation than that *magnum* and for whose illustrations no large claims had been made” (Millgate 19). That a sense of gratitude and obligation overpowered Scott’s professional judgment as an author

and publisher adds an interesting dimension to the intimacy that Scott's multimodal writing evokes not only between the writer and reader but also between the writer and his medium.

### Chapter Three Mary Shelley and a Collaborative Literary Practice

This chapter reads Mary Shelley's *Keepsake* contributions as important within her body of work for the way she intensifies her career-long reworking of the literary and philosophical legacy of her parents and husband, including the skeptical literary practice that Percy Bysshe Shelley (P.B.S.) developed within his writing.<sup>54</sup> P.B.S.'s literary practice, for example, involved a retreat into the creative isolation from which Shelley attempts, posthumously, to release him through the *Keepsake*. Shelley's stories for the *Keepsake* invest in the abilities of her readers and situate literary value in the shared effects and resonances of writing and reading as a communal act.

I argue that P.B.S.'s essay "On Love" (in the *Keepsake* for 1829) informs Shelley's annual writings both individually and as a body of work. Writing, P.B.S. suggests in this essay, will never adequately convey our love for another or release us from love's narcissistic compulsion to imagine our ideal lover as ourselves. Instead of facilitating a connection between individuals, writing becomes another mode by which the individual becomes isolated and disconnected from others.

By placing this piece in the *Keepsake*, Shelley draws a line between P.B.S.'s portrayal of an idealized, inexpressible love and the aesthetics and exchanges of the annual. If the purchaser, giftee or reader seeks through the annual to find and have reinforced

[t]he discovery of its antitype; the meeting with an understanding capable of clearly estimating our own; an imagination which should enter into and seize upon the subtle and delicate peculiarities which

we have delighted to cherish and unfold in secret, with a frame,  
whose nerves, like the chords of two exquisite lyres, strung to the  
accompaniment of one delightful voice, vibrate with the vibrations  
of our own (48)

he or she will find that the annual serves to reinforce a whole set of conventions that will moderate and constrain the connections between people, in particular between the lover and his or her “beau ideal.”<sup>55</sup>

In this way, Shelley makes the same moves as Scott towards the multimodal possibilities of print to expand the effects of writing and to generate a sociable and collaborative reading experience. Shelley’s approach towards her readers differs from both Wordsworth’s and Scott’s, however, in that Shelley takes on the urgency of what appears in her stories as the social and political power of writing.<sup>56</sup> Vital to the literary practices of writing and reading that Shelley explores in the *Keepsake* is the individual reader’s self-consciousness as the reader navigates the sensory and intellectual stimulations of new technologies of representation.

Shelley’s *Keepsake* stories and edited works explore the creative possibilities that commerce and new technologies of representation generated as well as their potential dangers. The visual and literary content of her stories continually calls her and her readers back to the active process of creating, publishing, purchasing, gifting, receiving and consuming the annual. The narrative frameworks themselves highlight how reading, viewing a painting or even sight-seeing, renders the sensibility and understanding of the audience vulnerable to the

various economic, social and political forces that vie for the reader's cooperation. Shelley points to the ways the forms and conventions of the writing they consume can be shaped to formalize or disrupt social norms and values. This danger is the same for the artist and writer who must also operate within such forms and conventions.

Shelley, I contend, builds a process into her *Keepsake* stories that works to regulate writing's tendency to absorb writers and readers into its form and content. The *Keepsake's* use of print and different forms of representation could then produce exchanges that would allow for an opening and fragmentation of the self, an experiencing of the world through one other, to connect with other people and one's self. Shelley presents this as a powerful process of self-awareness. Value is then produced in Shelley's stories through a critical distance and awareness of how forms of representation and social and political structures can shape the individual.

The extension of the inner self through the formal aspects of writing, Shelley suggests, is necessary for the development of the self-awareness of readers as individuals and members of a reading community. This involves extending the body and its senses as well as expanding one's emotional and perceptual range. To engage in such a process effectively, writers and readers must always attend to the modes of their expression and receiving of information. They must also magnify and dissect their own motivations and intentions as well as those of others without becoming lost in the process or seduced by the promise of the medium to reveal and complete the self. Shelley's message is one in which the heightened self-

awareness to which her *Keepsake* stories guides annual readers will intensify the pleasure of making and consuming literature. As she provides readers with states of suspended disbelief, skepticism, passivity and active participation, Shelley keeps them attuned to their responses and reactions as well as those of the writer.<sup>57</sup>

The printed word plays off these responses to create a charged exchange of information and affection between individuals. Literature is distinguished from other forms of writing in the marketplace and defined, in Shelley's *Keepsake* contributions, according to the collaborations through which it was produced. Literature mirrors the exchanges and circulations of consumer economics and includes the artist and audience as well as the specificities of the writing in which they are engaged.

Shelley's model of literary production removes the author from the centre of the creative moment and inserts an audience with whom the artist must necessarily communicate and exchange ideas, energy, and emotion. She explores the ability of print to extend readers' thoughts and emotions and to make them receptive to those of others. This involves Shelley's revealing her own hand in the story's controlling of its readers. The writing must remain flexible and open to the individual reader's particular engagement with the work as well as the unexpected variables that will operate on the work's reception. Literary writing generates a creative collaboration between writers and readers who must necessarily work together to manage their experience. Through this kind of management, print's interventions in the cultural and social spheres are made more effective.

The collaborative literary practice that Shelley produces in the *Keepsake* creates a model of literature and literary value by which readers would be able to approach and evaluate the variety of print forms available in the marketplace and to identify literary writing. Shelley arms writers and readers with the knowledge by which to best harness literature's potential and to diffuse its dangers. Critics such as Judith Pascoe have made similar claims about Shelley and artistic collaboration. I do not, however, approach Shelley's depiction of this collaboration or the value that it produces as withdrawn from the public sphere and rooted in a domestic economy and its relations.<sup>58</sup> Rather, I argue that Shelley's experiments with a variety of writing forms as well as her familial training in the publication process made her a skillful and controlled participant in the literary marketplace. She incorporates these skills into the self-awareness that her stories work to produce in readers. This self-awareness is the means by which the revolutionary potential of print and the exchanges it can create will be managed. The writing and reading of literature will both transform the individual and provide her with the ability to choose and control her responses to forms of print. In Shelley's *Keepsake* contributions, print has the potential to alter our physical, emotional and intellectual perceptions but just as important is how we understand and use the medium.

Critics typically overlook these features of Shelley's *Keepsake* contributions to emphasize the financial stability that the literary annuals offered her as a writer and single mother.<sup>59</sup> Shelley's publication in the annuals is also, as Charlotte Sussman points out, "usually represented as . . . discontinuous with her early



career" (163). Shelley published at least twenty-one stories in the annuals between 1823 and 1839. Sixteen of these stories were published in the *Keepsake* alone. Shelley's participation in the annuals reflects the commitment and the self-conscious, careful participation that she expected of her readers. Sussman argues that "it is important to remember that Mary Shelley always wrote for money" (163) and that Shelley's contributions to the *Keepsake* allowed Shelley to situate herself and her late husband, their names and works, in the social and cultural centre of things.<sup>60</sup> Even after P.B.S.'s death, her controversial past, poverty and Timothy Shelley's publication restrictions had pushed her to the fringes of the cultural and social spheres, the *Keepsake* "put Shelley in the company of the other leading writers of her day, including Wordsworth, Scott, Coleridge and Southey" and allowed her to participate in "polite society" (Sussman 164). Shelley's professional relationship with Reynolds was intimate and friendly, but complicated as she also wrote for and against the *Keepsake* as a valuable literary form.<sup>61</sup>

I focus the following readings on Shelley's original contributions to the *Keepsake* of 1829, the short stories "The Sisters of Albano" and "Ferdinando Eboli," as well as her submission of five of P.B.S.'s unpublished works including the prose piece "On Love" and three verse "Fragments" titled "Summer and Winter," "The Tower of Famine" and "The Aziola" as well as the *Preface to Essays, Letters From Abroad, Translations and Fragments*, by Percy Bysshe Shelley.<sup>62</sup> I will also draw upon three additional stories published in the *Keepsake*: "Transformation" (1837), "The Mortal Immortal" (1834) and "The Parvenue" (1838).<sup>63</sup> I hope to show how

Shelley mobilizes value through her *Keepsake* stories and the critical distance that these stories were designed to teach annual readers.

### **Words and Transformation**

Words have more power than any one can guess; it is by words that the world's great fight, now in these civilized times, is carried on; I never hesitated to use them, when I fought any battle for the miserable and oppressed. People are so afraid to speak, it would seem as if half our fellow-creatures were born with deficient organs; like parrots they can repeat a lesson, but their voice fails them, when that alone is wanting to make the tyrant quail.

(Shelley, *Lodore* 316)

Shelley's *Keepsake* contributions and the above quoted passage articulate a belief not in the power of the word itself but in its power as a medium for positive action and change. First through her parents and then through personal experience, Shelley learned that a literary life, including the publication, dissemination and marketing of one's ideas in print, had the potential to be a radical act. Along with a faith in the transformative potential of words, however, Shelley inherited, as did other writers and philosophers of late Romanticism, a distrust of print as a medium for violence. An increased access to writing, including the dissemination of this writing in print, was viewed as an integral aspect of both the French Revolution and the brutal shape it took as it devolved

into dictatorship. The violence of the revolution deflated Godwin's arguments about writing's inherent ability to perfect the mind.

In the *Keepsake*, Shelley contributes to these debates and proposes a departure from the Shelley-Godwin-Wollstonecraft family legacy with its emphasis on words, particularly the printed word, as the site of personal and social transformation. Shelley instead focuses on the individual reader as this site and emphasizes the independence of thought and education necessary to manage the power of words effectively. The above quoted Fanny, intensively educated in *Lodore* (1835) by her father "to guard against all weakness, to make her complete in herself, and to render her independent and self-sufficient" (156), exemplifies both Shelley's ideal user of words and the necessity of education in her creation.<sup>64</sup> Through Fanny, Shelley explicitly draws a link between the delivery of words and the integrity of their user. In *Lodore*, the narration is ultimately unable to articulate a concrete picture of Fanny's experiences outside of the plot or to foresee her possible future. This novel and her original and edited works in the *Keepsake*, point to the inadequacies of the conventional use of words and forms of writing in the accommodation of the modern writer and reader.

In her own stories, Shelley attempts to prepare the individual for the skills that literary writing would demand, including the ability of readers to think for themselves and to manage the energy of words and a shared reading experience. In this way, Shelley's *Keepsake* contributions (along with her novels) both address and dispute the distrust with which Godwin and P.B.S approached print. Godwin's skepticism was rooted in a profound antipathy towards the more ephemeral

forms of print circulating among the uneducated lower classes, many of which, he felt, incited violence. Godwin, Clemit argues, went so far as to turn P.B.S. away from a direct engagement with the mass public and a "popular" readership. Clemit suggests that Shelley's attempts to intercede in the Irish situation of 1813 through pamphlet writing—"a direct address to a popular audience" (194)--were for Godwin an irresponsible attempt to influence and incite a large or "popular" audience. Clemit claims that Godwin sparked P.B.S.'s ultimate retreat from any contact with an audience, even through the publication of books, into an imaginative and intellectual poetic sphere removed from political action. What Clemit describes as both Godwin's and then P.B.S.'s "belief in individual judgment" meant "a profound distrust of collective political action"(193).

Shelley instead emphasized collectivity as the route to a fully formed subjectivity. Although Shelley's contributions to the *Keepsake* resituate the imaginative and intellectual spheres at the centre of society (including its economic and political activities) she also points to the dangers that the combination of print, social and political injustice, anger, and a lack of education could have in terms of the provocation of violence. She turns to a different kind of "mass" or popular audience and form of writing that was ripe for the kind of intellectual experimentation and mental perfectibility that Godwin promoted. These weren't necessarily middle-class readers but rather readers who would break down such distinctions through knowledge, just as Fanny Durham, born into poverty, is educated to become a fiercely independent woman who defies traditional configurations of gender, class and intellectual ability. Words are the

means by which the individual is controlled on a variety of levels and also the means by which the individual can work to re-articulate and shape themselves.

In Shelley's story "The Swiss Peasant" (*Keepsake* 1831), for example, words are used to awaken the audience to their experience in the world and then writing is used to circumscribe the energy of this awakening for positive change. Shelley's story illustrates how the word, in the printed form of the story itself, can not only create a heightened awareness of the ties of love and hate that bind people but also generate the tie itself. "Swiss Peasant" begins with the introduction of a narrator who rejects his familiar society to travel and find solitude. He finds himself alone and lonely in Switzerland "among cold-piercing mountains" (136) with only one book, Byron's *Prisoner of Chillon*, to read and help him to reflect on his solitary experiences. In an attempt to follow in Byron's footsteps and to "cheat the minutes in this dim spot" (136) the narrator begins to write a tale. Unable to "invent" or "concoct" a fictional tale or "lie," the narrator retells a story narrated to him by Fanny Chaumont, the heroine and the subject of "Swiss Peasant" as both story and illustration in the *Keepsake*. Isolated from others both physically and philosophically, the narrator learns through the tale to look behind his own perception of the things and people around him, to empathize with their conception of their own experiences and to create a connection of love and understanding.

Whereas the printed word is unable to capture the "greatest charm[s]" of the tale's original telling in the form of Fanny herself, the illustration is unable to capture the struggles and traumatic events of her life. The illustration's romantic

rendering of Fanny's figure reflects the kind of romantic variability and depth of emotion that the narrator's companion Ashburn attributes to all human lives. The illustration, however, also mirrors the detached, conventional perspective with which the narrator looks at the Swiss countryside and people. The narrator complains to Ashburn "of the commonplace and ennui of life" to which Ashburn replies that "[n]o living being among us but could tell a tale of soul-subduing joys and heart-consuming woes worthy, had they their poet, of the imagination of Shakspeare or Goethe" (137). The narrator scoffs at his friend's suggestion as "pure romance" (137). His hearing of Fanny and Louis Chaumont's story, however, forces him to realize that it is not only his superficial reading of his surroundings or Ashburn's romanticizations, such as the figure of Fanny Chaumont "descending a mountain path" with her son in full Swiss peasant costume, that comes between the individual and experience. It is also his own lack of commitment to generating a new kind of perspective that will more profoundly connect him to his environment.

The subsequent events illustrate how this perspective can be generated through the concentrated power of words and how this power and its effects can be channeled and redirected for positive ends. The story's trouble begins when the hard-working and long-suffering peasant Louis Chaumont is denied marriage to the beautiful peasant girl Fanny who has been adopted and given a "bourgeois education" by Madame de Marville, Fanny's family having been killed in a freak storm. Fanny's adoptive brother Henry is also in love with the young maid and because of the resulting passions, Monsieur de Marville sends both men away.

Resentful of his and his family's treatment by their feudal lords, Louis rallies the local peasantry to rebel against the aristocrats of the neighborhood. They attack Monsieur de Marville's chateau. The visiting Henry, along with the women, including Fanny, attempts to escape.

When Madame de Marville, confronted by the crowd, calls one of the peasants a "*canaille*" (Shelley's italics) the diffuse and unmanaged anger of the crowd is suddenly focused—"The word was electric. The fierce passion of the mob, excited by the mischief they were about to perpetuate now burst like a stream into this new channel" (148). The crowd threatens to destroy the small group of aristocrats until Louis Chaumont appears and, remembering his love for Fanny, demands that they let the women pass. The men may, however, "deal with the young aristocrat [Henry] according to his merits" (149). Unable to connect the words of the man in front of her with Louis, the man she loves, Fanny attempts to access his humanity by claiming that Henry is her husband. She appeals to the crowd's sympathy by asking, "Will you murder one who, forgetting his birth, his duty, his honour, has married a peasant girl—one of yourselves?" (149). Although the larger crowd is unmoved, Chaumont has an immediate and intense reaction.

One word—"canaille"—galvanizes the crowd to their murderous purpose and now two words from Fanny unleash a powerful love in Louis that connects him with those he only moments before considered his enemies:

"Even so!"—the words died on her lips as she strove to form them, terrified by their purport, and the effect they might produce. An inexplicable expression passed over Chaumont's face; the fierceness

that jealousy had engendered for a moment was exalted almost to madness and then faded wholly away. The stony heart within him softened at once. A tide of warm, human, and overpowering emotion flowed into his soul. (149)

Louis's resentment and hatred as well as his desire for revenge are unraveled by the even more powerful positive emotions that words have the potential to release. With much difficulty, Louis overcomes "the awakened passions of the blood-thirsty mob" (149) and rescues the small group. It is through the power of his love and "his energy, his strong will" that he is able to "over[come] all opposition" (149) by the crowd.

