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Lived Space and Performativity in British Romantic Poetry

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Declaration

This is to certify that the work contained within has been composed by me and is entirely my own work. No part of this thesis has been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

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Abstract

In Romantic studies, Romanticism is regarded as a reaction against modernity, or more accurately, a self-critique of modernity. There have been critical debates over the nature of the preoccupation of the Romantics with the past and the natural world, whether such concern is an illustration of the reactionary tendency of Romanticism, or an aesthetic innovation of the Romantics. This study tries to approach this problem from the perspective of space. It draws from the spatial theory of Henri Lefebvre, discussed in *the Production of Space*, in which Lefebvre conceives a spatial history of modernity, and sees Romanticism as the cultural movement that took place at the threshold of the formation of abstract space.

The poetry of three British Romantic writers, William Wordsworth, S. T. Coleridge and Joanna Baillie, is examined. This study analyses how the writers' thinking and poetry writing are interactive with the formation of social space during the Romantic period. Their poetry embodies the lived experience of the time. The writers show an awareness of the performative aspect of poetry, that poetry is a kind of linguistic creation instead of mere representation, which can be used to appropriate the lived space of reality. This awareness is particular to these Romantic writers because their poetic tactics are socially contextualized. Poetry is their method, as well as manner of life, for confronting the unprecedented social changes brought by modernity. By using Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, an examination of the significance of the body and perception in Romantic poetry is also employed to show how, through the use of performative poetic language, the writers re-create their lived space so as to counter the dominance of abstract space.

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CONTENT

INTRODUCTION

The relationship of Romanticism and modernity is always troubling. The Romantics themselves were highly aware of the historical importance of their age for the coming-into-being of Western modernity. Such awareness was manifested in Romantic writers' concern with 'the spirit of the age' in Britain, which was influenced by, albeit by no means limited to, the German conception of 'zeitgeist'. The experience of modernity in Britain was prevailing and significant enough to invoke prolific reflections on the formation of the British 'spirit of the age' from British Romantic thinkers, among whom John Stuart Mill, William Hazlitt and Thomas Carlyle were certainly prime representatives. Thomas McFarland in the lucidly illuminating chapter, titled 'the Spirit of the Age', of his study of Romantic essayists, *Romantic Cruxes*, examines the Romantics' historical awareness by delineating various 'Romantic motifs cluster around the notion of process' (6). He identifies several symbols common to Romantic writers which all, in one way or another, connote the idea of 'flux' or the 'infinite'; and when they are used in different Romantic writings, they often suggest the intensity and scale of some 'process', a certain transformation and change. These symbols include 'a new fascination with electrical dynamism', 'torrents and cataracts…river and streams', 'the sea or the ocean' and the 'nature and growth of vegetable organisms' (*Romantic Cruxes* 7-11). This identification of symbols of process as particularly Romantic shows McFarland's sharp observation of one of the 'cruxes' of Romanticism.

McFarland's characterisation of Romanticism recalls René Wellek's attempt to define Romanticism in his famous essay, 'The Concept of Romanticism in Literary History'. Wellek believes that Romanticism can be considered a unified whole which exhibits coherent ideas and concepts. He unequivocally proclaims three criteria for Romantic literature: 'imagination for the view of poetry, nature for the view of the world, and symbol and myth for poetic style' (147). Wellek's essay is a response to Lovejoy's thesis in his earlier essay, 'On the Discrimination of Romanticisms', which contends that 'any attempt at a general appraisal even of a single chronologically determinate Romanticism—still more, of "Romanticism" as a whole—is a fatuity' (252). Having the opposing arguments of Lovejoy and Wellek in mind, McFarland is certainly not entangling his thoughts in the impasse of defining

Romanticism in terms of definitive aesthetic, philosophical and literary characteristics. His method is firstly to conceive Romanticism 'as a mountain range', and 'its various characteristics, and alternatively, its various individuals, as the different peaks in that range' (*Romantic Cruxes* 15). The mountain range, perceived from different perspectives will result in different views of it; moreover, it also counters assertions that deny the connectedness of the 'peaks': 'To take them merely as hills is both to lose perspective on their own elevation and to lose sight of the Romantic range' (ibid.). The mountain range encompasses Romanticism's multifarious phenomena, and McFarland then goes further to suggest that these phenomena share a common ground, which is the socio-economic, cultural, mental effects brought by the advent of modernity:

> Romanticism is a series of direct responses and reaction formations to a gigantic and unprecedented crisis in European culture, one that threatened the securities of man's economic, social, and spiritual life, one that above all threatened the very values by which he thought himself significant. The effect of those pressures exists and has even been augmented today, and Romanticism is the true beginning of our modern world. (*Romantic Cruxes* 19)

It should be noticed that although McFarland affirms that 'Romanticism is the true beginning of our modern world', he chiefly considers it as 'a series of direct responses and reaction formations', which is attributed to the historical material changes at that time; the stability and integrity of human existence were 'threatened' by the social and cultural crisis of European modernization. The conception of the relationship between Romanticism and modernity here is, to a certain extent, rather simplistic, as I am going to show in the coming discussion.