At this moment, Louis realizes that not only the feudal lords but also the revolutionary ideologies and words under which he has been acting have been in control of his mind and his body. He has become only mindless reaction. This realization is as if a "veil" has been "rent before his eyes":

The rage and hate which he had sedulously nourished suddenly became his tormentors and his tyrants—at the moment that love, before too closely allied to them, emancipated itself from their control. Love, which is the source of all that is most generous and noble in our nature, of self-devotion and of high intent, separated from the alloy he had blended with it, asserted its undivided power over him. (151)

Louis spends the following years as a soldier in a battle with both France's enemies and his own "fierce spirit" (151). Louis must painfully build an identity



and personality different than the one produced through the words such as “canaille” that have been imposed on him. Upon returning to the area, Louis unknowingly seeks sanctuary at the cottage of Fanny. The relationship between Louis and Fanny is subsequently restored.

Although Louis lacks the official, bourgeois education of Fanny, his newfound perspective on himself and his life is facilitated by words, just as his previous oppression had been enforced through their use in the form of orders and decrees. Through Louis, the narrator and the story’s readers are guided to an awareness of their connection with others in how they are shaped by forces around them as well as their own inner weaknesses. Reading the story becomes a mode of evaluating themselves as well as taking hold of their own thoughts and emotional reactions in relation to those of others and to the various forces that work to shape them.

### **Constraint and Limitation: Form**

Shelley’s contributions to the *Keepsake* explore what happens when both social and literary conventions and her characters’ proscribed identities and roles come up against experiences that challenge these forces and their limitations. Shelley uses a particular configuration of form, as the boundaries that can both restrict and help to refine and express our emotional and intellectual experiences, to draw a connection between two important aspects of her model of a self-aware, collaborative reading community: the formal aspects of literary writing necessary to manage the powerful potential writing has to enact change, particularly in

relation to new technologies of representation; and the social boundaries that are needed to maximize the effectiveness of the intimacies and exchanges of a communal literary process. Shelley's stories in the *Keepsake* suggest, however, that readers must always be aware of these limitations of form and be willing to use their literary practices to push against them.

I argue that Shelley was herself a skillful and disciplined writer who experimented with the constraints in which all artists and their audiences must necessarily operate. Such constraints include the limitations of class and economics on education and vocation and the gap between the individual's emotions and ideas and the technology available to communicate them. Shelley also highlights the limitations that she operates under as a contributor to the *Keepsake*. For example, seventeen of her stories were commissioned to accompany already completed illustrations. In a much quoted letter to Maria Gisborne, Shelley complains that the demands of the annual editors to shorten her work suggest that "people think ideas can be conveyed by intuition—and that it is a superstition to consider words necessary for their expression" (245). Restrictions such as the *Keepsake's* strict editorial deadlines and limitations on length and subject matter clearly mark Shelley's stories. Even so, they did not did not impede her art or her talent but contributed to the condensed energy of her writing and its intensification of the emotional and imaginative experiences of writers and readers.

According to Shelley's model of a self-aware literary practice, form does not have to paralyze the individual writer and reader or her characters. In actuality,

form as exemplified by the formal dimensions of the annual, such as the number of pages, the weight and the size, and its balancing of forms of representation, such as the combination of illustration and writing, or forms of writing, such as short stories, poems and essays, is often portrayed in her work as necessary and valuable. Form can regulate writing and its effects as well as facilitate the channels by which writers and readers collaborate in the creative moment. Without an awareness of how form acts on and within the individual, however, the individual's identity, their emotional and intellectual experiences, can become like that of Louis in "Swiss Peasant," locked within a set of beliefs.

The organizing narrative of "The Sisters of Albano," published in the *Keepsake* for 1829, for example, connects the constraints under which the oral story is told and then written to those under which the characters themselves are acting.<sup>65</sup> Shelley constructs the story so as to deliberately draw the attention of readers to the process of writing and the act of reading as a limited field. The written story begins with a claustrophobic sense of concentric constrictions of form and time with the oral tale and the listener in the middle. Encircling this middle point are the annual's restriction of space as well as the narrator's limited amount of time in Rome. The narrator's physical engagements with the land as well as her hearing and retelling of the tale are intensified by these constraints of time and space just as the constraints under which the characters live intensify their passions and beliefs.

The story's overarching frame is the accompanying illustration by J. M. W. Turner. Shelley's writing pushes at the perspective of the illustration to highlight

how form can influence how we see and interpret the physical world around us. The narrator's literary description of the lake of Albano is painterly, referencing the picturesque perspective of the illustration. This reference involves the physical elevation and detachment of the narrator and their fellow travelers (including the teller of the story Countess Atanasia D-- and her two children) from the prospect before them and the compositional layering and balancing of the scene. The description and the individual reader's experience of the landscape are not limited to the generic demands of the illustration, however, for they interact with the demands and restrictions of the short story and annual itself.

The narrator, for example, gazes upon the scene before her and her companions, the scene that is also depicted in the illustration, of two Italian peasants (one a hunter/farmer and one a "Contadina") who are themselves looking over the wares of a peddler that include "pictures and prints—views of the country, and portraits of the Madonna"(82). The narrator is inspired by this doubling of herself and the peasants to conjure a story. She states:

"One might easily make a story for that pair," I said: "his gun is a help to the imagination, and we may fancy him a bandit with his Contadina love, the terror of all the neighborhood, except of her, the most defenceless being in it." (82)

At this point, the narrator reveals the artistic and social irresponsibility of the romantic perspective by which she reads the landscape and the people in it. The activities of the three peasants do not in themselves indicate an illicit love affair. The activities of the individuals in the painting are of a cultural and economic

exchange that reflects the dynamics of the *Keepsake* itself, such as the consumers' perusing of the annual's offerings and their choosing to participate in the shared experience of owning and consuming its contents.

The Countess thus admonishes the narrator for her reading of the scene and draws her back to the reality of what she is saying:

“You speak lightly of such a combination. . . as if it must not in its nature be the cause of dreadful tragedies. The mingling of love with crime is a dread conjunction, and lawless pursuits are never followed without bringing on the criminal, and all allied to him, ineffable misery” (82).

Love, the Countess implies, is itself hard to control and when combined with actions that are not bound by the laws of civilization and the social and economic exchanges necessary to circumscribe it, there can only be a tragedy. To remove all of the boundaries around experience, the Countess implies, such as the framework of the story and the conventions around ways of seeing, is to remove its context, shape and meaning and leave only “ineffable misery.” Likewise, the imaginative and economic exchanges that take place through the annual have only a limited opportunity to dissolve the boundaries between people and generate a moment of communication and connection. It is in these exchanges, however, that such a moment is possible. We can imagine outside of such boundaries and frameworks but any expression of this imagining such as through love must remain within a set of forms and conventions.

Shelley's contributions to the *Keepsake* work to renew these forms and conventions in the creation of a modern reading experience. The narration of "Sisters" dissolves the various frames in which the story is situated and rebuilds them to transform the demands of the illustration and the annual. The intangibility of the Countess's memory and the narrator's experience of hearing the tale is initially brought into focus through writing. It is at the moment in which the countess agrees to tell the "real" tale of the Contadina and bandit affair, however, that the boundaries disappear and there is an exchange between the travelers, the oral tale and the form of writing by which it reaches readers. The printed product is mixed with the physical and oral dimensions of its telling such as the Countess's body and style of speech and the concurrent transition from day to night around the lake. The boundaries of form outlined above are loosened enough so that the story can continue through the twilight of the landscape to a retelling that is tenuously connected to the original framing by the illustration, the Countess and her memory. The tale is then dependent upon both readers and their ability to navigate and reframe the narrative layers in conjunction with the illustration.

This reframing can be linked to an important moment in the narrator's description of the lake and the waters of the Mediterranean glimpsed just beyond the hills. It is in this moment that living without boundaries and limits is understood to be the same as relinquishing one's identity to them. In the following passage the narrator describes the Mediterranean as a young bride who defines herself in relation to her new husband:

The waters, reflecting the brilliancy of the sky and the fire-tinted banks, beamed a second heaven, a second irradiated earth, at our feet. The Mediterranean gazing on the sun—as the eyes of a mortal bride fail and are dimmed when reflecting her lover’s glance—was lost, mixed in his light, till it had become one with him. (81)

This loss of an independent identity, particularly of a woman through marriage, and the type of exchange illustrated by the Mediterranean and the sun exemplifies the one between a reader and writing that erases all physical, emotional and intellectual borders. Like the bride to her husband and the Mediterranean to the sun, the solitary reader loses her identity and becomes only a mirror image, a representation of the writing’s and the sun’s physical form. There is no receptacle for the expression of the bride or readers themselves.<sup>66</sup> The tale told by the Countess, however, pulls readers back to an awareness of themselves as physical and social bodies in their encounter with the medium and their absorption by the act of reading. It also pulls readers back to an awareness of the limitations of writing, or any technology of representation, without the collaboration of writers and readers. The economic and emotional exchanges displayed in the illustration and translated into writing remind readers of their own agency in the literary process demanded by Shelley’s *Keepsake* contributions and the *Keepsake* itself.

### **Constraint and Limitation: Physical and Imaginary**

Shelley’s choice of contributions encourages the *Keepsake*’s readers to confront the abilities and limitations of print, and writing in particular, to act as a

medium for their seamless transition into another self and world. Shelley works to show readers how to use the exchanges and circulations of both writing and print to expand the self, to circulate throughout different communities, lives, and experiences and to connect with others without either losing their definition or being transfixed into one role or identity. Shelley warns readers, however, that the boundaries against which the individual defines and understands the self can become either so fixed or so unhinged that the individual is rendered unable to effectively read all of the outward markers and mediations that structure his or her life. The characters in "The Sisters," for example, are caught between resisting and surrendering to the social, political and religious constraints that define who they are. "The Sisters" plays with these markers in their physical states, as bodies and print, and imaginary states, as in social and land divisions, to learn more about how people interact with the boundaries and forms that mediate their lives.<sup>67</sup>

Both Maria and Domenico, for example, are trapped within the demands of their class and the belief structures of their religion and family. Maria escapes the poverty and despair of her domestic situation by maintaining a rigid piety and adherence to the conventions of her religion. In this way she is also isolated from her sister, who trembles "lest the nun, devoted to heaven and good works, should read in her eyes, and disapprove of the earthly passion that occupied her" (84). His class as well as his inability to escape the dictates of his banditti lineage and its conventions around masculinity similarly isolates "Poor Domenico!":

The reports spread against him were too well founded: his sole excuse was that his father had been a robber before him, and he had



spent his early years among these lawless men. He had better things in his nature, and yearned for the pace of the guiltless. (85)

Although Domenico's legacy of lawlessness goes against his simple and loving nature, Maria's and Anina's social situations add to their already rigid and stubborn personalities. Maria was already drawn to the martyrdom of religious faith and Anina's lack of education simply contributes to her tendency to emotional impulsiveness.<sup>68</sup>

Maria's religion and Domenico's lineage are ultimately unable to protect them. Maria sacrifices her own life for her sister and Domenico sacrifices his life for the honour of his gang. The irony, as Shelley depicts it, is that Maria and Domenico are citizens of communities that are structured by codes and beliefs other than those of the state. Domenico and his fellow bandits live outside of the laws and boundaries of the village and communicate through whistles and sounds. Maria's life in the convent is removed from the broader society and she acts from the belief that the sanctity of a self-consecrated to God will save her and subvert the power of the French military. Both characters discover that their communities are powerless before the state when it decides to assert its authority over them. The rigidity of the French general who has arrested and ordered the execution of Anina, his inability to dissociate his own emotions and desires from those of the demands of the organization to which he belongs, reflects the same rigidity in Maria and Domenico. Maria and Domenico are choked by conventions and beliefs that act much like the cordon that the French tighten around the bandits themselves.

Before she dies, Maria recognizes that orders of all kinds are “arbitrary” (94). Anina’s “sole crime,” complains Maria, “had been disobeying an arbitrary command, and she had done the same” (94). Without these arbitrary commands, however, and our belief in their reality, the story asks, what is left? The character of Anina illustrates to readers what it means not to recognize, respect or understand the forms, such as the laws and decrees and boundaries, in which a life is lived. Anina begins the story with an unrestrained ability to feel. Her love for Domenico becomes a passion “entwined with the roots of her being. . . herself: she could die but not cease to love” (84). This passion forces her to shield her thoughts and desires from others and blocks her from communicating with her sister and her father. At the same time, the passion inhibits her ability to see or process information around her. She does not realize that Domenico is a bandit even though every one else, including Maria, knows it to be true.

Anina’s inability to read the signs around her is connected to the absorption of her identity in her love for Domenico. She is so overwhelmed by this love that she forgets or fails to understand the severity of the military orders concerning the “forbidden line” drawn around the banditti hideout. The intensity of Anina’s love creates an illusory sense that she can transcend the laws of the state. She has become all emotion and gives herself to the dictates of her passion, not her community. She imagines that she still retains the freedom of her childhood delivering eggs and fruit to the Countess’s villa: the ability to circulate across all social, political and economic boundaries. As the French commanding officer later points out to Maria, “[s]he [Anina] is old enough. . . to know that she

ought not to disobey orders” (92). This is the knowledge that Anina fails to grasp and in so doing loses her ability to see herself and effectively read the world around her.

Once Anina has taken on Maria’s habit, the dissolution of her identity is complete and she becomes unidentifiable. It is only through her voice that Domenico recognizes her (96) and she must reluctantly uncover her face to show her father that she is not her sister (98). The story ends with Anina’s passion “calmed” and her identity shored up by the nun’s habit and the convent walls. She has learned to transfer some of her love for Domenico into “acts of benevolence and piety” (99) but she still focuses her prayers on Domenico and lives hoping “through the intercession of the Virgin, to rejoin him in the other world” (99). There is no essential change in her character or ability to define herself as other than her passions. “I shudder,” states the Countess, “at the recollection of the passion that has made her cheeks pale, her thoughts for ever conversant with death, her only wish to find repose in the grave” (100).

Instead of seeking immersion in another, Shelley’s story suggests, the lover should seek to acknowledge and sustain the individuality of the love object. Once again, Shelley draws a connection between the limits that must structure our social (intimate) exchanges and those that readers encounter through the annual and in its covers and pages. Readers must not lose themselves to the process of reading, and the giver and receiver of the annual should not lose themselves in the intimate exchanges of love and sentiment that the annual can facilitate. The annual can never meet and fully express the intentions and desires of the giver and will

not reflect back either to the giver or receiver their ideal love. It can, however, create a link between people based on a critical awareness of the annual's naturalization of romantic love through print. Resisting the constrictions and limitations that mediate our experience does not involve the sacrifice of the self but rather an ability to transform oneself.

### **Exchange: Form and Identity**

Shelley's *Keepsake* contributions encourage readers to embrace the literary marketplace in terms of the connections it creates between people and the diversity of identities and ideas that it offers them. Her stories also advise readers to remain vigilant and to protect themselves against the literary marketplace's tendency to freeze people and things, like the ladies in P.B.S.'s poem "The Tower of Famine," published in the *Keepsake* for 1829, into forms that can only represent, instead of live and create. Readers must be able to identify the physical boundaries that define and position them in the world, including the formal properties of the writing in front of them.

To develop their full power and abilities as readers they must, like Adalinda, learn to put a critical distance between themselves and others. Writing, Shelley reminds her readers in "Ferdinando Eboli," like the body, is limited in its ability to determine the self and to express this self to others. In "Ferdinando Eboli," as in "Sisters," form is manipulative and deceptive in terms of both literary conventions and bodies. The young Count Eboli of Naples is kidnapped, blindfolded and gagged and then abandoned. After being rescued by peasants,

Count Eboli returns to Naples to find that he has a doppelganger who has taken his identity, including his title, wealth and fiancée Adalinda. Eboli presents himself at the city gates, unkempt and disheveled from his ordeal and in clothes borrowed from a peasant. Even though Eboli's manners and behaviour indicate that he is a gentleman, he doesn't look like one. No one is able to read him or his body as that of the true Eboli. He has no artifacts by which to prove that he is not the imposter and when he tries to take this proof from his home, in the form of a miniature of his father, he is thrown into prison for thievery. The imposter ultimately convinces his in-laws that he is the true Count through a deliberate marking of his body that can be confirmed by Adalinda.

It becomes clear to the individual reader that it is the imposter who has earlier visited Adalinda in her chambers. The pretender had attempted to cut off a lock of Adalinda's hair and had cut his hand and developed a scar: "He drew his keen-edged dagger from its sheath. 'Ill weapon for so gentle a deed,' he said, severing the lock, and at the same moment many drops of blood fell fast on the fair arm of the lady" (198). This exchange of her hair for his blood creates a bond that later obliges Adalinda to confirm that the pretender is Eboli. Even though she initially accepts the real Eboli as the Count, it is the imposter's bringing "from his heart a locket, enclosing hair tied with a green riband, which she recognized to have worn, and. . . a slight scar on his left hand" (208) that sustains the illusion that he is Eboli and tricks Adalinda into the confirmation. Both the lock and the cut are used as proof that his body is what he claims.

It is Adalinda who is finally able to read the imposter's body for its secrets and to recover the real Eboli. What Adalinda and the story's readers do not yet know is that the imposter is Eboli's older illegitimate brother Ludovico. Readers do know, however, that Ludovico has spent "all his time disguised in the vicinity of the castle" (211) in which Adalinda is living. Not only does he disguise himself as his brother, he takes on a double disguise so as to protect himself from the discerning eyes of Adalinda. The ability to see through the disguises of others takes on a particular importance for readers as they move through the story. This includes becoming aware of the forms and conventions that work to direct how the individual must feel and behave.

The locket of hair, the sacrificial blood and the vows that Adalinda and the false Eboli make to one another under the moon exemplify such forms and conventions (198). As the plot makes clear, these conventions are inherently deceptive and serve only to disguise and distort the inner life and desires of the characters. The "hope of glory" and "visions of aggrandizement and love" with which Count Eboli galloped through life before being kidnapped are also conventions that dictate how he understands himself and his role in society. The Count's blind adherence to chivalric ideals is a beautiful distraction from the realities of his life. The tropes of romantic love serve to blind Adalinda and veil Ludovico's malevolent intentions.

When Adalinda finally confronts the false Eboli he is no longer able to conceal his emotions or the truth of his identity:

Their eyes met, he felt that he was detected, and she saw that he perceived her now confirmed suspicions. A look such as is peculiar to an impostor, a glance that deformed his beauty, and filled his usually noble countenance with the hideous lines of cunning and cruel triumph, completed her faith in her own discernment. "How," she thought, "could I have mistaken this man for my own gentle Eboli?" (75)

Through this mistake, Adalinda learns to trust her own readings and intuitions. "A few minutes before," the narrator claims, "she had been a young and thoughtless girl, docile as a child, and as unsuspecting. Now she felt as if she had suddenly grown old in wisdom, and that the experience of years had been gained in that of a few seconds" (75). The impostor reveals himself as Ludovico who conspired and acted to transform himself into "the noble" Count and Eboli into "the degraded outcast" (76).

Ludovico attempts to manipulate Adalinda further by evoking the "mutual overflow of feeling" (76) and exchange of hair and blood that took place on her balcony. Adalinda, however, now recognizes the modes through which she was deceived and answers that "she would rather share the chains of the innocent and misery, than link herself with imposture and crime" (76). When Ludovico refuses to release Adalinda, she dresses in the wardrobe of a pageboy, leaves the castle and for the first time in her life, is able to free herself from the social restrictions that have dictated her every thought, feeling and decision. She "tripped lightly on, in a kind of ecstasy, for many a long hour over the stony mountain-path—she, who

had never before walked more than a mile or two at any time in her life" (78).

Hungry and tired, she arrives at a cave and on entering she is once again confined by convention. She is made a subject or object of art.

As the plot moves Adalinda into the cave, she becomes the "Adelinda" [sic] in the story's illustration. The illustrated Adalinda is dressed in a pageboy's clothes while sitting in a cave, encircled by a wig, sword and simple meal. The narrator claims that "[h]er fanciful but elegant dress, her feminine form, her beauty and her grace, as she sat pensive and alone in the rough unhewn cavern, formed a picture a poet would describe with delight, an artist love to paint" (78). The narrator explicitly draws attention to Adalinda's entrapment by the conventions of the painting and the desires and expectations of the artist and cultural consumer. The disguise and the resolve that had released her from her former imprisonment and inspired her to access her inner strength and skill as a reader are translated into a pretty picture. She "sat, her head resting on her little snow-white hand; her dark hair shading her brow and clustering round her throat. An appearance of languor and fatigue diffused through her attitude, while her soft black eyes filled at intervals with large tears, as pitying herself, she recurred to the cruel circumstances of her lot" (78). Gone is the energy and ecstasy of her freedom. The illustrated Adalinda becomes a model of conventional femininity, idealized as an artistic object and commodity. It is in this state that Eboli finds her - "the wandering, fearful, solitary, fugitive girl; and never was lighthouse more welcome to tempest-tost sailor than was her own Ferdinand to his lady-love" (79).



Through Eboli's eyes, Adalinda has become a victim, lost to forces outside of her control, who must once again rely on a man to guide and protect her.

Disguise in this story can allow one to change one's position in the world and to learn more about the self and others. Disguise also teaches readers to observe and to be aware of the fallibility of their senses and perceptions. The manipulation of the forms by which we are defined and recognized including the disguise of the body in this story, can serve to both deceive and liberate. The moment of exchange between individuals in terms of love, money and objects and the extension of the self that it involves is an opportunity to both connect with others in a way before unavailable and to become more aware of one's identity and position in the world. The characters have to learn, however, the dangers of such an exchange and how to better manage the process. Adalinda's conventionalization through illustration forces readers to confront themselves as both consumers and objects in the production of literature.

### **Telling Tales**

Shelley portrays the collaborative exchanges (economic, intellectual and physical) between writers and readers in her *Keepsake* contributions as central to the vitality of the creative process and the viability of writing as it circulates through the marketplace and public sphere. It is not, Shelley makes explicit in her stories, the role of writing and print to explicitly teach this to its users. In fact, it is usually the readers who are asked to teach or guide the narrator or writer of the tale. In many of Shelley's *Keepsake* stories, the narrators are compelled to tell their

stories and most often in the hopes that the readers will be able to “judge” or identify a value in the narrator’s life and life choices.<sup>69</sup> The telling and the writing become a part of the process of reconfirming a reality that is tenuous and easily traded away in economic and social exchange. Guido in “Transformation,” for example, recognizes this most profoundly and spends his life surrounded by mirrors and the retelling of his tale as if to continually reconfirm the link between the physical and metaphorical aspects of his identity. Like Guido, the following narrators must continually purge their secrets and exchange them for the time and intellectual energy of their audience.

The collaboration between narrator and reader that plays out in “The Mortal Immortal” (in the *Keepsake* for 1833) and “The Parvenue” (in the *Keepsake* for 1836) serves a purpose for the narrator, who is temporarily distracted and comforted through the articulation of her suffering. The narrators’ initial reasons for telling their story to a reader, such as the development of an understanding of their life purpose or the ability to judge their own actions, however, are unfulfilled. Readers are left with a story without any didactic purpose or moral resolution outside of the collaborative process of reaching out to an other through telling, writing and reading. In “On Love” P.B.S. bemoans the fact that “words are ineffectual and metaphorical. . . no help!” in the individual’s quest to meet “with an understanding capable of clearly estimating our own” (38). Like P.B.S.’s narrator in this essay, Shelley’s narrators in “The Mortal Immortal” and “The Parvenue” end up “in solitude, or that deserted state when we are surrounded by human beings and yet they sympathize not with us” (49). What is important in the end is the

continuation of “this want or power” to communicate and connect with another (49). Even though the collaborations that enable the connection will not be perfect, the journey cannot be made in isolation and must be made through writing.

In “The Mortal Immortal” the narrator claims that he will write his story in order that the “reader shall judge” if he is truly immortal or not. He is no longer sure of who or what he is as three hundred and twenty-three years have passed since he drank Cornelius Agrippa’s secret “cure for love and for all things—the Elixir of Immortality” (“The Mortal Immortal” 224). In the end the narrator reveals his own “miserable vanity” (230) that has forced him to immortalize his story before destroying himself. He records his name in print even as he makes plans for the “scattering and annihilating [of] the atoms that compose my [his] frame” (230). He acknowledges, however, that if he is truly immortal, he may live beyond the lifespan of his reader and the printed word and so defy any conventional definitions of life and value.

Although his body seems as if it will live on forever, his emotional and mental life has run its course. Cured of the ability to connect with others but not the desire, the narrator has no one with whom to share his feelings and thoughts and so with no way to understand himself or measure his worth. “Thus I have lived on for many a year—alone, and weary of myself,” he writes, “and the ardent love that gnaws at my heart, never to be returned—never to find an equal on which to expend itself” (230). He is unable to connect with his fellow humans as “[t]he inextinguishable power of life in my frame and their ephemeral existence,

place us wide as the poles asunder" (230). He attempts to translate the immortality of his body into his writing and so extend his experience to others. Having watched his wife grow to disdain his eternal youth and then to die, and having been forced to move from place to place to avoid the suspicions and resentments of others, he desires to set his spirit free "to a sphere more congenial to its immortal essence" (230). In the terms of his narration, this sphere is the writing itself. Although the body is "too tenacious a cage for a soul which thirsts for freedom" (230) the printed page is not. Readers are thus asked to help him on his way to the transcendence of true immortality in exchange for his telling of the tale.

In "The Parvenue" the narrator raises a similar concern with the reasons and purposes of narration: "Why do I write my melancholy story? Is it as a lesson, to prevent any other from wishing to rise to rank superior to that in which they were born? No! miserable as I am, others might have been happy, I doubt not, in my position" ("The Parvenue" 266). The narrator denies that her writing has a didactic purpose and claims that she is writing only because she wants others to help her assess her life. She states, "my mind is bewildered, I cannot judge myself" (266). Writing provides her with an audience with whom she can build an identity and generate meaning and value out of her decisions. She translates her body into the narration and attempts, through the writing of the story and then through its circulation in the marketplace, to find a community of readers who will understand and support her experience. In her attempt to solidify herself through print, however, she realizes that her identity must come from within.

She is insubstantial because she is too responsive to the demands and needs of others. Her lack of a certain identity is reflected in her inability to name herself and for others to name her. The narrator, however, has had a promising education “not in accomplishments but in real knowledge” that includes “the wonders of the visible creation” to which are added “the precepts of the gospel, charity to every fellow-creature, the brotherhood of mankind, the rights that every sentient creature possesses to our services alone” (43). Through a series of events as well as her own weaknesses, the narrator becomes isolated between two different duties, one to her family and philanthropic ideologies and one to her aristocratic husband Sir Reginald and a social system that requires that she spend money on fashionable commodities. In choosing the demands of the family in which she grew up over those of her husband she is unsuccessful at finding a self. The choice destroys her marriage and her family comes to devour not only her money but also her body and soul. Her management of the social and economic exchanges demanded of her does not allow her to develop a fully functioning identity, separate from others. She loses herself to the process.

Although the narrator initially feels gratitude towards Lord Reginald for his rescue of her first from the fire that destroys her family home and subsequently from poverty, she does have the presence of mind to question his motives for marrying her.<sup>70</sup> Her own motives are clear in that she marries Lord Reginald to achieve economic security for her family, primarily her mother. In a singular act of assertiveness, the narrator stands firm in her belief that her marriage to Lord Reginald should not lead to her rejection of the community life in which she has

been raised. The narrator refuses to spend her marital allowance on herself and instead gives it all to charity, thus alienating her husband, who expects her to appreciate and enjoy the wealth he has offered her. "I would not," she claims, "spend twenty guineas on a gown, while I could dress so many sad faces in smiles. . . by the same sum" (269).

The narrator's compulsion to give her money to others with no expectation of a return only renders herself, her husband and her family unhappy and dissatisfied. Her determination to circulate money outside of the marketplace isolates her and becomes a duty that is just as limiting as the wifely duties she owes her husband.<sup>71</sup> The narrator is unable to stop herself from giving in to her family's requests for money even as her husband presents her with an ultimatum: moderate her charity or lose him forever. As a result, her family is corrupted by an insatiable desire for the money she unthinkingly gives. Rather than spend money on consumer goods, the narrator throws her money like "a drop of water in the ocean" (273) of her father's and siblings' debts and desires.

Neither the narcissistic consumerism required by her marriage nor the monastic self-denial required by her principles provides the narrator with a true sense of self or purpose. Her real problem, as it is manifested in her handling of money, is her inability to maintain boundaries between herself and her needs and those of others. Like the money she spreads throughout the community, her body, mind and soul are dispersed amongst the push and pull of different social and economic exchanges. They lose any value or worth. Even her body becomes insubstantial. In a moment of self-pity she writes of the husband who has rejected

her and her imminent death, “[s]oon will the hand he once so fondly took in his and made his own, which, now flung away, trembles with misery as it traces these lines, molder in its last decay” (274). As she writes, her body turns to dust and mirrors her loss of self. She invites readers to judge her actions and to help her to sort out her “bewildered” mind for she has lost her ability to evaluate what she has seen and experienced. It is up to readers, then, to establish and maintain their own sense of self and value through their reading of the story.

### **Extensions and Collaborations**

Shelley’s *Keepsake* contributions are intensely concerned with the ways in which exchange, as it is engaged by consumer economics and technologies of representation, can both facilitate and impede connections between individuals. This exchange includes the abilities of readers in the virtual collaborations necessary for literary writing’s establishment as the mediator of modern identities and definitions of worth. Whereas Reynolds describes Shelley’s contribution of P.B.S.’s works to his annual as a gift for which he was indebted, Shelley uses the actual commercial nature of their exchange as a means to create the ultimate virtual collaboration between her dead husband and an audience. In her Preface to *Essays, Letters From Abroad, Translations and Fragments, by Percy Bysshe Shelley*, Shelley describes P.B.S. as a writer who uses technologies of representation to see through the external aspects of form to its intangible inner qualities. She writes:

The eminent German writer, Jean Paul Richter, says, that “to describe any scene well, the poet must make the bosom of a man his

*camera obscura*, and look at it through *this*." Shelley pursues this method in all his descriptions; he always, as he says himself, looks beyond the actual object, for an internal meaning, typified, illustrated, or caused, by the external appearance. Adoring beauty, he endeavoured to define it; he was convinced that the canons of taste, if known are irrefragable; and that these are to be sought in the most admirable works of art; he therefore studied intently, and with anxious scrutiny, the parts in detail, and their harmony as a whole, to discover what tends to form a beautiful or sublime work. (341)

Shelley, in editing and publishing P.B.S.'s prose and poetic fragments, works to make a camera obscura of the bosom of P.B.S. and his readers through which his poems will be read.<sup>72</sup> Readers will find aspects of themselves fixed and traced in the poems and will finally connect with and appreciate the poet and his work as a whole. In all of her *Keepsake* contributions, Shelley explores the potential of writing and print to act as a portal between "internal meaning" and "external appearance" in terms of characters and events and in their creation and consumption. Writing becomes like the bird in P.B.S.'s *Keepsake* poem "The Aziola" who sings its way into the guarded soul of the poet in a way that readers can access and share.

In her "Notes" to the *Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, Shelley talks about her encouragement of her husband to try to meet the needs and expectations of modern readers if only to achieve a sympathy with them that



would in turn inspire and rejuvenate his work and his physical and mental well-being. In the following passage Shelley outlines her belief in the exchanges that must occur between writer and reader, artist and consumer in the production of art:

The surpassing excellence of "The Cenci" had made me greatly desire that Shelley should increase his popularity by adopting subjects that would more suit the popular taste than a poem conceived in the abstract and dreamy spirit of the "Witch of Atlas". It was not only that I wished him to acquire popularity as redounding to his fame; but I believed that he would obtain a greater mastery over his own powers, and greater happiness in his mind, if public applause crowned his endeavours. . . . Even now I believe that I was in the right. Shelley did not expect sympathy and approbation from the public; but the want of it took away a portion of the ardour that ought to have sustained him while writing. He was thrown on his own resources, and on the inspiration of his own soul; and wrote because his mind overflowed, without the hope of being appreciated. I had not the most distant wish that he should truckle in opinion, or submit his lofty aspirations for the human race to the low ambition and pride of the many; but I felt sure that, if his poems were more addressed to the common feelings of men, his proper rank among the writers of the day would be

acknowledged, and that popularity as a poet would enable his countrymen to do justice to his character and virtues, which in those days it was the mode to attack with the most flagitious calumnies and insulting abuse. (*Novels and Selected Works* 316-17)

It was P.B.S.'s play *The Cenci* and drama's more direct, physical connection with the audience that strengthened Shelley's attempts to convince her husband that he needed to write from an intention that would emotionally and intellectually connect him to a wider readership, particularly as the isolation he felt amidst his fellow humans was beginning to take its toll on his health and work (317).

For Shelley, writing's potential could only be realized through a reading community. Around the time that P.B.S. was writing the poems that Shelley contributed to the *Keepsake*, Shelley and P.B.S. met the famous Italian improvisator Tommaso Sgricci. Shelley's letters at the time indicate her fascination with Sgricci's ability to not only interact with the audience but to feed off and gain energy and momentum from his auditors. According to Emily Sunstein, "what especially interested her, [Shelley] and what she discussed at length with him [Sgricci], was the interplay between the improvisator's inspiration and the warming audience" (192). Shelley builds her own writing as a conduit for an exchange of warmth and vitality between writer and reader, artist and viewer, poet and listener. Shelley also clearly positions herself and her readers in a self-conscious relation to the form and the exchange. This is not only because the form can distort the connection but because to create a network of exchange with an unworthy or unskilled partner could damage the output of the artist and the

intellectual and emotional growth of readers. This is particularly true in the case of an artist like the improvisator who must rely so heavily on his audience for the creative moment.