Before I go on to examine some other more elaborated views on the relationship between Romanticism and modernity, McFarland's observation on Romantic symbols and the Romantics' preoccupation with the idea of 'process' require more elaboration. The 'pressures' of European modernity were manifested through the anxieties represented in many Romantic writings: 'Whether they resulted in Promethean or Satanic defiance or in suicide, they threatened the very meaning of life' (McFarland, *Romantic Cruxes* 20). McFarland aptly points out the metaphysical crisis acutely felt by the Romantics with reference to Coleridge's poem, 'Human Life':

> If dead, we cease to be; if total gloom
> Swallow up life's brief flash for aye, we fare
> As summer-gusts, of sudden birth and doom
> […]
> If rootless thus, thus substanceless thy state,
> Go, weigh thy dreams, and be thy Hopes, thy Fears,
> The counter-weights!—Thy Laughter and thy Tears
> Mean but themselves, each fittest to create
> And to repay the other! Why rejoices
> Thy heart with hollow joy for hollow good?
> Why cowl thy face beneath the Mourner's hood?
> […]
> Be sad! be glad! be neither! seek, or shun!
> Thou hast no reason why! Thou canst have none!
> Thy being's being is contradiction. (*ll*. 1-29)

McFarland certainly recognizes the existential uneasiness revealed in Coleridge's poem, as he explains: 'Romanticism was a complex of realizations and denials set in motion by the fear that man had "no reason why". And underlying its three main sources of political-social, economic, and spiritual pressure was the single great transformation: the demise of substance and the rise of process' (*Romantic Cruxes* 21). The human condition has been permanently and vastly changed throughout the course of modernity, and the 'fear' felt by the Romantics probably rose to its climax in the twentieth century, which was embodied so powerfully in the pessimistic outcry of modernist works such as Eliot's *The Waste Land* and Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. As Romanticism was complexly bound up with the unprecedented process of modernization, it was inevitable that the Romantics felt the necessity to create symbols for their own time.

McFarland's overarching view perhaps could find a theoretical counterpart in *Romanticism against the Tide of Modernity* by Löwy and Sayre. After an elaborate review of various attempts to define Romanticism, Löwy and Sayre are convinced that the difficulty of pinning down and periodize Romanticism is due to its intricate relationship with modernity. More precisely, they frame their formulation of Romanticism by seeing it as a 'worldview, that is, a collective mental structure', which is to be sought as 'the concept—in the strong sense of the dialectical Begriff of the Hegelian-Marxist tradition—that can account for the contradictions of the phenomenon and for its diversity' (Löwy and Sayre 14-15). Similar to McFarland,

Löwy and Sayre postulate that Romanticism 'has to be understood […] as a response to a slower and more profound economic and social transformation: the advent of capitalism, which was under way well before the [French] Revolution. In fact, important manifestations of an authentic Romanticism can be found beginning in the mid-eighteenth century' (17). Nevertheless, their project and argument are more ambitious: besides considering Romanticism 'essentially a reaction against the way of life in capitalist societies', they go further to suggest that 'this worldview is *coextensive* with capitalism itself' (my emphasis; ibid.). Along with capitalism, Löwy and Sayre also take into account other related aspects of the modern world: 'rationalization, bureaucratization, the predominance of what Charles Cooley calls ''secondary relations'' in social life, urbanization, secularization, reification, and so on' (19). They define modernity with reference to capitalism as the fundamental grounding, because 'as mode and relations of production, capitalism is the principle that generates and unifies the overall phenomenon, rich in ramifications, that we know as "modernity"' (ibid.). In recognizing the anti-capitalist, and hence anti-modern, tendency of Romanticism, Löwy and Sayre formulate a more intricate relationship between Romanticism and modernity:

> Romanticism is a modern critique of modernity. This means that, even as the Romantics rebel against modernity, they cannot fail to be profoundly shaped by their time. Thus by reacting emotionally, by reflecting, by writing against modernity, they are reacting, reflecting, and writing in modern terms. Far from conveying an outsiders' view, far from being a critique rooted in some elsewhere, the Romantic view constitutes modernity's self-criticism. (21)

This formulation of Romanticism by Löwy and Sayre inherits from the Hegelian dialectic, which significantly influenced Marx's critique of capitalism, and later, Georg Lukács' thinking in *History and Consciousness*. Romanticism's position as 'modernity's self-criticism' is probably one of the aspects of it that attracts a lot of critical investigations. How should we understand such a position in terms of its critical effectiveness and contemplation on the possibilities, as well as problems, of modernity?

In his *Romantic Imperialism*, Saree Makdisi proposes a comparable view to that of McFarland and Löwy and Sayre, that Romanticism can be regarded as 'a diverse and heterogeneous series of engagements with modernization' (6). Besides

noting Romanticism as a self-critique of modernity, Makdisi proposes a further illumination of such engagement that it is 'constitutive':

> Romanticism was not merely a response to this [cultural] transformation. It was a key constitutive element: as much as any other material development, this series of engagements contributed to the constitution of modernization as a cultural field that would eventually rise to dominance (notwithstanding this romantic critique that would accompany it to the bitter end). (6-7)

Despite the inevitable 'dominance' of modernity as it developed throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century, Makdisi suggests focussing on Romanticism as the '*beginning*' of its course, and its particular interest in representing 'cultural otherness' has to be understood 'in relation to' the culture of modernization, not as an inferior other, but as a self-critical alternative, and this is what makes the Romantic 'mode of understanding otherness' *new* (11-12). The new mode invented by the Romantics participated in the modern formation of 'social production, practice, and experience of space and time' as an oppositional force: 'This re-composition was taking place largely in terms of an antagonism between a growing abstract world-space and world-time of modernization and differential spaces and times not yet drawn into that world, and hence defined as different precisely because of their resilience' (13).