It is for this reason that Shelley bemoans Sgricci's inability to become a printed rather than an oral poet. The energy of the creative collaboration between story-teller and audience can be condensed and controlled through writing and print. The ways in which print materialized, reproduced and distributed this collaboration worked to refine the audience's abilities to participate in the process. "If however," Shelley writes to Leigh Hunt, "his auditors were refined and as the rock or oak to the lightning—feeling in their inmost souls the penetrative fire of his poetry I should not find fault with his making perfection in this art the aim of his exertions—But to Improvise to a Pisan audience is to scatter otto of roses among the overweight stench of a charnel house—pearls to swine were oeconomy in comparison" (172). Shelley's contributions to the *Keepsake* illustrate her belief that writing and print provided a unique kind of opportunity for the writer to both collabourate with the audience that was so essential for creativity and to maintain control over the process. Sgricci is an extreme but fascinating example for Shelley of how she believes art is created and the fundamental importance of the exchanges that art can facilitate between literary producers and consumers. It is also an extreme example of how the artist and audience can lose true collaboration to sensationalism and fashion. By pointing readers to these same tendencies in the *Keepsake*, Shelley draws them back again and again to their vital role in the process of writing and reading and the pleasure it can bring.

As outlined above, Shelley's notes to *Posthumous Poems* express her frustration that P.B.S. was unwilling to cultivate a sympathetic relationship with an audience by writing poems and plays that would reflect and meet the emotional experience of other people. What is interesting is that she attributes this reluctance to his fear of the power that writing had to open his heart to the fickle and changeable readership of the popular literary marketplace. She claims that "Shelley shrunk instinctively from portraying human passion, with its mixture of good and evil, of disappointment and disquiet. Such opened again the wounds of his own heart; and he loved to shelter himself rather in the airiest flights of fancy" (317). That writing could shield or extend the messages of the heart and body in both a metaphorical and material way is a prominent theme throughout Shelley's work but one that is condensed and intensified in the *Keepsake* stories. In her *Keepsake* stories and contributions, Shelley calls attention to the processes that are involved in the creation and the reception of the *Keepsake* and, further, of literature. Her writing guides readers through a collaborative process out of which literature and literary value is produced. The purpose of this process is a profound intellectual and emotional experience of love that is necessarily transformative and that will change how readers view and experience their selves in the world.

## **Chapter Four**

### **City Space and the Literary Marketplace: Literalized Value in Landon's Urban Poetics**

The publication of the poet, novelist and editor Letitia Elizabeth Landon, more commonly known as L.E.L., in the literary annuals was integral to Landon's overall literary project.<sup>73</sup> Landon contributed numerous poems and short stories to annuals such as the *Keepsake* and *Amulet* as well as *Heath's Book of Beauty* and *The New Monthly Magazine*.<sup>74</sup> She also edited and provided the literary content for both *Fisher's Drawing Room Scrapbook* (1832-1836) and *The Easter Gift* (1832). Annual publication expanded Landon's presence in the literary marketplace. The annuals also helped Landon form a literary theory that she was experimenting with in all of her work but that found full resonance in the *Keepsake's* unique configuration of commerce and art. Where Wordsworth's, Scott's and Shelley's definitions of literary value and the literary marketplace in the *Keepsake* were still notional, Landon's were literalized as geographical space. In other words, Landon's definition of literary value materializes the features of the popular literary marketplace that is itself a manifestation of the energy and variety of the Romantic metropolis.

I argue that Landon defined good writing according to its ability to incorporate the varieties and speeds of urban life. This incorporation could generate new ways of seeing and feeling. It also had the potential to generate the literary terms writers and readers would need to manage their possibilities in terms of new subjectivities and experiences. Landon depicts cities as spaces marked by history, including the past collaborations between technologies of

representation and economic and political systems, but continuously manifesting the future. The city's ever changing configurations of people and things meant that definitions of value and the subjectivity they required were inherently flexible. The literary value that Landon defines in her *Keepsake* writings emerges out of a materialization of the popular marketplace that offered readers the opportunity to access and mold the city's dynamic manifestations of history, including the desires and needs of its inhabitants. Landon's use of imagery in her writings works to illustrate the literary practice and subjectivity that could arise out of such a value. This was a literary practice and subjectivity, like Shelley's, capable of managing and reflecting critically on its own impulsive renewals in relation to the individuals and things around it.

The premise of this chapter is that Landon used the *Keepsake* as a space that could take on the transitional qualities of urban space to generate a form of writing and a value that would be able to represent present experience in relation to a still open and unrealized future. This openness was also reflected in the *Keepsake's* embodiment of a variety of yet-distinguished definitions of value. Readings of Landon by critics such as Glennis Stephenson, Katherine Ledbetter, Jerome McGann and Daniel Reiss have made a connection between Landon's participation in the popular literary marketplace and her representations of literary form and value. They have included useful illuminations of Landon's self-consciousness in relation to her own commercially successful writings and other Romantic representations of feeling and literary production. They still subscribe, however, to an understanding of Romanticism and the literary marketplace as

inherently divided. Landon's challenges to anti-commercial definitions of literary value are understood to have failed because she was unable to produce a viable alternative definition of literary value. The relevance of Landon for Romantic criticism has become "as a poet of revelation, a prophet of the loss of the romantic vision" (Reiss 824) to the commercial marketplace.<sup>75</sup>

I depart from such readings to approach both Landon's participation in the *Keepsake* and her popularity with literary consumers in terms of her writing's positive, evolving embodiment of literary value as rooted in the dynamics of urban life and the expansive reach of the popular literary marketplace. Recent Landon research by critics such as Jill Rapoport, Adriana Craciun, Margaret Linley and Angela Esterhammer argues that Landon was asking important and relevant questions about how the production and consumption of art is implicated in the shaping of society as it moves into the modern era. Nineteenth-century critical responses to Landon's work support this claim as well as my own reading of how Landon's literary project was combined with the varieties of urban space. These responses ranged from idolatrous praise for Landon's feminine style and literary skills to a dismissal of her writing as too focused on superficial, popular themes such as unrequited love. On the other hand, Landon's work was also disparaged as overly satirical and pessimistic. That Landon criticism praised Landon as an artist of a new age, dismissed her as a writer for superficial, female consumers and admonished her from engaging in the masculine realm of social and cultural criticism indicates her ability to articulate and to evoke the variety of literary practices available in the day as she produced her own spatially situated practice.

To explore the relationship between the *Keepsake* and Landon's literalizing of literary value and the popular literary marketplace as urban space, I will read both of Landon's contributions to the *Keepsake* of 1829, "Verses" and "The Altered River," as well as a selection from the other ten poems and two short stories that she published in the annual between 1830 and 1836. I will also contextualize her *Keepsake* publications with readings from the three novels, seven books of poetry, as well as the hundreds of annual, magazine and journal poems and prose pieces that we know she published between 1828 and 1835. In this way, I hope to ground the vitality and importance of Landon's literary practice both in her day and for nineteenth-century studies.

### **Urban Space and Literary Form**

Landon's biographers and scholars of her work agree that the city played an important role in Landon's life and literary practice. Landon lived and worked most of her childhood and adult life in London (until moving to Ghana with her husband in 1838). Letters that Landon wrote from the country indicate that she found rural life lacking the commercial and so the intellectual, social and creative energy of its urban counterpart (Blanchard 58-59). Urban space also influenced the form and content of her works such as their reflections on the variety of ways in which people and things interact and come together in the city. These interactions are represented as capable of producing both undesirable waste and transcendent states of being. Most importantly the city's mixing of people and



things materializes the continual renewal of literary form demanded by Landon's definition of literary value.

Landon's treatments of the city and country within her poems and stories have been read as a self-conscious critique of the literary ideology and practice of her more rurally situated (ideologically if not physically) situated male contemporaries. I understand Landon's use of the city in her *Keepsake* writings as a part of her unique literary practice as opposed to a dialectically enmeshed engagement with masculine Romantic traditions of representation. Landon's poems in the *Keepsake* necessarily address the representational frameworks with which readers have come to approach art in the era and that create a divide between urban and rural life, literature and commerce, nature and culture. Landon does so in order to experiment with writings that would meet a modern experiencing of self and society. These writings would also require ways of reading and engaging with text that, in Landon's writings, appeared as distinctly urban.

Cities were the primary settings of Landon's poems and stories and even their most "natural" of settings, such as the bowers in which her improvisatrices live and sing, were city parks. Landon's configuration of the city and the rural in her poems resembles the bowers and treatments of nature that Elizabeth Jones describes as characteristic of the suburban poetics of John Keats. Jones situates Keats at the suburban border between rural and metropolitan life and at the forefront of an incipiently Victorian privatizing of nature for personal decoration and consumption (121). Landon's bringing together of nature and urban space in

her work resembles Keats's in its reflection on the bourgeois appropriation of a Romantic idealization of nature and rural life. That Landon situates this idealization within the architecture of the city, however, is not the simple register of a bourgeois desire to achieve the social prestige of a traditional, aristocratic economy. In her poem "Linmouth" (*Fisher's* 1833), Landon articulates the distinction between an imagined literary value and experience and a value and experience materialized in the city:

Aye beautiful the dreaming brought  
By valleys and green fields;  
But deeper feeling, higher thought,  
Is what the city yields. (45-48)

The environment of the city and not the country leads individuals to an emotional and intellectual transcendence and a heightened perceptual awareness of their subjectivities.

At the same time, however, Landon builds both the grittiness of urban space and its intensification of experience into her works. Craciun claims that Landon incorporated current debates on urban sanitation into a materialist poetics and philosophy of decomposition. There is more to Landon's use of the urban in her poems than decomposition, however, and that is the building of something new out of the city's rapid changes and strange convergences of people and things. Her poem "The Altered River" contrasts idealized representations of nature with realistic portrayals of urban effluence. In "The Head" (published in the *Keepsake* for 1834) Landon writes "[a]ll great cities present strange contrasts; the

infinite varieties of human existence gathered together mock each other with the wildest contrasts" (103) and in her novel *Romance and Reality* she describes the "crowded street" of London" as a space in which "varieties approximated and extremes met" (22). The narrator of "Linmouth" states, "I love to see the human face/Reflect the human mind,/To watch in every crowded place/Their opposites combined" (lines 25-28). Linley explores the ways in which Landon experimented with the annuals as the site in which to shape the new communities and identities made available through the metropolis. I read Landon as incorporating the city's varieties and contrasts into her literary practice to create a writing that can both evoke the emotional and sensory energy of the city street and shape it into a cohesive, although not homogenizing, whole.

The city, in Landon's writings, acts as the unstable centre of literary creation. What Landon is developing is a literary practice that is built out of and, in turn, shapes, the mutations and extensions of the city space. Landon's writing works to create a disorienting reading experience by using the form of the annual and its own juxtapositions of literary forms, illustrations and ornaments. In "The Head" (*Keepsake* 1834), for example, the illustration of the Countess Amalie de Boufflers in her costume as a simple peasant girl is juxtaposed with the story's final image of her preserved, guillotined head. The reader is left with a monstrous mix of genres that reflects the variety of literary forms and definitions of literary value in circulation at the time.

Seemingly pure and stable artistic ideals such as the pastoral and picturesque are as partial and fleeting as any fashion in Landon's work. Landon

emphasizes the inevitable death and decay of even the world's most powerful architectures as well as the ideals and emotions they were intended to monumentalize. In "Marius at the Ruins of Carthage," for example, the Roman General Gaius Marius looks over the crumbling architecture of a "city which once stood/A queen beside the sea" (19-20) and that represented all of the ingenuity and power of the classical age. Even "Religion, War and Love" (Landon, "Ancient and Modern Influence" 161), the three primary sources of poetry since ancient times, have lost their power and influence in the new world. The literary process in Landon's poems and stories must be responsive and adaptive to historical change. Literary production and consumption in "The Altered River" threatens to become stuck in ideals that will be unable to accommodate modernizations of representation in the forms of print and the popular literary marketplace.

In "The Altered River" Landon attempts to wake the poet and the reader from dreams rooted in a pastoral vision that not only isolates them from themselves and others, but from the realities of change and the possibilities for their interventions into such change. "The Altered River" begins with an idyllic poetic depiction of an idyllic pastoral scene. The river is described in conventional poetic terms as a maiden "fair as fair can be" (2) with a "brow" that "flowers wreathe" (3), untouched by the hand of man and "[w]ith fairy favours starr'd" (4). Although the scene appears to be one of nature at its most uncorrupted and pure there is already an indication that its perfection is man-made. The "hath leave" in the lines "[o]nly the morning sun hath leave/To turn they waves to light" (5-6) suggests that there is a consciousness shaping the picture. Although the mid-

morning sun evokes its later mid-day heat in which it will become “too bright” for the soft illusions of this representation of nature, the willow branches have been created to provide a “[c]ool shade” (7-8) for the moss on the banks. The scene is, however, necessarily static. It will only ever be midday in this scene and all imperfections of nature are resolved into this stasis. The poet and reader are lulled into a limbo that is detached from the realities of life.

The scene also “[s]eems made” (115) to be the embodiment of the traditional “haunt” of the “melancholy bard” (16) whose solitary musings will find correspondence with the beauty of the area. This is a charmed space, encircled and protected by pastoral poetry. The passive reflections and wanderings of the bard, however, are as inconstant as the idealized picture before the reader. The river, for example, is incapable of staying still, despite the desperate appeals of the ideal. “Flowers fling their sweet bonds on thy breast,/The willows woo thy stay,/In vain” (25-27) because in reality, nature is in constant flux and change. It is impossible to fully encase nature in a poetic ideal. A poetic tradition that associates the bard with an authentic sensibility and creative process is the same tradition that finds in nature the stable site of poetic inspiration and imagination. Landon points out, however, that these configurations of poetic creation and of nature are themselves constructs that do little to ensure the longevity and significance of poetry in the cultural sphere.

As Craciun points out, “[n]ature’ for Landon is undeniably inaccessible, remembered, imagined—whether in the country or in the city” (238). Thus, the feelings and ways of seeing that are attributed to this nature are also purely

imagined. We may “wish” for the river “to remain/The same pure and unsullied thing” but it is itself a man-made thing built to manage and explain the human experience just like any other artistic or architectural creation. The bard is a ruin or trace of the cultural activities of the past that were never themselves static. The two halves of the poem reflect and overlap with one another. The clear, bright waves of the first stanzas become the muddied waves of the final lines (36), the bright “morning sun” finds that “[s]moke has shut out ...[its]glad beam” and the lilies and swans are transformed into “barges” that must “toil” up the stream against “[t]he heavy bridge” that “confines” the stream (31-38). In accessing more effective modes of representing and relating to the world, to one another and to progress, the poet and his audience will be liberated from the ideal. They will be able to take part in shaping the rapid changes that the poem depicts as the river’s descent into the industrial grit of the city. The bard in “The Altered River,” however, is forever trapped in the “pure and unsullied” (21) scene as will be the “young poet” who later bends “o’er” the same stream (41).

If this young poet practices art as arising out of an authentic, unchangeable source that can only be accessed by transcending the everyday transactions of life, he will find only disillusionment and despair. As Landon points out in “The Altered River,” the production of art is not something that can or should abstract one from the “toil and care” (30) of life. The nature that Landon suggests the poet should associate with his artistic process is the river whose water must act and move and “may not rest” (28). The poet and the river must work to overcome the obstructions that “confines. . . [their] stream” [33] in the form of both the

operations of industry and the pastoral ideal. If the poet realizes that the artistic process is itself a process that reflects and engages in the continual change inherent to nature and civilization, including their continual dissipation and reformation into the new, then art will retain its life and power. If not, then modernity will only ever be perceived through the static lens of the pastoral ideal as a “sully” of pure, authentic expression and the possibilities of the city for a revolutionary reshaping of society and the individual will be buried.

In her novel *Romance and Reality* (1831), Landon experiments with a reshaping of urban space itself by means of literary form. She uses the skeleton of a plot and a consistent cast of characters by which to organize urban productions of knowledge and discourse and their related sociabilities. *Romance*'s varied and perplexing alignments of action and discourse create what seem like incongruous combinations of the material and imaginative. The continual diverting of action and plot, for example, with chapter-long conversations between characters on popular topics of the day creates a disjointed reading experience that must navigate what seem like simple recordings of the author's daily experiences with a range of dramatic events involving betrayal, disguise, kidnapping, murder and suicide. The instability of the novel's content in terms of a recognizable pattern or form leads the readers to reflect upon their own reading processes and the changeability of not only knowledge but of their own subjectivity in relation to evolving forms of writing. As in Mary Shelley's short stories, the readers of *Romance* are compelled to reflect on the responses of their own expectations and

desires in the literary marketplace. The novel turns the responsibility of producing literary value onto its readers.

The most interesting aspect of Landon's handling of a spatialized writing is her use of epigraphs to materialize the production of knowledge on a busy city street or shop or in a fashionable urban parlour. Each chapter has an epigraph that can range from lines of Milton and other such poets to snippets of overheard conversation, quotations from magazine and newspaper articles, plays, and a variety of popular publications at the time. These quotations are put together without any obvious connection to one another or to the chapter that follows. Here is an example of the epigraph to Chapter XI (a chapter that focuses on a conversation between two of the central female and one of the central male characters on the social nature and experience of women):

“Yet mark the fate of a whole sex.”—POPE.

“Look on this picture, and on this.”—SHAKESPEARE.

“I beg to deny the honourable gentleman's assertion.”—*DEBATES:*

*MORNING CHRONICLE. (23)*

By contextualizing the work of writers such as Pope and Shakespeare with extracts from national dailies such as the *Morning Chronicle*, Landon creates a form that is a literary embodiment of the fashionable city life in which the novel is set. This is an ephemeral, ever-changing and self-renewing kind of knowledge that must be synthesized and made into something meaningful and relevant by the individual reader. That these fragments of thought and conversation can lead to miscommunications and misunderstandings is played out in the novel's plot.



The novel's mixing of points of view and incomplete expressions appears to comment upon modern, superficial engagements with contemporary thought and culture. A 10<sup>th</sup> of December 1831 review of *Romance* in *The Atheneum*, for example, likens the first two volumes of the novel to "reading a volume of Horace Walpole's Letters (only that the names and news are newer), or, if acquainted with literary London, like passing an evening with half your acquaintance" (338). Landon builds a novel around the sociabilities of the metropolis to engage the ephemerality and incompleteness of all knowledge whether produced in the literary salon or city street. "So many," states the narrator of *Romance*, "act on the mistaken principle, that mere hearing is listening" (24). By calling on the active participation of readers to generate connections and meanings out of fragments of text and conversation, Landon produces a literary form that is initially unrecognizable but capable of prompting us to revise the ways in which we see, hear and communicate with one another.

Although, as "The Altered River" makes clear, urban life produces some undesirable effluence, it also generates a flow of ideas and emotions that the writer and reader can contribute to and control through the literary process. The river in the poem acts as a channel between the different spaces of literary production. Literary writing, writing that incorporates the fluctuations and energies of the city, will help readers to manage the affective stimulations of the literary marketplace by cultivating an ability for self-reflection as well as a responsiveness to a changing world. Landon's representation and use of urban space is a part of her use of the popular literary marketplace as the true site of

literary value as well as the site by which readers will realize their potential as participants in the literary process.

### **Popularity and Literary Value**

Landon equates her readers' navigation of the "varieties and extremes" of the city street with their navigation of the literary marketplace. She claims that the value of a piece of writing is predicated on its ability to connect with as many readers as possible. This is in addition to the valuing of art, its production and reception, according to its ability to transcend the reader's (and even the poet's) experiences. Good writing, in Landon's works, does not circulate in a disinterested imaginative realm only. To continue to produce art under this understanding will mean the loss of writing's ability to influence history and its future directions and developments. Landon's definition of poetic value is instead that which develops the largest audience, is purchased the most and has the widest circulation within the literary marketplace.

Landon rebuts suggestions that the popularization of British culture has resulted in the loss of a taste for literature, particularly poetry. Her literary practice is firmly rooted in a belief that the popular literary marketplace's distribution of writing according to the needs and desires of readers produces the best writing of its time.<sup>76</sup> In her anonymously published "On the Ancient and Modern Influence of Poetry," Landon asks, "[w]ho will deny that our best and most popular (indeed in this case best and popular are equivalent terms) poetry makes its appeal to the higher and better feelings of our nature, and not a poet but owes

his fame to that which best deserves it" (165).<sup>77</sup> Landon describes literary value as dependent upon the judgments and interpretive acts of the writers and readers of the popular literary marketplace. The market success of the annuals and their popularity with readers in particular was a model of the standard of value that Landon was generating throughout her career.

The problem with literary value in the early nineteenth century as Landon configures it is that "the little now written possesses beauty not originality" ("Ancient and Modern" 167). "We have graceful singing in the bower," writes Landon of contemporary poetry, "but no voice that startles us into wonder" (67). Literature has become a solitary singing of the poet to himself instead of a medium that will inspire readers and facilitate the individual's opening to the experiences of his own heart and those of others. Landon reflects and possibly responds here to both Shelley's theories on the collaborative possibilities of writing in the literary marketplace and this collaboration's ability to facilitate the individual's renegotiation of social and literary convention.

In "Ancient and Modern" Landon goes even further than Shelley to suggest that audiences are ever present and so they are the only aspect of artistic production on which the artist can absolutely depend. To declare that we can establish writing's worth according to its popularity defies a definition of literary value as different from economic and other material values. Her emphasis on the equivalency of "best and popular" suggests that the popular marketplace generates modes of artistic production and consumption that can cultivate the audience's inherent desire and need for artistic expression. The importance of the

equivalency is also illustrated by her extensive participation in the literary marketplace and the *Keepsake* as the most popular literary annual of the time. For literature to maintain its relevance it must be receptive to the vitality of the popular literary marketplace and its readers.

In "Grasmere Lake: A Sketch by a Cockney!" (*Fisher's* 1834) the idealizations of the Lake Poets have already become victims of an isolated rigidity. Landon creates an urban narrator who reads the Lake Poets voraciously and idealizes the solitude and earthy wholeness of British country life. This cockney shopkeeper sees the city through the filter of the Romantic poetics he so admires and finds "nature" all around him, whether "out in my gig on a Sunday" in the park or "in the arrangements of my shop window. . . as I watched the graceful ribbons mimic some gay parterre" (45). His imposition of a Romantic nature on the city streets and shops is ultimately unsatisfying. He inherits a home in the country and eagerly sets out to embody and put into practice the ideals of Lake poetry as he understands it. It becomes apparent that the subjects, themes and representations of the Lake Poets to which the shopkeeper looks for personal inspiration are a form of display and fashion very similar to the ribbons and gloves in the his shop window. Whereas the pleasure evoked by the novelties offered by the city "perpetually renews itself" (Landon, *Ethel Churchill* 35), however, the range of the emotional and imaginative enjoyments evoked by the idealized nature of the Lake Poets "exhausts itself" (Landon, *Ethel Churchill* 35).

According to Landon a desire and "taste" for the pleasures and enjoyments of art, particularly poetry, is an innate human quality. "In the most sterile times of

the imagination,” writes Landon, “love of poetry has never been lacking; the taste may have been bad, but still the taste existed” (“Ancient and Modern” 162). The taste of historical readers may have needed some shaping but their desire for a poetic expression of their experience will never disappear. The subsequent historical changes in “religion, in philosophy, in politics, in manners” have marked each era’s technologies of representation but particularly the form and reception of Romantic-era poetry (Landon, “Ancient and Modern” 160). A modern poetics must work to access the variety and energy of the city with its industrial innovations and new architecture and fluid organizations of people and things, and to refine it:

The influence of poetry has two eras,--first as it tends to civilize; Secondly as it tends to prevent that very civilization from growing too cold and too selfish. Its first is its period of action; its second is that of feeling and reflection; it is that second period which at present exists. (Landon, “Ancient and Modern” 165)

When we connect this passage to the passage on literary quality and popularity just preceding it, writing in the popular literary marketplace can be understood to be capable of changing the constitution and structure of society and of the individual himself. In this marketplace the writer must develop forms of representation that can articulate the realities of modern life and a new mode of being that the audience can, in turn, utilize and inhabit.

For Landon, the popularity of a writer and his works in the literary marketplace is not antithetical to the value of his work in terms of its literary

merit. If the writer becomes a status object with which readers interact, however, their work is itself forgotten and they are removed from the intimacy that writing should produce between writers and readers. "We talk of the author's self more than his works, and we know his name rather than his writings," exclaims Landon. The natural return for the writer's labours should be what in her novel *Ethel Churchill* (1837) she calls "fame" (34) as an emotional and intellectual recognition or engagement by as many readers as possible.<sup>78</sup> Creating involves, as Landon points out, sacrifice as well as joy. The responsibility of the audience is to receive the poem in a way that will engage the channels and modes of communication made available through the poem. The audience will be repaid by the poet's awakening within them "thoughts and feelings which stir the loftiest dreams and the sweetest pulses of their nature" (Landon, *Ethel Churchill* 34).

The physical, mental and emotional labour of the writers, the obstacles they must overcome and the actions they must undertake to publish and access an audience are inscribed in the text and will lead us, suggests Landon, to a more extraordinary understanding of ourselves and our historical moment. These are similar to the kinds of labours and energies modeled in Wordsworth's and Scott's *Keepsake* writings. Landon is unlike these writers, for whom readers are still essentially separate from both them and one another, however, in that she suggests that although the production of literature is mostly a solitary and internal act, the process is itself directed towards the attainment of a "universal sympathy" between herself and her audience across time and space. In the following passage

from *Ethel Churchill*, Landon points to the real labour that writing requires, as opposed to a creative moment that is disembodied and spontaneous:

The life of the most successful writer has rarely been other than of toil and privation; and here I cannot but notice a singularly absurd “popular fancy,” that genius and industry are incompatible. The one is inherent in the other. A mind so constituted has a restlessness in its powers, which forces them into activity. Take our most eminent writers, and how much actual labour must have been bestowed on their glorious offerings at the altar of their country and, their fame! What a godlike thing that fame is! Think what it is to be the solace of a thousand lonely hours. (34)

Landon here “parodies” a creative process associated with the privileged position of the Romantic genius (Craciun 205). According to Landon, however, industry or “work” is the natural manifestation of a creative genius on the part of both writers and readers. Landon also refutes the suggestion that the work of writing is its own reward. Literary value is itself worked out and carried forward in this process of renewed engagements between writers and readers as facilitated by the writing’s responsiveness to change.

The “fame” that the artist attains will sustain the creative activities of the artist in the present moment and carry her into a “future, glorious and calm” through the imagination and memory of her readers. The popular literary marketplace also provides the space in which new forms of writing can emerge that will meet the reader’s needs and different engagements with texts as they

change over time. "We deny that poetry is fiction," writes Landon, "its merit and its power lie alike in its truth: to one heart the aspiring and elevated will come home; to another the simple and nature; the keynote to one will be the voice of memory" or "[t]o another, poetry will be a vision and a delight, because the virtue of which he dreams is there realized" (164).

The most detrimental barrier to the individual reader's ability to reach her potential in both the city and literary marketplace, as it is represented in Landon's work, is the critical apparatus, the literary terms and expectations that have begun to scaffold it. Readers come to understand that they must go through this structure in order to appreciate any work of art. The individual develops an approach to writing that emphasizes self-doubt and calls into question her ability to see, read or listen with her own powers of perception and discernment. "Books, works of art, the noble statue," Landon writes in *Romance*, "the glorious picture, how rarely are any of these the subjects of conversation? Few venture to speak on any topic that really interests them, for fear they should be led away by the warmth of speaking, and, by saying more than they intended, lay themselves open to the sarcasm which lies, like an Indian in ambush, ready to spring forth the moment the victim is off his guard" (102). Eventually, readers are reduced to a cynical artistic judgment that must "either be convinced or sneered into" (Landon, "Ancient and Modern" 167) an opinion. What they like must certainly be bad. Although, Landon argues, literary writing is in a process of transition, its obligation is still to unite people in feeling. The popular literary marketplace has the potential to open people to one another across divides that were previously unbridgeable.



The narrator of "Grasmere," for example, ultimately finds that living according to the high ideals of the Lake Poets is boring and lonely. He claims that he has been left without a domestic companion because "the poetry by which I have regulated my existence is eloquent upon love, but silent upon matrimony" and, furthermore, "Moore says, no great genius ever yet lived happily with his wife" (46). The narrator describes his slow disillusionment with the ideals of the pastoral:

The influence of the Lake poets was on "the haunted air." I went to bed, and dreamt of getting up early, and really had new-laid eggs, and milk from the cow, for breakfast; but—for the truth be told, when we are tired to death of keeping it to ourselves—I am a miserable man: I really do not know what to do with myself, the nights are so long; for I go to bed soon, and get up late--and the days are yet longer. In vain I remind myself, that I have realized my former dreams of human felicity; that I bake my own bread, grow my own vegetables, and kill my own mutton. (46)

The realities of rural life leave the narrator without basic human contact. In Landon's configuration, the realities of country life are unable to provide the ideological or imaginative restitution that is promised by the poet. That neither the ideologies of the Lake Poets nor the social and configurations of the city are able to connect people with one another in her work is a failure of representation. The technologies of representation that filter how we interact with our

environment, such as the pastoral and picturesque, are unable to lead readers to the mix of self-reflection and thought and the stimulations and novelties of the literary marketplace and the urban space that literary writing should lead them. They are also unable to effectively manage the dynamics of the city and the realities of modern life to ensure their own circulation into the future. They lead instead to disillusionment and apathy.

Finally the narrator of "Grasmere" demands a repayment for his sacrifices to an idealized nature. "I have done a great deal for the poets," he states, "is there not one among them to do something for me?" (47). The narrator then suggests that one of the poets should die in his garden so as to create a permanent tourist attraction by which he could meet people and earn an income. The Lake poet has become kitsch. The rural economy and life to which the narrator has "returned" consists of an endless domestically restrained circulation that doesn't allow an expansion into the future or even an ability to sustain a self in the present. As Landon makes clear in this context, the poetic practice of the Lake poet is as much a part of the literary marketplace as her more popular and widely consumed works in the literary annuals. An ability to adapt and change is vital because as her work constantly makes clear, there is no essential nature to fall back on and no stable monument on which to ensure the longevity and influence of one's life and work. Landon refuses to look back at an imaginary rural organization of society with nostalgia.

## Urban Space and the Past

All of Landon's *Keepsake* poems and stories work to facilitate an intimacy between writer and readers in terms of a shared experience of change, historical or in terms of the individual life. Writing acts as a form of representation through which people are connected by the memories and desires that it can hold but only in the shaping of a future to which all of her work points. By playing with her readers' desires and expectations, memories and emotions, Landon forces them to confront their own role as readers and consumers and to understand the powerful effect that different technologies of representation can have on their experience of themselves and their environment.

In "The Head," Landon draws a direct connection between language and its definition of the individual. The Countess de Boufflers is described as physically perfect but not beautiful in the terms of an English definition: "Beautiful she was not, for the imagination and the heart must enter into the composition of beauty—that beauty which is both poetry and passion; but, after all, there is no word in French that translates our 'beautiful,' and who in her own sphere could have desired her to be what their language did not even express?" (93). Despite the obvious ethnocentrism of this passage, there is a commentary on how language itself limits our modes of being and feeling in the world. Who we are and what we desire are defined by the technologies through which we express and represent experience.

The implication of this argument is that all experience is mediated, even the Romantic poet's imaginative or "authentic" interfaces with Nature. Landon claims

that what lies underneath these mediations is a “conviction at which, though forced upon us by daily experience, we never arrive, namely, the conviction that Nobody in reality cares for Anybody; but this truth is so cold that we fence it out by all sorts of cloaks and coverings, delusions and devices” (102). The solitary dream offered by a poetic Nature where “one might dream the hours away,/As if the world had not/Or grief, or care, or disarray,/To darken human lot” (17-20) provides a pleasure that evades this truth and removes literature’s agency in the shaping of the endless transformations of the present moment.

The city in Landon’s work is indelibly marked by reminders of human suffering and mortality both in terms of the bodies of its citizens and its own streets and buildings. The “truth” she articulates above is most often revealed in terms of the relentless changes of the city where “on all/Is set the sign and seal/Of sorrow, suffering, and thrall,/Which none but own and feel” (“Linmouth” 37-40). Instead of numbing readers, these markings intensify a shared human “feeling” and “thought” (47). It is in the city that “Industry, intellect, and skill/Appear in all their pride,/The glorious force of human will/Triumphs on every side” (33-36). The literary marketplace as urban space is where writers and readers can experience both the cold truth of their mortality and the forms in which their emotions, memories and experiences will be embodied and recycled into the future.

This recycling necessarily requires the constant adaptations of literary convention and value to the needs and desires of the present moment. In this way, writing would replace the early nineteenth-century social norms and institutions

that worked to bind people together. The characters in Landon's *Keepsake* poems such as "The Forgotten One" (1831) can attempt to preserve their memories in mementos such as a "picture to recall," "profiled outline on the wall" or a "ringlet of hair" (13-18) but they are unable to arrest time and the process of forgetting, nor should they:

Ah! It is well we can forget,  
Or who could linger on  
Beneath a sky whose stars are set,  
On earth whose flowers are gone?  
For who could welcome loved ones near,  
Thinking of those once far more dear. (49-54)

To live in the past destroys our ability to feel and share with others: "We grow suspicious, careless, cold;/ We love not as we loved of old (59-60). The inability of the bride of "Remembrance" (in the *Keepsake* for 1837) to move beyond her loss to the future, for example, holds the individual accountable for their negotiations of history as they move into the future as readers.