Makdisi's discussion of an antagonism between an 'abstract world-space and world-time' and 'differential spaces and times' is derived from Henri Lefebvre's spatial theory developed in *The Production of Space*. In this magnum opus of Lefebvre, he sketches a challenging conception of a spatialised history of modernity, which can be understood as consisting of the following stages: absolute space, historical space, abstract space and differential space. Romanticism, for Lefebvre, is situated at the 'threshold' of abstract space (*Production* 290). It is a transitional and formative moment, and more importantly, the term 'threshold' also implies the true beginning of 'abstract space': a phrase that is coined by Lefebvre to name the characteristic of rational abstraction of modernity. Lefebvre's spatialised history is profoundly influenced by the Hegelian dialectic and Marx's appropriation of it for his critique of capitalism. It inherits Hegel's critique of modernity's formal abstraction and Marx's analysis of production and alienation, but construes them from a spatial perspective, and thus supplies an ontological perspective to the

discussion. Lefebvre's stages of spatial history are not to be understood as linear progression, rather, such an interpretation of history creatively makes use of the co-existence and interaction of space's physical and representational aspects, as well as its formal representation, to subvert conventional understandings of space. At the same time, this model also challenges Hegel's dialectic and temporal understanding of history. Abstract space is the space of accumulation—the accumulation of wealth and knowledge. It signifies the dominance of mental space over physical and lived space. In abstract space, individuals are homogenized, personal differences are suppressed, the body is evaporated, and spatial totality is broken up. Lefebvre criticises the prevalence of abstract space for its adverse effects on human beings. He endeavours to re-assert the agency of human subjectivity and restore the integrity of the life-world by turning to the lived space of everyday life.

I will elaborate on Lefebvre's critique of the Hegelian dialectic and exposition of his theory of social space at length in the following chapter. For now I would like to make clear in what way Lefebvre's spatial framework can illuminate the Romantic 'new mode' of understanding anti-modern otherness in terms of lived space. As seen in the argument of Makdisi, the Romantics see other spaces as antagonistic alternatives to abstract space—what makes them differential spaces is their otherness. In the later development of modernity, these differential spaces were assimilated, leading to modernity's ultimate triumph. However, in fact in Lefebvre's theory of the production of social space, differential spaces are produced out of abstract space's internal contradictions; they are outcomes, or at least conceivable possibilities, of the inhabitants' reaction to, or even rebellion against and appropriation of abstract space in the lived realm. The lived realm, or in spatial terms, representational spaces, is defined by Lefebvre as the space of the 'inhabitants' and 'users'. It is 'directly lived through its associated images and symbols' (*Production* 39). The lived is never simple reception of the outside world through the senses alone, as Lefebvre further explains: 'Bodily *lived* experience, for its part, maybe both highly complex and quite peculiar, because "culture" intervenes here' (Lefebvre's emphasis; *Production* 40). In other words, it is partly real and partly imaginary, yet it is always the way that we as human beings lived and experienced. 'Images' and 'symbols' of culture are at the same time representations and the experience of

reality. Lefebvre believes that only by considering and returning to the lived experience of the body can theory examine the contradictions masked by abstract space. In the lived realm, qualities, desires and possibilities are recovered, and such rediscovery gives rise to a new kind of space: the differential space.

Therefore, in contrast to Makdisi's view that the 'romantic critique' would after all 'accompany' the culture of modernisation 'to the bitter end', which compels him to focus on Romanticism's constitutive role at the beginning of modernity, this project sees the space of Romantic poetry as one that meditates and projects possibilities, as a creation of anti-modern differential spaces with a consciously modern mentality. It is constitutive of the modern social space, but not synthesized with it; it is the artistic sphere that endows potential to social space for differential space:

> [Social space] contains potentialities—of works and of reappropriation—existing to begin with in the artistic sphere but responding above all to the demands of a body 'transported' outside itself in space, a body which by putting up resistance inaugurates the project of a different space (either the space of a counter-culture, or a counter-space in the sense of an initially utopian alternative to actually existing 'real space'). (Lefebvre, *Production* 349)

I will try to analyse how Romantic poetry acts as a way in which the discussed Romantic poets 'appropriate' the spaces that they interact with. The term 'inaugurates' is significant here: Romantic poets' have their own 'project of a different space'—no matter whether in Wordsworth's account of 'the growth of a poet's mind' in *The Prelude*, Coleridge's theorisation of imagination and symbol, or Baillie's investigation of the passions—all of them bear a certain 'project' in response to their contemporary modern condition.

Lefebvre's discussions of art and literature in *the Production of Space* are often quite fleeting and unspecific—and on occasions where he names some artistic movements, he seems to have arts of his contemporaries in mind, such as surrealism. However, if we examine other works of Lefebvre's oeuvre as well, his thoughts on the aesthetic does have a Romantic root. As Rob Shields observes: 'His interest in a radicalised romanticism surfaces again and again throughout Lefebvre's life' (73). Lefebvre's discussion of Romanticism in his *Introduction to Modernity* is probably worth mentioning here. In the chapter of 'Towards a New Romanticism?', Lefebvre

elaborates his views on Romanticism and an aspiration of reviving it in a new way for his present time. Although his examples are drawn mainly from French Romanticism, he speaks with an awareness that Romanticism 'was a foreign import from Germany and England' (*Modernity* 241). And indeed, if we examine the applicability of his ideas to British Romanticism, we will find an interesting compatibility. Romantic studies have held an established thought that Romantic consciousness is an inward consciousness. This is largely influenced by German Romanticism, as mentioned in Habermas's 'Modernity's Consciousness of Time' with reference to Friedrich Schlegel: 'Modern art reveals its essence in Romanticism; and absolute inwardness determines the form and content of Romantic art' (18). Lefebvre also notices that from Hegel's view: 'the true content of romantic art is absolute inwardness' (*Modernity* 292). Contrastingly, Lefebvre is interested in the social significance of Romanticism, particularly its contribution to the coming-into-being of 'symbolization…in the depths and substance of social practice as a whole' (*Modernity* 299). He considers how Romanticism represents bourgeois society, and the living contradictions between its ideology and the restless aspirations of some uncompromising groups combating against the bourgeois social force. Romantic writers embody their experiences through symbols and figures:

> [F]rom all this symbolism, imagination and fiction, and via subjectivity, a concern with 'lived experience' is born; in other words, an emotional realism emerges. From contingency, necessity is born again. Although he has set himself up outside the social and historical domain, the romantic artist finds himself back within it. Thus our aesthetic response to and subsequent analyses of these works will reveal that hidden deep beneath their manifest and recognized historical content […] lie durable psychic and artistic symbols. (*Modernity* 328)

In this vivid and emphatic passage, Lefebvre portrays the struggle as well as the achievement of the Romantic artist. The word 'born' appears twice; this perhaps conveys the importance of Romanticism for a nascent meaning, a new mode of aesthetic expression that speaks remarkably of the age. Romanticism in its most generous sense was not a schematized cultural project or movement; it was 'born' out of the enormously transformative chaos of the modern world—hence the word 'contingency'—but the subsequent aesthetic articulation gave significance and

enacted a reality for the voiced 'lived experience'. This is probably the way that Romanticism functions as a constitutive cultural element in modern social space:

> [R]omanticism drew its aesthetic lifeblood from symbols which were of a social rather than an inherently aesthetic nature; this was because they contained the relation of social (cultivated) man with nature and self, and this relation was a relatively stable one. […] Romantic art fed off and prolonged a creative excitement which came from beyond its own microcosm. Within this microcosm it defined a certain manner of using imagination, and tested the solidity of the affective nuclei which had crystalized around the symbols. (*Modernity* 329)

Therefore, via the discussion of Romantic symbols, we reach the other key aspect of this project: the performativity of Romantic poetry. With reference to Lefebvre's discussion of Romantic symbolism as a starting point, I will eventually study the language of Romantic poetry as a performative poetic language which embodies and enacts the Romantics' social relationship with modernity. Although the term 'performativity' is not used by Lefebvre, his views of language are essentially 'performative' because he attends to the active, dramatic and social communicative aspects of language. 'Performativity' in this project will have to be understood in both terms: the performative acts as well as the performance of poetic language. Lefebvre's theory of language is closely related to his theory of space. The realm of language is peculiar since on the one hand, it fosters the abstraction of social space through signs; on the other hand, it is the vehicle of lived experience, or even lived experience itself, with its symbols and images encountered and assimilated in the cultural aspects of our life. Preceding his study of Romantic symbolism, Lefebvre delineates his thoughts of the 'semantic field' of language at considerable length. It concerns human *use* of language for both subjective and social purposes; hence it is inevitable for language to become an interactive field which is produced socially through acts: 'The semantic field encompasses culture and social activities. Thus *constructs* and *actions* cannot be separated, nor can their possibilities ever be exhausted' (Lefebvre's emphasis; 285). The coupling of 'constructs' and 'actions' here interestingly parallels the idea that space is both the product and the arena of production for society. Lefebvre distinguishes two levels of meaning for symbol: the first one attends to its formal and signifying dimension; the second one, which is more relevant here, concerns the symbol's significance of being 'charged

with images, emotions, affectivity, and connotations. Lefebvre is aiming at precisely this second meaning of the symbol: that is, its substantiality, its ambiguities, and its complexity that are integral to the lived and living language' (Schmid 36). The implications of language's acts and communication coincide with the initial proposition of J. L. Austin in his *How to do Things with Words*, which is to study the aspect of language of doing rather than stating something. Although the origin of 'the performative' comes from the analytic philosophical tradition (which may seem incompatible with Lefebvre's continental philosophical tradition), it has largely entered the theoretical vocabulary to designate various discussions of the acts of language, and its variation, 'performativity', also goes further to encompass theatrical performance, in both literal and metaphorical senses. I would prefer a broader definition of 'performativity', that it is not restricted to the sense that was originally discussed in analytic philosophy, for the main contribution of Austin is a recognition of the creativeness of language, as J. Hillis Miller puts it: 'The essential thing is that, against the traditional model that saw language as essentially making statements about what is the case, Austin has provided an account of the active, creative functioning of language' (506).

Romantic poets spoke *from* and *for* their lived experience. Hence, by examining the works and ideas of three British Romantic writers, this study of space and performativity of Romantic poetry aims at exploring in what ways they performatively express and embody their lived space, which reveals the experience of conflicts of individuals in an increasingly modernised social world. The contradictory characteristics of Romanticism are paradoxically both the cause and the result of Romanticism being the transitional stage of modernity. Romantic poets acknowledge the multiplicity of human life and witness how this multiplicity is being disconnected and abstracted in the process of modernization. The Romantics' preoccupations with nature, the ancient past, the Orient, the imagination, perceptions and sensibility, the mystical and so on characterise an effort of re-inventing the modern condition. This is to be done by seeking and re-creating other spaces that restore the body's significance, foregrounding the body's contradictions with the dominance of abstract space. This serves the purpose of bringing into being the resurgence of life's integrity (on both personal and social levels). The Romantics'

method is experiential, that is, paying particular attention to sense experience and human sensibility. They search thoroughly into their own lived experience in order to recognise the source of the sense of anxiety for their time, as well as to negotiate and intervene in the almost irresistible forces of modernization. Indeed, the Romantic mission is arguably a projection into the future instead of naïve nostalgia or escapism. In spatial terms, the construction of Romantic lived space attempts to, or at least shows, the possibility to appropriate and disrupt abstract space.