In two of Landon's *Keepsake* poems, "Marius At the Ruins of Carthage" (in the *Keepsake* for 1833) and "The Return" (in the *Keepsake* for 1831), this moving forward requires a return, but not a nostalgic return to a perfectly preserved past. The Carthage referred to in "Marius" is the city site of the mythological Dido's rise to power as Queen of Carthage. General Marius finds himself forced to camp at Carthage due to "gloomy seas and stormy skies" (4) and in a moment of solitude he looks over the collapsed city. As a city whose architecture was built out of

political and economic struggle and questions of loyalty and power, Carthage's ruins stand before Marius as the embodiment of his own inevitable defeat before time, either in his political career or death. This defeat contrasts with the virile young soldier depicted in John Vanderline's accompanying illustration. Wild flowers grow up between the cracks of broken "column's pride" and sand drifts over "[t]he arch, the once triumphal, spann'd" (9-12) and even the city's sites of domestic regulation and peace such as the "calm and quite home" and "senate, with its pillar'd hall" and "palace with its dome" (14-16) have crumbled. "All things in which men boast and trust," and that are assumed would last forever, lie "prone in the unconscious dust" (17-18). They do so, however, to make way for historical developments yet to come.

Where "Marius" leaves off in terms of Carthage's thwarted "[p]ath for bold oar or daring prow" (24), "The Return" revives with the naval return of a traveler to the city of his childhood. "Drop down your oars, the waters trace/Their own path fast enough for me" (1-2), states the poem's narrator, as he takes "a breathing space" on which to reflect upon Nantz, the "[f]air city" to which he "come[s] once more" (5). The return, in this poem, is a return to the community and human connection that the city can provide the lone traveler. This traveler-narrator describes the youthful exuberance and inexperience with which he left the city to find wealth. The "[h]ope" of his youth created an idealized vision of a "future that its wish reveals" (13-14). His life's "[a]dventure, trouble, sorrow, strife" (23) has led to his financial success but not to his success in terms of a sharing of experience and affections with others:

Affection's circle soon grows less—

The dead, the changed, what blanks are there!

And what avails half life's success,

No early friends can see and share? (29-32)

Although this return involves a certain amount of looking back, the past is itself a “shadow” that produces fear and dread in the narrator (33-36). The return is focused on the future and on the new, more experienced “hopes in yonder city's walls” (37). The energy of the bustling scene before the narrator, including the sound of his “native tongue around,” revives his youthful desire for experience and wealth but in terms of intimacy, rather than monetary returns. “Oh!” he exclaims, “for some voice I used to hear,/The grasp of one familiar hand;/So long desired, and now so near” (35-37). The walls and banks of the city do not simply preserve the narrator's past self, his desires and dreams, but evoke in him a renewed envisioning of the future. The literary theory that Landon builds throughout her career attributes to writing and the literary marketplace the material transformations of the city and its regenerations of form and content, including of its citizens. Literary writing, according to this theory, has the added unique ability to access and transform the emotional and intellectual dimensions of the individual and the society in which they live.

### **Producing a Modern Poetics**

Landon's literary project, both within and outside of the *Keepsake*, is to literalize literary value as the reflexivity of the literary marketplace and of the city.

In pursuing this project, Landon works to transform technologies of representation that keep readers trapped within limiting and outdated structures and ideals. The stakes of this project are the continued relevance of writing in the cultural life of modern Britain. Landon's Romantic liberation of the minds and bodies of her readers is not an idea or ideology nor an enactment of physical power. Landon attempts to build a literary value and form that will put into practice a new, flexible, adaptable, responsive subjectivity. Her writings in the *Keepsake* as well as her other editing and publishing work, including her prolific literary interpretations of the mediums of print and illustration, are material manifestations of urban space with all of its varieties, instabilities and often uncomfortable elisions of people and things.

Landon explores the virtual sociabilities and shared emotions facilitated by the popular literary marketplace and materialized by the *Keepsake*. Her incorporation of the varieties and extremes of urban space into her configuration of literary value and form allows her to experiment with pushing through the limits of conventional forms of representation that in turn shape the subjectivities of writers and readers. In so doing, Landon appropriates the ability of the city to archive the past, including the memories of its citizens, while constantly transforming itself in terms of its every mutating form and content into the future. I argue that the embodied discourse of literary value engaged by Wordsworth, Scott and Shelley is taken out of the realm of conversation by Landon. Landon's definition of literary value and form emerges out of the very dynamics of modern life.



## Epilogue

Wordsworth's, Scott's, Shelley's and Landon's work in the *Keepsake* is an exciting glimpse into how writers responded to the *Keepsake's* embodiment (through the form of its volumes as well as the stories, poems and art that made up their content) of the Romantic scene as a site of dynamic negotiations of value. This dissertation has traced how these four writers used the *Keepsake* to mediate their experiments with aesthetics and commerce, reading and writing in the production of ideas of value that could be mobilized into the future. These experiments include Wordsworth's and Scott's remediations of traditional ideas of value as materialized and mobilized, for Wordsworth, through consumer choice and, for Scott, through the exchanges of a commercial credit economy and multimodal process of reading and writing; Shelley's model of reading and writing as collaborative value, and the necessary self-awareness of its participants; and Landon's critical detachment and literalizing of value as a geographical site, London. That the *Keepsake* offers multiple case studies of Romantic value as a dynamic idea in a state of flux opens up interpretive possibilities for a rethinking of how value was understood and practiced in the era, including how ideas of value and forms of writing and print inflected one another.

My own reading of this inflection has led me to approach the *Keepsake* not as a commodity by which consumers displayed or affirmed their social status but as an object that brought together innovations in print technology, writing and economics. This combination, I argue, created a site through which writers and readers could engage in new forms of feeling and modes of action. My analysis of

the ways in which the above four writers participated in the *Keepsake's* virtual sociabilities has allowed me to begin to answer the question with which I introduced the dissertation. If the Romantic imagination and literary value can be located in the desiring of commodities one may or may not be able to possess, what happens to the value of purchasing or “getting” the annual itself.

Landon's work in the *Keepsake* suggests that the value of the annual was produced through the acts of purchasing, giving and receiving as well as writing for, reading and viewing the annual. To own and to read the annual was, in Landon's work, as well as in Shelley's and more subtly in Scott's, a collaborative act that generated a value that was fluid and open to the dynamics of its audience. Thus, according to Landon, market success or “popularity” operated as more than an idea used by the annual editors to market their wares. Popularity, Landon claims, produced value as a kind of writing that was purchased and, most importantly, read en masse by a receptive literary public.

I argue that for Landon, a book in the hand was a powerful site of literary value making that was able to adapt to the transformations of modern life, including the changing desires and needs of writing's producers and consumers. Landon's ideas about the materiality of literary value can be found in the later aesthetic theories of Walter Benjamin, particularly his writings on book collecting in “Unpacking My Library: A Talk About Collecting” (1931). The most significant difference between Landon's and Benjamin's arguments, as I will illustrate, is in Landon's emphasis on writing and Benjamin's on the book that contains it.

Landon's writings both suggest the later modernism of Benjamin and take it a step further.

Benjamin's celebration of the book as an object that produces value through its acquisition and handling reflects Landon's connection of literary value with the successful sales of a piece of writing and the amount of people who possess it. Like Landon, Benjamin situates the value of the book in its materiality, its arrangement on the shelf, and its evocation of experiences and memories, the "distant past" (487) not only of the book but also of the collector. Whereas Landon presents this evocation as a part of writing's reshaping of the past into the future, Benjamin suggests that the value of the book is in its ability to revive and preserve the past — "To renew the old world, this is the collector's deepest desire" (487). Landon is writing to a future from a past that Benjamin desires and that she describes as already, irrevocably in ruin.

Furthermore, Benjamin locates the book's value solely in the imaginative and aesthetic experiences it evokes as an object. The value of the book is disconnected from its content or its utility as a facilitator of knowledge and intimacy. In fact, Benjamin claims, a valuable library is valuable because it was difficult to acquire and it hasn't been read. "The purchasing done by a book collector," he writes, "has very little in common with that done in a bookshop by a student getting a textbook, a man of the world buying a present for his lady, or a businessman intending to while away his next train journey" (489). This is a distinct departure from Landon's situating of the annual's value in both its purchase and *reading* and the connections it can generate between people.

Landon, unlike Benjamin, combines the value of the book as an object for sale with its value as a piece of literature or “good” writing. She does so by spatializing value itself. As I have illustrated, reading and writing in Landon’s *Keepsake* poems and stories not only mirror the city, they are virtually connected to it—their spatial dimensions, paths of meaning as well as reflexivity are the same. In this way, writers and readers are virtually connected through the *Keepsake* and so the value of writing unfolds in the real time of the printed words as they are produced, purchased and, most importantly, consumed. I will conclude with a reading of “Verses” from the 1829 *Keepsake* in which Landon puts into play the fundamental concerns of this dissertation about literature, commerce and value.

Landon’s representation of a traditional, romantic idealization of beauty and artistic creation in “Verses” is not a nostalgic one. She uses Heath’s portrait of Georgiana, Duchess of Bedford to illustrate how the process by which she translates the image of the Duchess into verse is also the process by which writers and readers in the popular literary marketplace reconfigure literature and their own subjectivities. What the illustration becomes a chronicle of, like the accompanying poem, is the process by which new technologies of representation and their users are formed.

The first stanza comments on the conventional composition of the illustration, such as the ways in which the Duchess’s hair, clothes and body are arranged in an obvious homage to a romantic ideal of British history. The portrait of the Duchess is situated within an aesthetic and cultural tradition that supports a

social system the rest of the poem attempts to undermine. That this tradition still has currency in a modern cultural marketplace, however, is the poem's overall concern. The Duchess's beauty, for example is described as natural and artless just as her hair is described as hanging over her shoulders as if "passing winds paid homage here" (3). In the following passage, Beauty is depicted as inherently aristocratic and so validated by nature itself:

And gems, such gems as only princes cull  
From earth's rich veins, are round thy neck and arm;  
Ivory, with just one touch of colour warm;  
And thy white robe floats queen-like, suiting well  
A shape such as in ancient pictures dwell. (4-8)

Nature, or the earth, offers up her "rich veins" to accessorize and sustain an ideal beauty that brings together social and monetary wealth with physical attractiveness. The Duchess's body, Landon points out, is arranged so as to display "[a] shape such as in ancient pictures dwell" (8).

Here Landon points to the ways in which technologies of representation not only represent history, but shape it. An idealization of history fails to register the "thousands nameless, hopeless" (18) who have been sacrificed for political, social and economic ends. "If thou," Landon begins the second stanza addressing the woman in the portrait, "hadst lived in that old haunted time,/When sovereign Beauty was a thing sublime,/For which knights went to battle" (9-11) then "chivalrie/With brand and banner, would have honour'd thee!" (14). Chivalry as a cultural practice is qualified, however, once one realizes that it was the ideal, not

the Duchess herself, that would have been source of admiration. The Duchess's "glove/Had even more of glory than of love" (11-12) and so, like a glove, the Duchess possesses value only according to her representation of "Beauty" and "Love" and "Honour." She is used as an inspiration and justification for personal glory in the guise of love.

Although the artist has tried to position her within an ancient knowledge and expression, the Duchess exudes an agency that eludes his control. If the Duchess really is a product of the age and ideals that the portrait attempts to recreate, then her painted form would be a silent chronicle of the historical moment "whose contents might only poets tell" (16). Her portrait, translated first by the painter and then by the poet, would reveal a story of "[w]hat king had worn thy chains, what heroes sigh'd/What thousands nameless, hopeless, for thee died" (17-18). She is, however, "of the Present" moment and so needs a modern artistic representation. There "is nought" about the real Georgiana, such as her social situation, life style, intellectual abilities or political engagements, "for the dreaming minstrel's thought" (19-20). The realities of the present have little with which the ideals and artistic forms of a romantic tradition can correspond. Art is thus at a crossroads which results in the momentary loss of language itself:

No, the chords sleep in silence at they feet,  
They have no measures for thy music meet;  
The poet hath no part in it, his dream  
Would too much idleness of flattery seem;  
And to that lovely picture only pays

The wordless homage of a lingering gaze. (25-30)

The revision of the “poet’s dream” here, as in “The Altered River,” is a process of dissolution and concurrent creation. His words and poetic practice in the light of modern culture becomes idleness and flattery. The romantic bard or the poet in the guise of the bard may not have the language to articulate the vision before him but Landon the annual poet does. The portrait of the Duchess makes visible the transformative energy of the urban and economic spaces that the *Keepsake* inhabits and embodies. The romantic poetic tradition and picturesque visual tradition are inadequate in their representations of modern life.<sup>79</sup>

Within this poem, a bridge is formed by the Duchess’s looking backwards to an imagined past but from within the poem. The music of the bard is silenced because his gaze is no longer able to find articulation. Unlike the bard’s limited, “lingering” range of both vision and language, Landon’s gaze moves between the picture and the poem as both artist and reader. It also looks out from within the process of creation to readers and the spaces in which they circulate. She brings the image and word, writer and reader into a dynamic exchange that reproduces in the poem the overall transformative activities of the literary marketplace and city. That she can articulate this moment of transition and the possibilities of the future from within the *Keepsake* indicates that where the bard has gone silent, Landon, the poet of a modern age, has found a voice.

## Notes

### Introduction

<sup>1</sup> I chose these five writers because literary criticism has tended to entrench interpretations of each of these writers and their literary works within the perspective that what we now call Romanticism was a reaction against the commercialization of British society. The ideological and political positions of critics in relation to this perspective have marked their readings of the above writers as representative of, aesthetically, the Romantic ideology or, historically, a Romantic nostalgia for archaic and non-commercial systems of value. The respective contributions of these writers to the *Keepsake*, however, challenge such readings of their works as well as their literary practices and careers as a whole.

<sup>2</sup> I build upon the work of critics such as Charlotte Sussman who show how Mary Shelley's contributions to the *Keepsake* is a logical extension of her literary career rather than an indication of a break between her younger, ideological writings and those of her more economically and socially conservative later years ("Stories for the *Keepsake*" 163-164). Sussman highlights the seamlessness with which Mary Shelley used the annual form, including its circulations as a commodity in the marketplace, to raise questions about economic exchange and the social construction of a modern identity ("Stories for the *Keepsake*" 164-167).

<sup>3</sup> The critical neglect of the annuals has been used as evidence of the gender and class biases behind literary criticism's language of value. The history of this language is understood as rooted in another self-interested move on the part of Romantic era poets who were desperate to maintain the exclusivity of their form of writing and to protect its cultural value. They generated a language by which to control the expansion and commodification of the fields of writing and publishing and to hierarchize the rapidly growing numbers of printed texts. According to critics such as Margaret Woodmansee in *The Author, Art, and the Market: Rereading the History of Aesthetics* (New York: Columbia UP, 1994) and Mary Poovey in *Genres of the Credit Economy: Mediating Value in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2008), Romantic era writers disseminated an understanding of literature and literary work founded upon an ideological split between the economic and the imaginative realms, with the privileging of a particular literary, or imaginative, value over that of the marketplace.

<sup>4</sup> Critical studies of the annuals only really began with Anne Renier's 1964 article "Friendship's Offering." After another twenty-years delay, feminist criticism (Anne Mellor, Sonia Hofkosh) and cultural studies (Cindy Dickinson, Kathryn Ledbetter, Terence Hoagwood and Cynthia Lawford) began to take up the annuals as objects of study. At the very least, literary critics working within print culture or



cultural studies have begun to acknowledge the presence of the annuals in the Romantic cultural marketplace.

<sup>5</sup> The contents of Ackerman's *Forget Me Not* indicates that "the new genre had not yet developed a fully focused identity or character" (Feldman 13). This content included:

Fine emblematic engravings representing each of the twelve months of the year accompanied poetical 'illustrations' of the months and a series of prose tales. The books also included an historical chronicle for 1822, data from the 1821 census...lists of the diplomatic agents of the principal courts of Europe, and the reigning sovereigns of Europe and their geneologies. (Feldman 13)

<sup>6</sup> William St Clair argues that this turn destroyed the cultural and social function of the genre. The privacy of the commonplace books and their subsequent detachment from the concerns of the marketplace facilitated the individual reader's ability to make their own meaning out of the cultural field. The entering of these books into the public realm of commerce turned them into books that invaded and then exploited the domestic sphere to impose bourgeois values and interests upon their readers. Using women readers as a case study of how the commercialization of the common place books reflected a society wide limitation of intellectual and cultural progress, St Clair argues that the common place books provide evidence that women's reading of the middle and upper classes, before the advent of the annuals, included a range of texts publicly denied them. The limited space for personalization in the annuals and the poor quality of their literary content meant that women were subsequently forced into a reading that proscribed their intellectual range as well as social role and cultural choice to fashionable consumerism (*The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* 224-232).

<sup>7</sup> The story most criticism tells of the annuals is of the editor-publisher's—and then the Romantic writer's—exploitation of what McKendrick has described as the commercial liberation of an innate human desire to emulate one's superiors (*The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England* 10-11). The annuals capitalize on this desire and the increasing ability of the middle-class individual to satisfy it by promoting a taste that reflects the fashion consciousness and social ambition of a commercially democratized British society. Peter Manning also argues that the annuals "set in motion" the kind of desire they were designed to satisfy (45). Accordingly, the function of the *Keepsake* in its own day and as an object of critical interest to us today is as a commodity that acts as a "concrete embodiment of social aspiration" (Feldman 10). In other words, its value lies in its revelations about the role of commerce in certain literary trends of the era, rather than in its own artistic or literary merit. This includes what it can tell us about what the desire to achieve and serve this impulse for social aspiration entailed on the part of writers and readers—such as their writing for and purchasing of the *Keepsake*.