The Romantics' awareness of the modern significance of their thinking and writings is conspicuous. I would suggest that Romantic poetry dramatizes the Romantics' aspiration to rediscover qualitative values lost due to modernity's abstraction, and to assert the 'right to difference' of a modern individual (regardless whether these aspirations are successful or not) — the implications of these aspects and the Romantics' self-awareness of performatively inventing and embodying such a mentality through poetic and symbolic means, attribute to Romantic poetry a position as the beginning of modern poetry. Their poetic acts, although proposed as personal and individual experience, are ultimately social communicative acts. The bridging of the private and the public realms by positing the private and the individual as paradigmatic representatives, and by constructing symbols that crystalize social relations, distinguishes Romantic poetry from pre-modern poetic works, which primarily consider 'that discourse is an affair of public rather than private consciousness' (Burke xviii). The communicative acts of the Romantics' also set them apart from the modernists, who became so preoccupied with experimenting with the artistic (de)construction of individual subjectivity and sceptical towards the act of communication itself.

In order to study the space of Romantic poetry as a lived space, I would complement Lefebvre's theory with Merleau-Ponty's philosophy. Although they represent two distinct strands of philosophy of space, i.e. the Marxist and the phenomenological, there are interesting similarities and connections between them. As phenomenology is philosophy's endeavour to construe a pre-reflective life-world, it places prime emphasis on discovering an unmediated, authentic experience prior to the interference of intellectual reflection. Similar to Lefebvre, Merleau-Ponty was also profoundly influenced by Heidegger's spatial thoughts in his later works (not to

mention his phenomenological critique of Husserl and development of ontology). However, Merleau-Ponty goes beyond Heidegger's poetic critique of modernity by engaging more explicitly with Marxism. In fact in the study of philosophy, Merleau-Ponty's thinking is also known as Marxist phenomenology. The combination of Lefebvre and Merleau-Ponty illustrates James Miller's proposition that 'When applied to Marxism, existential phenomenology promised to direct the theory back to its premise in the interaction of real individuals, and to provide a new framework for reconsidering Marx's hopes for individuation' (*History and Human Existence* 198). By reading Romantic poetry along with the philosophy of Lefebvre and Merleau-Ponty, I attempt to illuminate the intricate relationship of Romanticism and modernity with the benefit of hindsight—seeing the Romantics' cutting edge insights and trying out the strength of the theoretical formulations of Lefebvre and Merleau-Ponty on space and language.

The theory of Merleau-Ponty and its significance for my discussion of Romantic poetry will be unfolded in the following chapters. At the moment what I would like to draw attention to is that Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology is essentially a critique of modernity. As modernity proceeds, two antagonistic intellectual strands make up the epistemological basis of modernity: rationalism or idealism and materialism or empiricism. Thinkers of rationalism or idealism have their unmoved belief in human rationality and they attempt to develop modern science which will allow the human being to stand for himself in the universe, that he will ultimately make nature fully intelligible to man. The disadvantages of this position eventually become perceptible in everyday life: 'During the course of modernity, the world of experience thus seems to dissolve into either mere concepts or brute material forces' (Gillespie 531). The former view turns the world into abstraction, body and experience are signified by signs, and hence the sense of existence is evaporated. The latter view is used by ideology to support the exploitation of nature and the destruction of spaces unknown to human knowledge. Under this context:

> [Phenomenology and existentialism] begin with a critique of Hegelianism and everyday life and politics in favor of individual authenticity based upon an immediate encounter with the absolute, but that [*sic*] they then come to believe that such individual authenticity is only possible on the basis of collective authenticity, which itself is only possible as the result of a truly radical transformation of everyday life and politics. (Gillespie 532)

This realisation of thinkers of phenomenology and existentialism is certainly significant in Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, but it is also implied in Lefebvre's works, such as *The Production of Space*, and most evidently in his three volumes of *Critique of Everyday Life*. The series was a grand project asserting and demonstrating the significance of everyday life as an arena for critical analysis of capitalism and modernity. The word 'critique' is to be understood in two senses: firstly it demands a criticism of everyday life; but more importantly, it argues for the possibility of everyday life to criticise itself so as to bring about transformation.

The above theoretical issues are going to be expounded in detail in the first chapter, especially the social part. Following that are three chapters dedicated to William Wordsworth, S. T. Coleridge and Joanna Baillie respectively. 'The Embodied Subject and Wordsworth's Poetic Act in *The Prelude*' focuses on Wordsworth's autobiographical poem *The Prelude*, which has been considered a quintessentially 'Romantic' poem with its exploration of human consciousness, imagination, nature and growth. The working of perception, memory and feeling, and their relations to the spatial and temporal dimensions of being will be re-considered in the light of Merleau-Ponty's philosophy. This chapter begins with a review of empiricist and idealist criticisms of *The Prelude*, especially paying attention to the tradition of reading Wordsworth in relation with associationism, as well as the influence of science on the 'language of the senses' at the time. And then I attempt to orient my discussion around two important aspects of *The Prelude*, namely memory and nature. It is argued that Wordsworth's poetry writing is an act of re-opening life's horizon and concretising each present moment of Wordsworth's personal history. There is an interplay of the past and the present in *The Prelude*, which leads to an anticipation of the future. The Wordsworthian vision is an anticipation and a pursuit of the continual establishment of inter-relationship with the world so as to enact lived experience. 'Spots of time' and 'nature' are two figures that contribute most heavily to Wordsworth's discerning creation of Romantic 'lived space'.

The second writer I examine is Coleridge. Continuing from my discussion of Merleau-Ponty in the Wordsworth chapter, this chapter, titled 'Imagination, Symbolic Perception and Coleridge's Poetic Space', expands on the problems of intellectualism and empiricism, and investigates the role of perception in imagination

as understood by Coleridge. Coleridge's theory of imagination is often discussed with reference to his distinction between imagination and fancy in chapter 13 of his *Biographia Literaria*. Critics have different interpretations for Coleridge's very brief and suggestive passages on primary and secondary imagination. An important philosopher that Romantic scholars use to understand Coleridge is Kant. Some commentators contend that Coleridge's idea is not as systematic and complete as Kant's, some others believe he is actually more advanced and sophisticated. With reference to these critical discussions, I try to explore Coleridge's insights into the imagination so as to reveal some similarities as well as differences when Coleridge's ideas are compared with Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology and Kantian philosophy. My arguments are developed and illustrated with four poems, and the poems cover quite a significant period of Coleridge's poetic career, ranging from an early poem 'The Eolian Harp', followed by 'This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison', 'Dejection: an Ode', to a relatively late poem 'The Garden of Boccaccio'. It is argued that the poems attempt to create a poetic space for which lived experience and communication are to be performed.

The third writer I study in this project is Joanna Baillie. The inclusion of a Scottish female writer is to avoid representing British Romantic poetry with national and gender bias, albeit that national and gender issues are relatively supplementary in this chapter. Although Baillie is primarily a dramatist, she actually started her writing career with lyric poetry. Her first collection of Poems was published in 1790 but it did not attract much critical attention. In this chapter, 'Differential Lived Spaces and Baillie's Critique of Everyday Life', four of Baillie's poems are studied. They exemplify Baillie's discernment of modern problems, and exploration of the human desire for disalienation from a different perspective than Wordsworth and Coleridge. My discussion on Baillie is more explicitly social, as the poems chosen here, 'A Winter's Day', 'Lines to a Teapot', 'Address to a Steamvessel' and 'A November Night's Traveller', mainly focus on community, everyday life and leisure activities. They provide concrete representations of various aspects of the abstract space of modernity, not only on a local but also global scale. The poetry of Baillie is a critique of modern everyday life, as it investigates phenomena of modern life, probes into its transformation, and creates artistic moments among the flux of prosaic everyday life.

CHAPTER ONE

Romantic Lived Space: Enactment and Re-Creation of Modern Life

When reviewing various theoretical debates on Romanticism in the twentieth century, one would certainly notice that Marxist readings of Romanticism pronounced critiques of Romanticism's ideology from different perspectives. In fact, Marx himself was also 'hostile to Romanticism', Terry Eagleton observes, 'which he regarded as a poetical mystification of hard political reality' (42-43). Works by realist, satiric and radical writers would be more critical towards the bourgeoisie and hence more revolutionary for Marx. Marxist theory investigates how the material base of the relations of production relates to its superstructure; when applied to the study of Romanticism, critics usually focus on the historical position of Romanticism and its social influence. In the panoramic review of Romantic criticism in *Romanticism against the Tide of Modernity*, Löwy and Sayre notice a 'common axis' of Marxist critiques of Romanticism: 'the unifying element of the Romantic movement in most if not all its manifestations across its principal centers in Europe (Germany, England, France), is opposition to the modern bourgeois world. […] [T]hey perceive in Romanticism's antibourgeois critique only its reactionary, conservative, retrograde aspect' (10). This is manifested in various aspects of Romanticism analysed by different Marxist thinkers. The examples that Löwy and Sayre discuss are Karl Mannheim and György Lukács. These thinkers contend that Romanticism shows a reactionary ideological tendency against the progressional force of the modern world. Löwy and Sayre point out that Mannheim is one of the first who 'develop[s] a systematic analysis of Romantic political philosophy as a manifestation of conservative opposition to "the bourgeois-capitalist mode of experiencing things"' (ibid.). For Mannheim, Romanticism was conservative in the way that '[i]t seized on the submerged ways of life and thought, snatched them from oblivion, consciously worked them out and developed them further, and finally set them up against the rationalist way of thought' (275). While 'bourgeois rationalism' was becoming the social mainstream during the eighteenth and nineteenth century, Romanticism tried to 'rescue' older ways of life, including 'the Middle age, religion or the irrational' from disappearance (275-276). Although this aspect of Romanticism is considered in terms of conservatism, Mannheim is well aware of

Romanticism's similarity to Enlightenment—far from simply reviving the past, Romanticism performed an intellectual investigation of it:

> [Romanticism] worked out suitable methods, modes of experience, concepts and means of expression for all those forces which were for ever inaccessible to Enlightenment. Thus all those ways of life and attitudes to men, things, and the world, which for almost a whole epoch had been largely invisible were once more brought to the surface. They were brought to the surface not, however, in their old form as the natural basis of social life, but as a task, as the content of a programme. (276)

In other words, Romanticism made use of 'those ways of life and attitudes' which were 'invisible' to Enlightenment thinkers to counter the bourgeois rationalism of Enlightenment, but in doing so, the Romantic method provided a cognitive, intellectual aspect to those forces which showed anti-capitalist tendencies. Politically and socially, 'the right-wing opposition' was more interested in anti-capitalist Romanticism (ibid.).