<sup>8</sup> According to the research of Katherine D. Harris, sixteen annuals were published in 1823. This number rose to sixty-two in 1831 and didn't fall to sixteen again until 1846. In terms of the motivation to publish so many annuals, Harris claims, "by 1828, 100,000 copies of fifteen separate annuals earned an aggregate retail value of over 70,000 [pounds]" ([http://www.orgs.muohio.edu/anthologies/FMN/Frame\\_1.htm](http://www.orgs.muohio.edu/anthologies/FMN/Frame_1.htm)).

<sup>9</sup> The first edition of the annual was sold through subscription and barely made its Christmas season delivery but even then it was said to have sold 15,000 copies (Feldman 16).

<sup>10</sup> See Feldman (17) and Ledbetter (<http://romantic.arhu.umd.edu/editions/Landon/Keepsake.htm>).

<sup>11</sup> For more on how writing itself became a site of frantic attempts to control writing's ideological and material organization see Mary Poovey's study of the intense competition between forms of writing in the nineteenth century and the subsequent rift between "imaginative" writing and writings of political economy (*Genres of the Credit Economy: Mediating Value in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Britain*). See also Clifford Siskin's treatment of the explosion in writing and publishing during the eighteenth and nineteenth century (*The Work of Writing: Literature and Social Change in Britain, 1700-1830*. Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1998). Siskin claims that the technology of writing became the means to its own regulation and that writing is implicated in the "classifying, hierarchizing, and naturalizing" of different kinds of work, such as physical and intellectual work. Siskin writes, "[a]s writing became increasingly implicated, during that century, in (disciplinary) acts of knowing, and those acts were, in turn, valorized under the rubric of mental labour, the work of writing was idealized as a cipherlike medium for the power of mind" (24).

<sup>12</sup> *The Literary Gazette* (25 October, 1828) and *The Athenaeum* (22 October, 1828).

<sup>13</sup> In their analysis of the *Keepsake's* representation of literary value, the writings of early annual scholars such as Anne Renier (*Friendship's Offering: An Essay on the Annuals and Gift-Books of the Nineteenth-Century*. London: Private Libraries Association, 1964) along with the more recent work of Judith Pascoe ("Poetry as Souvenir: Mary Shelley in the Annuals." *Mary Shelley in Her Times*. Eds. Betty T. Bennet and Stuart Curran. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2000. 173-184), Paula Feldman ("Introduction." *The Keepsake for 1829*. Peterborough: Broadview, 2006. 7-32) and Peter Manning ("Wordsworth in the *Keepsake*, 1829." *Literature in the Marketplace: Nineteenth-century British Publishing and Reading Practices*. Eds. John O. Jordan and Robert L. Patten. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995. 44-73)

have described the annual as an exemplary luxury item, a product of what Neil McKendrick has described as the commercialization of British society in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: the reciprocal relationship between a rise in middle and lower class wages, the explosive growth in commodity production and consumption, the accessibility of these commodities to the lower classes, and the home demand for ever more (*The Birth of Consumer Society* 9-33). The common thread to most of these readings of the *Keepsake* is that the annuals were not books to be read so much as owned and displayed; thus, the kind of beauty and desire embodied by the *Keepsake* was manufactured for the purchase of intellectually shallow, middle-class consumers. The *Keepsake* and other annuals, in other words, were produced and purchased as objects to satisfy an insatiable, middle-class appetite for possessions that could signal the individual's good taste and social value.

<sup>14</sup> For more on the nineteenth-century literary annuals, see Kathryn Ledbetter, "Domesticity Betrayed: *The Keepsake* Literary Annual." *Victorian Newsletter* 99 (2001): 16-24; Charlotte Sussman, "Stories for *The Keepsake*." *The Cambridge Companion to Mary Shelley*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001. 163-179; Judith Pascoe, "Poetry as Souvenir: Mary Shelley in the Annuals"; Anne Renier, *Friendship's Offering: An Essay on the Annuals and Gift-Books of the Nineteenth-Century*; and Paula R. Feldman, "Introduction," in *The Keepsake for 1829*.

<sup>15</sup> The *Keepsake* is thus understood to have participated in a wider commodification of affect and thought in the service of economic expansion. Such a picture of the annuals is inflected by Jerome McGann's influential definition of the "Romantic ideology"-- the transcendent and disinterested form of imagining that has long defined the literary cultural of the early nineteenth century—as having developed out of a struggle with this commodification (*The Romantic Ideology: A Critical Investigation*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1993). According to New Historicist criticism of the 1980s, those who generated and disseminated this ideology, such as the predominantly male Romantic poets, were understood to have been active, or at the least willfully blind, in the veiling of their immersions in these concerns. In so doing, these poets produced a definition of value that mystified their own alignment with the political and economic power structures of the day while confining disenfranchised peoples, such as women, to the realm of the material, and in particular, the commodity (Marjorie Levinson, Jon Klancher, Anne Mellor, Kurt Heinzelman). Critical mention of the annuals at this time focused on the complicity between the annuals' commercialism and the gendered exclusions of the Romantic ideology (Cynthia Lawford, Kathryn Ledbetter, Judith Pascoe, Glennis Stephenson).

<sup>16</sup> *Keepsake* scholars have attempted to use the commercial aspects of the annuals as a means to complicate the set of assumptions through which literary criticism has understood the Romantic era. The annuals, however, are still approached as a site in which authentic literary work and pure imagining was commodified. Recent

studies such as those by Judith Pascoe (“Poetry as Souvenir: Mary Shelley in the Annuals”), Peter Manning (“Wordsworth in the *Keepsake*, 1829”) and Paula Feldman (“Introduction.” *The Keepsake for 1829*), for example, have made evocative claims about the *Keepsake’s* innovations such as the annual’s blending of aristocratic and middle-class aesthetics, bringing together of artists from a range of ideological positions and influencing of literary production and consumption including the short literary form. They unanimously return, however, to a discourse that positions the *Keepsake* as important primarily in terms of its’ contributions to the generation of consumer desire for more commodities.

<sup>17</sup> To help in the building of a different understanding of the *Keepsake* I look to the work of cultural historians such as J. G. A. Pocock. Pocock has argued that the split upon which standard interpretations of the Romantic era are based, in which the liberal humanist, commercial economy triumphs over the political life of the nation and a materially detached, literary aesthetic takes control of the cultural, was never actually realized (*The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1975; *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985). Many critics, such as Mary Poovey, Colin Campbell, Deirdre Lynch and Andrea Henderson now agree with Pocock, that the distinction between the economic and the literary was embedded in theoretical interpretations of the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries, even though the reality was that the two were in a continuous, dynamic exchange.

<sup>18</sup> I argue that the *Keepsake’s* editors actively engaged this blending and promoted themselves and their product through a remediation of the Commonwealthman figure. The story of the *Keepsake* combines the energy and optimistic reach of the commercial economy and the cultural return to a “classical” or aristocratic aesthetics abstracted from the realm of money and profit. In the mid-1820s the celebrated engraver Charles Heath, editors William Harrison Ainsworth (1827) and then Frederic Mansel Reynolds (1828-35) set out on “a speculation” (“Preface,” Reynolds v) or imaginative adventure to create a product that would tap into the potentials of the literary marketplace. The publishing industry was reluctant to take risks in the post-war years. “The bold speculative spirit that made fortunes overnight in war commodities,” notes Richard Altick, “never touched Paternoster Row” (*The English Common Reader* 260). Despite these resistances Heath and Reynolds combined the “bold speculative spirit” of the wartime years with their own artistic aspirations to convince Hurst, Chance and Company to publisher their venture. Reynolds’ “Preface” to the 1829 *Keepsake* indicates that both he and Heath were modeling themselves as selfless investors, in terms of money and artistic labour, in the greater good of the nation (iii-v). Their marketing of the *Keepsake* suggests that they produced the annual to serve the refinement not only of the nation’s cultural life but also of its citizen consumers.

<sup>19</sup> St Clair describes the commercialization of British culture as a breakdown between the personal and private and the public and economic. When the annuals move from the realm of private possession and the establishment of domestic relations in the form of the commonplace book and “manuscript,” for example, to the realm of the commercialized commodity and “the openness of the printed book” (*The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* 229) there is a loss of creative and intellectual freedom. The commodification of the domestic sphere in the form of the annual is a part of the invasion of this sphere by government regulations and social controls, the social manners and mores to which J. G. A. Pocock refers (*Virtue* 49).

<sup>20</sup> These were ideas of value by which the individual was defined, particularly in relation to their social identity and worth. I call upon critics such as Martha Woodmansee (*The Author, Art, and the Market*), Clifford Siskin (*The Work of Writing: Literature and Social Change in Britain, 1700-1830*), John Guillory (*Cultural Capital: the Problem of Literary Canon Formation*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1993), Mary Poovey (*Genres of the Credit Economy: Mediating Value in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Britain*) and Deidre Lynch (*The Economy of Character: Novels, Market Culture, and the Business of Inner Meaning*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1998) who have brought to attention the set of assumptions around “real” value such as intellectual property and good taste that became the foundation of literary criticism. These critics have suggested that what we have assumed to be natural distinctions in our conceptualizing of value, such as deep and shallow character, imaginative and economic production, fashionable and serious art developed in relation to, and sometimes out of, one another.

<sup>21</sup> As opposed to the negative portrayal of an individual’s social status if they do not own consumable objects.

## **Chapter One**

<sup>22</sup> Romantic criticism has been reluctant to address Wordsworth’s publication in the *Keepsake* and the important role that the popular literary marketplace played in Wordsworth’s literary practice, perhaps because of the consensus that Wordsworth used the annuals to create a market for his name but not as a model of value. New historical critics such as Marjorie Levinson (*Wordsworth’s Great Poems: Four Essays*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986), Jerome McGann (*The Romantic Ideology: A Critical Investigation*) and James Chandler (*Wordsworth’s Second Nature: A Study of the Poetry and Politics*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1984) among others have read Wordsworth’s definition of literary value according to rural values and exchanges. Criticism on Wordsworth in relation to commerce such as the work of Martha Woodmansee, Judith Pascoe, Clifford Siskin and Peter Manning has brought Wordsworth’s concern about the status of poetry in the literary marketplace to bear on his participation in that

marketplace, including the annuals and their merchandising of “the elusive promise of refinement” (Manning, “Wordsworth in the *Keepsake*, 1829” 68). Although the work of these critics involves a much needed rethinking of Wordsworth’s literary career it still understands Wordsworth’s publication in the annuals to be antithetical to his overall definition of literary value as detached from economic profit.

<sup>23</sup> This is a distinctly different definition of choice from the one that Jon Klancher describes Wordsworth criticizing in his 1800 “Preface” to the *Lyrical Ballads*. Klancher claims that for Wordsworth the commodification of literature turns readers into passive participants of “a popular culture that ‘craves’ but cannot truly ‘prefer’ what it reads; its unconscious desires parade as its conscious cultural choices” (137). In the *Keepsake*, Wordsworth attempts to align “craving” or desire and consciousness or choice.

<sup>24</sup> For more on Wordsworth and labour or work see Mark Schoenfield, *The Professional Wordsworth: Law, Labour and the Poet’s Contract* (Athens: U of Georgia P, 1996); Kurt Heinzelman, *The Economics of the Imagination* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1980); Thomas Pfau, *Wordsworth’s Profession: Form, Class, Logic and the Logic of Early Romantic Cultural Production* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1997).

<sup>25</sup> Heinzelman makes a similar claim about Wordsworth and labour. In Heinzelman’s reading, Wordsworth aligns poetic labour with economic labour as a work that blends the material and imagined to create real products and profits. Heinzelman claims that, “Wordsworth’s newly confirmed sense of ‘profession’ allowed him...to regard poetry itself as part of an economic transaction, with the poem endowing its own form of exchange” (199). But the productivity of such a transaction was dependent upon the mutual labour of the poet and reader.

<sup>26</sup> Francis Chantrey was a prominent sculptor of busts in the nineteenth-century. Cunningham, who apprenticed with a stone-mason before moving to London, worked with Chantrey as clerk/assistant until Chantrey’s death in 1841 (LY 137).

<sup>27</sup> Wordsworth worked hard to get the manuscripts of the rejected poems from Reynolds who subsequently tried to offer Wordsworth fifty guineas for seven more pages of poems. As Dora Wordsworth points out, however, Wordsworth felt that Reynolds was disrespectful and having washed his hands of the “*Keepsake* affair” had “nothing to say to them” (*Letters of Dora Wordsworth (LDW)* 59)). Dora also writes in this letter:

my Father bids me say that for this year at least he would rather have nothing to do with any Annual—first because he has been so much disgusted by the conduct of the Editor of the *Keepsake* & secondly because he now sees that whilst there is so much

competition it is impossible for any <honest> Editor to offer him a sum which could make it worth his while facing the annoyance of appearing in any periodical *Money* alone as you know tempted him to break thro' a rule he had so long adhered to— (59)

It was after this that Wordsworth contributed a poem to Alaric Watts and so he broke his rule more than once.

<sup>28</sup> According to Jared Curtis, in *Last Poems, 1821-1850*, James Holmes “was a painter and water colourist of genre, portraits and miniatures” (437)

<sup>29</sup> Alex Dick claims that Wordsworth’s poetics are profoundly concerned with the economic definition of productive labour as that which “[c]reates commodities and opportunities for future trade, investment, and profit” and unproductive labour as that which generates only frivolous excess and pleasure” (397).

<sup>30</sup> As Mark Schoenfield has illustrated, Wordsworth forges a place for poetic labour as something that “stems from both choice and necessity. . . . Like the labourer, he must work; but, like the capitalist, he chooses his time to disburse his labour in the marketplace” (84). It is this ability to choose that distinguishes poetic labour from the necessities of physical labour.

<sup>31</sup> Coleridge’s claim that the poem seemed artificial is itself an articulation of the literary value that has defined critical readings of Wordsworth until today. Wordsworth’s letters at the time he was writing the poem indicate that he considered “The Triad” to be good enough to workshop amongst the women with which it was concerned and to state that the poem was “a great favorite with all my friends who I have heard speak of it” (January 1829, *LY* 26).

<sup>32</sup> In the myth of the Judgment of Paris, Zeus asks the mortal Paris, who was renowned for his shrewdness, to judge who was the most beautiful of the goddesses Hera, Athene and Aphrodite. Paris was to award his choice with a golden apple. Paris rejects Hera’s bribe of unsurpassed political power and wealth and Athene’s bribe of superiority in battle, beauty and intelligence but cannot resist Aphrodite’s offer to make the already married but exquisitely beautiful Helen his lover. The result of Paris and Helen’s affair is the downfall of Troy (Graves 630-40).

<sup>33</sup> The poems that Reynolds rejected for the 1829 *Keepsake* included “Roman Antiquities Discovered, At Bishopstone, Herefordshire,” ““Wait, prithee, wait!,” “Four fiery steeds impatient of the rein,” and “St. Catherine of Ledbury” (*Last Poems* 435).

<sup>34</sup> Martha Woodmansee argues that Wordsworth's attempts to establish the Romantic poem as *the* standard of taste and aesthetic value in the literary marketplace did not move him to dehistoricize the poem and so render his own work ineffectual, but to dehistoricize an ideal reader. According to Woodmansee, Wordsworth was stung by *The Lyrical Ballad's* lack of critical and monetary success. His belief in the instrumentality of poetry and his ability to teach his readers how to appreciate and value his work was stretched to its limit. Woodmansee's research suggests that Wordsworth wanted to maintain poetic communication with his contemporary audience but without limiting the value of his poems to this audience's receptive abilities (*Author Art and the Market* 38-40).

## Chapter Two

<sup>35</sup> Scott republished "My Aunt Margaret's Mirror," "The Tapestryed Chamber" and "The Death of the Laird's Jock" in a collection titled *The Keepsake Stories* (1831). They were also repositioned under the rubric of the *Chronicles of the Canongate* in later editions of the Magnum Opus.

<sup>36</sup> Critics such as Yoon Sun Lee ("Time, Money, Sanctuary, and Sociality in Scott's *The Fortunes of Nigel*." *European Romantic Review* 14.2 (2003): 233-238) and Kathryn Sutherland ("Fictional Economies: Adam Smith, Walter Scott and the Nineteenth-Century Novel." *English Literary History* 54.1 (1987): 97-127) have brought to our attention Scott's interest in the connection between economic systems and literary forms.