New Historicist readings of Romantic poetry inherit Marxist concerns with history and material reality, but they focus more on the textual operation of the Romantic texts. They aim at unveiling how profoundly the Romantics are influenced by the political, economic and ideological forces of their time; and by discovering these influences in their literature we can reconstruct the socio-political and intellectual history of the Romantic period. Jerome McGann, in his *Romantic Ideology*, famously proclaims that 'the poetry of Romanticism is everywhere marked by extreme forms of displacement and poetic conceptualization whereby the actual human issues with which the poetry is concerned are resituated in a variety of idealized localities' (1). In his discussion on Marx's concept of the 'false conscious' in *The German Ideology*, McGann points out that according to Marx, the German Ideology's characterisation of itself as progressive 'was based upon (and productive of) a false consciousness which insinuated an upside down view of the world's realities' (8). This false consciousness in fact functioned to 'conceal the truth about social relations [and serve] the interests of the ruling classes' (ibid.). This understanding of false consciousness is a key theoretical concept for McGann's critique of Romanticism. In his analysis of Wordsworth's poetry, for example, he sees how 'the works tend to develop different sorts of artistic means with which to occlude and disguise their own involvement in a certain nexus of historical relations'

(McGann 82). Poetic representations of philosophical reflections and subjective transcendence are aesthetic operations of 'cognitive materials' that mask the historical specificity of Wordsworth's poems. In his reading of 'The Ruined Cottage' and 'Tintern Abbey', McGann analyses the 'displacement' of socio-political conflicts with the poet's account of self-consciousness. This tendency of transforming historical particulars to claims of universal ideas represents the Romantic ideology. For McGann, criticism should be aware of and able to reveal it, since we are now reading Romantic writings from a different historical position. It is also the critic's responsibility to expose and emphasise this difference. He writes: 'When critics perpetuate and maintain older ideas and attitudes in continuities and processive traditions they typically serve only the most reactionary purposes of their societies' (2). Therefore, McGann is sceptical towards a certain mainstream Romantic criticism in the twentieth century, which typically concerned the Romantic imagination, nature and transcendence as revolutionary literary achievements of the Romantics. Representations of subjective experience and philosophy of life are condemned as an attempt to retreat from the social, or an abstraction of the social reality; moreover, Romantic aesthetics actually entails an ideological plot (no matter the writer is conscious or unconscious of it) that is concealed by its poetic representation.

In his discussion of L. J. Swingle's proposition of characterising 'Romantic poetry as non-doctrinal, as a poetry of exploration, of search and questioning', which 'forces the reader to experience the act of questing itself', McGann points out a weakness in Swingle's argument: 'he is not describing a special feature of Romantic poetry; he is setting forth one of our age's most basic value measures for any and all poetry' (60-62). Swingle's characterisation of Romantic poetry is ahistorical and over-generalized. It is inadequate for critics to just follow the 'mental theatre' of Romantic poetry because its ideological operation will be overlooked.

McGann's study was a seminal text that attracted abundant advocates and challengers alike. The New Historicist way of 'reading against the grain', however persuasive it might seem, is a rather unfair view on the Romantics, because the argument does not properly acknowledge the importance of the Romantic writers' awareness of their self-critical position for their time. The term 'ideology' itself has

complicated connotations as well. In McGann's discussion, ideology is 'what literary criticism traditionally sees as the thematic and doctrinal aspects of verse', and it 'gives to poetry its local habitation and a name' (66). Romantic poetry provides an illusionary reality or evasive political resort when it posits a certain 'truth' of life; in this way it embodies an 'ideological structure' particular to its history.

In his thorough study of *The Ideology of Imagination*, Forest Pyle disagrees with McGann on the notion of ideology as 'false consciousness' because it presupposes the possibility of recognizing a true consciousness. Pyle suggests that his work is not to deal with Romantic imagination as 'a stable property of mind or a concept of selfhood but with a matter of discourse, with a figure' (2). Pyle argues against the idea that the Romantic ideology of imagination is an evasion of the real but a means of representing the social coherently: 'The intrication of imagination and ideology demands that we think of ideology as something more than the mystifications of "false consciousness" and more than a coherent body of ideas: it demands that we begin by conceiving of "ideology" as the fundamental necessity of a representation of the social' (3). Imagination's representation is necessary for the self-articulation of the social, but it is also a 'misrepresentation' since the social is fundamentally non-coherent. On the one hand, Pyle's critical stance is an advance on that of the New Historicist in terms of seeing how ideology works, as he aptly notices that 'ideology is not merely the gap between the literary and the social that gives rise to misrepresentations which might be rectified by empirical reference', because 'the ideological gap is active in the real itself' (14); on the other, this confinement of imagination to a figure, to ideology, is a critical abstraction that makes it hard to see beyond ideology as representation.

In his examination of the Romantic imagination, John Whale notes another shortcoming of Pyle's argument—it 'essentially lock[s] imagination into a totalising narrative or at least unescapable reversibility' (8). Whale argues for 'imagination as a strategically deployed category [...] as a reflex or a reaction to an epistemological, cultural, or representational crisis rather than always invoking its hegemonic control or potential' (11). It is 'a sign of crisis rather than a faculty of truth', and is 'not just a form of evasion or an ideological illusion' but 'a means of articulating resistance' (ibid.). 'Imagination' is far from being a universal cognitive activity of human beings;

for Romantic writers who engage in its production, 'imagination' is a counteractive force against other dominant forms of representation: 'Even in the Romantic period itself the "imagination" (above all else) is forced to compete with other would-be hegemonic discourses and subject positions' (Whale 11). Whale focuses on the different 'stylistic and generic polarities of Romantic literary texts', and he identifies several 'cultural opponents' of imagination that the Romantics had to confront during their time: 'literalism, revolutionary rationalism, utility' (12). On the textual and ideological level, imagination played a central role in the Romantic cultural critique of the consequences of the French Revolution and the prevalence of utilitarianism.