<sup>37</sup> This argument is related to McCracken-Flesher's claim in *Possible Scotlands: Walter Scott and the Story of Tomorrow* that Scott ultimately embraced his readers as the real producers of value (155). McCracken-Flesher argues that Scott configured the Waverley novels so that to be a Waverley reader was to participate in Scotland's future. It was thus through readers that the value of literature, including the longevity of Scott's own writing, would be ensured (McCracken-Flesher, *Possible Scotlands* 8-28).

<sup>38</sup> My interpretation of this hierarchy is informed by St Clair's following claim that

the reading nation was not so much a scatter of individuals reading this and that, but a group of reading constituencies, with cohorts joining and leaving, a reading class which was geographically well spread and which was not commensurate with social class, income, gender, or with age, and which only in part coincided with the economic and social elites. (267)

<sup>39</sup> Although St Clair claims that there were no Scott novel chapbooks, The University of British Columbia's Koerner library holds a selection.



<sup>40</sup> St Clair points to the difficulty of ascertaining literary levels in Romantic Britain, particularly in terms of how literacy is defined, although his research suggests that “by the middle of the romantic period more than half the adult population had the ability to read, some quite well, and in some areas such as London and lowland Scotland a higher proportion” (*The Reading Nation* 266). The numbers in which Scott’s works sold, indicate that whether people could read themselves or not, they wanted access to his writing (St Clair 216). St Clair also points to the public nature of reading in the Romantic era so that “the selection of the books, the reading, and the subsequent discussion, were often collectively decided through book clubs” (394). Re-reading, memorization and reading aloud were also common practices of the era (395).

<sup>41</sup> These include Scott’s gathering and blending of traditionally oral forms of storytelling, such as the ballad, and blending them with the new demands of reading, writing and print. According to John Sutherland, such innovations included the sprung rhythm that Scott used in the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* (*The Life of Walter Scott* 98-105). Scott’s experimentations with traditional forms and topics as they were translated into modern literary production and reception and his addressing of the consequences of such translations can be found in the form and content of his *Keepsake* tales.

<sup>42</sup> According to Jane Millgate, novels published in Britain during the 1820s cost a guinea and a half to two guineas depending if one purchased a three or two volume edition (*Scott’s Last Edition: A Study in Publishing History* 2).

<sup>43</sup> Millgate has documented Scott’s editorial additions to the Magnum Opus and the marketing of the editions around these original contributions as well as the quality of the original artwork (16-20).

<sup>44</sup> Scott established his own publishing/printing house, John Ballantyne and Co., so that he could publish whatever and whenever he wanted. Scott was intensely concerned with such details as the quality of the paper and print (Sutherland 138).

<sup>45</sup> This could be one of the motivations behind what critics such as Katie Trumpener (*Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1987), Ian Duncan (*Scott’s Shadow: The Novel in Romantic Edinburgh*. Princeton: Princeton UP) and Jerome McGann (“Walter Scott’s Romantic Postmodernity.” *Scotland and the Borders of Romanticism*. Eds. Leith Davis, Ian Duncan and Janet Sorensen. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. 113-29) point out is Scott’s intense, meta-textual engagement with his readers. Scott directly addresses the reader in his introductions and appendixes, as well as from within the narrative of his novels, poems and stories themselves so as to situate the reader as well as reading in a position of privilege and authority.

<sup>46</sup> The period in his career after the 1825 crash until his death in 1831 was also a time in which Scott fully established himself and his work as the standard for an emerging literary canon even as he made ever more innovative publishing decisions and lucrative forays into the popular literary marketplace (Millgate).

<sup>47</sup> The day after making his counter-proposal, Scott discovered that Heath had in the meantime secured the use of the Edwin Lanseer painting titled “A Study at Abbotsford” from the wall of The Chief Commissioner of Scotland himself. This is the painting upon which the “Description of the Engraving Entitled A Scene at Abbotsford” is based and whose subject was Scott’s beloved dog Maida sitting amongst Scott’s antiquarian collection. Scott was delighted with this acquisition and the artistic value it added to the annual and so the deal was sealed.

<sup>48</sup> Both “My Aunt Margaret’s Mirror” and “The Tapestry Chamber” were rejected by Robert Cadell as not fitting with the *Canongate* collection, which was to eventually include “Chrystal Croftangry’s Narrative,” “The Highland Widow,” “The Two Drovers,” and the novel “The Surgeon’s Daughter” (the novel having replaced the two *Keepsake* stories).

<sup>49</sup> Scott’s disruption of his readers’ expectations and his reshaping of their understanding through multisensory writing could also be understood in terms of what Kevis Goodman calls the “noise” of history (*Georgic Modernity and British Romanticism: Poetry and the Mediation of History*). According to Goodman, this noise intrudes upon and interrupts our perception of the seemingly cohesive unfolding of history on both a personal and national level (38-56).

<sup>50</sup> Celeste Langan argues that in some ways Romanticism is “[s]ingularly characterized by a print-cultural nostalgia for a ‘prior’ (alternative) technology of communication—orality—poetry in the romantic period is virtually redefined as a species of communication caught between then and now, here and there” (*Telepathos: Medium Cool Romanticism* 5). Langan’s arguments can be applied to a reading of Scott’s *Keepsake* writings as allowing Scott to escape the “in between” of the poetry that Langan claims was a powerful force in the formation of Romantic aesthetics.

<sup>51</sup> Look to Langan’s discussion of Scott and the work of Sir David Brewster who invented the kaleidoscope and wrote on sensory perception and the relationship between illusion and reality (“Telepathos: Medium Cool Romanticism” 20-21).

<sup>52</sup> As Langan points out “we do not encounter the ‘uncommon splendour’ of the ‘illustrative’ magic mirror. . . until we have negotiated a series of frame narratives that seem designed to suggest both dimensions of *telepathos*—the prosthetic capacity to hear and see beyond the here-and-now, and its

'discomposing' effect on the experience of the here and now" ("Telepathos: Medium Cool Romanticism" 16).

<sup>53</sup> Examples of the gothic hero, overcome by the physical and emotional sensations of horror include the young Don Raymond's encounter with the Bleeding Nun in Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (160) and the hero Horatio's nightmare in *The Wild Irish Girl* (60).

### Chapter Three

<sup>54</sup> I argue that Shelley explores questions of literary agency and value in both her original stories and the previously unpublished Percy Bysshe Shelley (P.B.S) pieces she selected, edited and contributed to the *Keepsake*. I analyze Shelley's original works alongside her edited ones under the premise that they arise out of her model of a Romantic literary process as it is developed within the marketplace and in dialogue with the philosophies of her literary peers, including those of her father William Godwin and late mother Mary Wollstonecraft. I argue that Shelley worked not only "to translate" her influential family's "highest visions and most devastating social critiques onto the page" (Ellis 161-2) but also to situate literature and her own reworkings of Romantic value at the forefront of societal change in the era.

<sup>55</sup> According to Donald H. Reiman, in "On Love" "Shelley expresses his conception of love in terms common to the eighteenth-century doctrine of sympathy, and he places the 'beautiful,' the real object of love, within the individual lover's own soul, rather than in other people or external nature. Each external embodiment of this *beau ideal* fails the lover, because nothing external seems quite to conform to his ideal" (643-44).

<sup>56</sup> These include Wordsworth's poetic modeling of labour and choice to his readers and Scott's training of his readers in a media literacy capable of handling the exchanges and intimacies of his multisensory writing.

<sup>57</sup> I am drawing upon William D. Brewer's argument in *The Mental Anatomies of William Godwin and Mary Shelley* that these two writers used "their fiction to explore such psychological phenomena as ruling passions, madness, the therapeutic value of confessions (both spoken and written), and the significance of dreams" (18) on the individual mind and personality. Ultimately, Brewer argues, these experiments allow the writer and reader to reflect on their own mental and emotional states and that the renewed self-knowledge that results will lead them to a better understanding of others.

<sup>58</sup> Most Shelley-circle criticism interprets the collaborations between Godwin and Wollstonecraft and their influence on Shelley's work as primarily domestic and affective. See Anne K. Mellor's *Mary Shelley: Her Life, Her Fiction, Her*

*Monsters*. New York: Routledge, 1989; Janet Todd's *Mary Wollstonecraft: A Revolutionary Life*. London: Weidenfeld, 2000; and William St Clair's *The Godwins and the Shelleys: the Biography of a Family*. New York: Norton, 1989.

<sup>59</sup> It has been generally understood by Mary Shelley biographers and critics such as Emily Sunstein, Anne Mellor and St Clair that Mary Shelley's motivation for publishing in the literary annuals and gift-books was to support her and her son as well as to financially assist her father William Godwin and his failing publishing business. That this was a necessity has been blamed on Percy Bysshe Shelley's aristocratic father, Sir Timothy Shelley, who refused his daughter-in-law a proper allowance after his son's death. Sir Timothy also threatened to withdraw the money she did receive if she put her or P.B.S.'s name before the public in any conspicuous way (Sunstein 276-277). I argue that although the annuals did provide Shelley with a necessary financial reward this was not the only reason that she dedicated so much of her intellectual and literary labour to these publications.

<sup>60</sup> The *Keepsake* was the only annual to which she submitted P.B.S.'s work.

<sup>61</sup> Even when having to remind Reynolds of money owed to her she addresses most of her letters to the editor as "My dear Fred" (*Letters*).

<sup>62</sup> "On Love" was soon reprinted in *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction* and was translated for a French periodical, *Le Voleur* (February 19, 1829). This prose piece was included in Shelley's *Essays, Letters from Abroad, Translations and Fragments* (1840) and H. B Forman's *The Prose Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley* (1880). "Summer and Winter" and "The Aziola" were also included by Shelley in her *Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley* (1839).

<sup>63</sup> All page numbers and citations refer to *Collected Tales and Stories*.

<sup>64</sup> Fanny's education is the opposite to the aristocratic education of Ethel Lodore who is brought up "to dependence" in which "all the sensibility, all the softness of Ethel's feminine and delicate nature" (157). Both women are brought up to embody two extremes.

<sup>65</sup> "The Sisters of Albano" tells the tale of two sisters of the peasant class. At the age of fifteen (and the death of their mother) the sisters take different life paths. The older sister Maria enters a nunnery and the younger sister Anina remains to work with their father. Anina then engages in a secret love affair with a local villager and banditti named Domenico. Maria is "persuaded" to become a nun after nursing her mother in a convent and Anina, without the guidance of a mother or a sister, falls prey to her spirited and care free spirit (82-83). "I can remember them," claims the Duchess, "when as children they brought eggs and fruit to my father's villa. Maria and Anina were constantly together. . . Maria was serious,

gentle, and considerate; Anina was a laughing, merry little creature, with the face of a cherub" (82). Anina's delinquent lover Domenico is eventually trapped and starved by the French military as they attempt to cleanse the Italian countryside of the banditti and Anina is arrested and sentenced to die for trying to take him food. Maria visits Anina and trades her nun's habit for her sister's clothes, thus saving her sister and sacrificing herself. Maria is executed in Anina's place. Domenico is then killed storming the camp where Maria is being held and Anina becomes a nun herself. She dedicates herself to filling the emptiness left in the nunnery by the death of her sister and her heart by the death of her lover.

<sup>66</sup> Charlotte Sussman's analysis of Shelley's short story "Transformation" looks at another instance when the female gender is associated with an empty purse. Sussman argues that Shelley is commenting on what happens to women's body in the economic exchanges of the marriage market—"the empty purse can be seen not only as a figure for the site of exchange, but also as a figure for feminine sexuality—a 'nothing' that can never be filled or defined" ("Stories for the *Keepsake*" 170). The female body in the story "would become the empty space through which more goods and money would arrive" (170) for her husband, leaving her empty and without value.

<sup>67</sup> Sussman points out that the themes of identity exchange and clothing exchange that we find in "The Sisters" run through a few of Shelley's stories and seem to "investigate the importance of outward markers, such as clothes, in determining selfhood. Such outward transformations often prove effective and galvanizing, leading the characters who attempt them in and out of life and death situations" (168).

<sup>68</sup> The Countess states, "I know not if in the north your peasants love as ours; but the passion of Anina was entwined with the roots of her being, it was herself: she could die, but not cease to love" (54-55).

<sup>69</sup> Brewer investigates this compulsion in Shelley's and William Godwin's novels. Although Brewer notes that in Godwin's work verbal and written self-expression is therapeutic he reads Shelley as "skeptical about the therapeutic value of verbal self-expression" although "she acknowledges the human need to put suffering into words" (167). Brewer continues to claim that Shelley's prose treatments of therapeutic, self-expression suggest "that, in the case of extreme trauma, writing is sometimes more viable than speech as a form of language therapy" (168).

<sup>70</sup> She asks, "Now, I wonder much, what could he see in me? So many girls of rank and fortune were prettier. I was an untaught, low-born portionless girl. It was very strange" (268).

<sup>71</sup> See Note 66 for how this narrator becomes what Sussman describes as an “empty purse”.

<sup>72</sup> Michael O’Neill argues against the critique that Shelley’s editorial work in and on *Posthumous Poems* participated in the deradicalization of P.B.S. and that they were of a more popular than political nature. He claims that the publication and editorial history of *Posthumous Poems* as well as her notes and prefaces to the volumes themselves, do not provide any evidence that “*Posthumous Poems* etherealizes, disembodies, and depoliticizes” the poet but does illustrate “her wish to obtain a readership for P.B.S.’s poetry. Mary Shelley’s attempt in *Posthumous Poems* to shift the ground of the debate about P. B. Shelley’s work is more justifiable than is sometimes allowed. By 1824, after years of polemical wrangling, the time was right for appreciation of the poetry’s literary and aesthetic qualities” (195).

## Chapter Four

<sup>73</sup> Letitia Elizabeth Landon initially published under the initials of L.E.L. as a form of pseudonym. Landon, however, continued to use L.E.L. and to published anonymously as a literary reviewer and critic for the *Literary Gazette* and as a poet for various magazines, annuals and other publications even after her identity was made public and her success as L.E.L. was established. Nineteenth-century reviewers and critics mostly refer to the writer as “Miss Landon” rather than L.E.L. when discussing her work. I approach Landon’s different modes of publication, including her use of names as a part of her dynamic literary practice and so I will continue to use her original name throughout the paper. Glennis Stephenson has thoroughly explored Landon’s use of L.E.L. as a marketing tool that worked to create a public persona and so I will avoid such an analysis of Landon and L.E.L. in this chapter.

<sup>74</sup> Landon published twelve poems and two short stories in the *Keepsake* between 1829 and 1836. They include “Verses” (1829, 121), “The Altered River” (1829, 310), “The Death Song” (1831, 143), “Legendary Fragments” (1831, 172), “The Forgotten One” (1831, 205), “The Return” (1831, 273), “Edith” (1832, 94), “Good Angels” (1832, 129), “An Early Passage in Sir John Perrot’s Life” (1832, 179), “Do you remember it?” (1832, 239), “Marius at the Ruins of Carthage (1833, 65), “The Adieu” (1833, 103), “One Peep was Enough” (1833, 301), “The Head” (1834, 93), “Fenella’s Escape” (1836, 215), “Remembrance” (1837, 28).

<sup>75</sup> This understanding of Landon is linked to questions of gender in the literary marketplace. Critics such as Anne Mellor and Angela Leighton have described Landon the writer as fulfilling the destiny dictated by her gender, such as the emotional suffering and self-emulation common to her literary heroine-artists and so admired by female readers and consumers. In this way, Landon is

understood to enforce literary and social conventions that ultimately worked to erase her from literary history.

<sup>76</sup> We know that Landon was “one of the most famous and prolific authors of the late romantic period” (St Clair 195) and that, like Mary Shelley, Landon had an early and intimate knowledge of the inner dynamics, politics and strategies of the print and publishing industry.<sup>76</sup> Both women wrote, published and achieved critical attention and success in the literary marketplace in terms of sales and popularity before they turned twenty.

<sup>77</sup> Jill Rappoport’s analysis of what she called Landon’s gift economy presents Landon’s relationship with a “capitalist” marketplace as one in which Landon takes control of her own circulation as a commodity as well as her reception by her readers. Landon, according to Rappoport, “commodifies herself through the commodification of her writing, and then sells that commodity in the guise of a precious ‘gift’” (459). Through this gifting Landon creates a set of obligations on the part of the reader and their repayment “by admiring her, desiring her, sympathizing with her—but above all, by expending his or her own energy on the subject of L.E.L” (454). I argue instead that Landon’s configuration of the economic, emotional and intellectual exchange between the writer and reader in the popular literary marketplace was one that worked to equalize their power and that served the writing and its forms.

<sup>78</sup> This is not the same kind of addictive, self-consuming fame discussed by Esterhammer in relation to Landon’s improvisatrice poems.

## **Epilogue**

<sup>79</sup> In her analysis of Landon’s poem “The Vale of Lonsdale, Lancashire,” Linley describes a similar inability on the part of the poem’s narrator to find in the picturesque an expression of her experience. Linley writes that, “Landon assigns to the picturesque a fundamental inability to bridge the gap between seeing and feeling” (64). Landon attempts to generate a modern process of representations both landscape and affect that finds purchase in the pages of the annual.

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