In both Pyle's recognition of the need for an articulation of the social and Whale's reference to a cultural crisis during the Romantic period, imagination is associated with a kind of production of meaning. While Pyle sees imagination as an ideological figure, Whale posits it as one of the competing discourses. In these discussions of Romantic ideology, much attention has been paid to the intellectual and reflective, textual and discursive aspects of Romanticism. However, when talking about ideology and history, as well as ideology and the real, it would be useful to ask: does ideology, as a system of ideas, precede history/the real? The answer could be both yes and no—ideology might lead to actions in reality, but it might also be a consequence or effect of actions; they are always interactive. Romantic imagination, and other subjects of Romantic idealization should not be reduced to mere ideology, even though ideology could be a part of them, because they originated from lived experience in the outside world. There was a space beyond ideology in which the Romantics lived. The articulation or translation of lived experience by the Romantics was itself an act that might be constitutive of the real; if, as we see earlier in Swingle's argument, that Romantic poetry presents an 'act of quest', it would be useful to see how this poetic act was particular to the Romantic age. In his *Introduction to Modernity*, Lefebvre provides an interesting perspective:

> At any period in history, aspirations will be confused, and ideology, utopianism, symbols and myths will be inextricably combined in the minds of those who are living within them. Only later can they be separated…Ideology collapses and vanishes; utopianism atrophies, but something great is left behind: the memory of a hope. Myths and symbols become recharged with new meanings, but the process is a slow one. (91)

The language of poetry is different from the language of rationalism and utility, even though both forms are a kind of abstraction; the former is also an embodiment because by giving symbols new meanings, it makes new experience intelligible; it also produces affective effects when being communicated. The Romantics were well aware of this difference and developed it in ways that manifest the spirit of the age.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth century, people experienced a series of pervasive qualitative changes to their ways of life. Among these changes were the decline of the aristocracy, the rise of the bourgeois class, changes of the relations of production and the specialisation of knowledge. There was also a gradual separation of the public and the private. Raymond Williams investigates how Romantic poets, by positing the uniqueness of the Poet's talent, invested their personal experience in their poetry to produce a kind of antagonistic discourse that attempted to counteract social change. However, this assertion of the identity of the Poet was also one of the factors conducive to the specialisation of poetry. The professionalization of art happened simultaneously with the development of the market:

> It is a fact that in this same period in which the market and the idea of specialist production received increasing emphasis there grew up, also, a system of thinking about the arts of which the most important elements are, first, an emphasis on the special nature of art-activity as a means to 'imaginative truth', and second, an emphasis on the artist as a special kind of person. (39)

The systematisation of art contributed to the growth of aesthetics, and art became a kind of knowledge with its claim to attain 'imaginative truth'. The formation of this system of ideas or the body of knowledge of the Romantics is what we have termed the Romantic ideology. Romantic poetry was a social product resulting from this social context. While the Romantics (and Wordsworth's 'Preface' to the *Lyrical Ballads* is Williams' example) mourn for a loss of taste of modern readers and genuine feeling in poetry, they 'isolate the "artistic sensibility"' by restricting it to the Poet (Williams 51). However, Williams also recognises that this specialisation is a 'valuable' one:

> Under pressure, art became a symbolic abstraction for a whole range of general human experience: a valuable abstraction, because indeed great art has this ultimate power; yet an abstraction nevertheless, because a general social activity was forced into the status of a department or province, and

> actual works of art were in part converted into a self-pleading ideology. (ibid.)

In this sense, Romantic poetry was actually constitutive to the programme of modernity even though it was a reaction against it. Under the influence of capitalism, abstraction is inescapable, so the question would be: what is the use of symbolic abstraction of poetry among other forms of abstraction? Romantic poetry is a way to articulate the experience of encountering those social changes. It is also necessary to maintain the differences of the 'knowledge' that poetry may bring from that of science since what the former values, such as the realms of the imagined and the irrational, are incompatible with rationalism, but undeniable to an experiential reality. Williams' comment sympathetically acknowledges the power of Romantic poetry; it also affirms the embedded-ness of Romanticism in the age and that it participated in the progress of modernity, yet his tone is after all regretful:

> In practice there were deep insights, and great works of art; but in the continuous pressure of living, the free play of genius found it increasingly difficult to consort with the free play of the market, and the difficulty was not solved, but cushioned, by an idealization. (ibid.)

Problems brought by modernity cannot be solved by poetry alone, and in fact it is impractical to depend on poetry to solve those problems. It is perhaps more important to recognise the lost qualities of experience that should be rediscovered in everyday life. What Williams describes as 'the felt helplessness of a generation' is not restricted to the Romantic generation—it is still present in our time (52). Nowadays, after experiencing the terror of communist regimes, capitalism is still the most practicable socio-economic system for human beings. Individuals are bound to it. If for the Romantics, 'idealization' cushioned the difficulty, for us, 'idealization' connotes possibilities. What Romanticism leaves with us would be a kind of 'memory of a hope' (to use Lefebvre's terms); certain features of this hope are concealed in Romantic poetry, whose formation and significance should be delivered by criticism.

In order to examine the lived experience embodied in Romantic poetry and its meaning for the modern age, we have to consider the forward-looking aspects of Romanticism. Löwy and Sayre disagree with the view that Romanticism 'came into being as an effect of the disillusionment that followed the bourgeoisie's seizure of

power', they suggest that 'the phenomenon has to be understood rather as a response to a slower and more profound economic and social transformation: the advent of capitalism, which was under way well before the Revolution' (17). This is the reason why some of the Romantic tendencies already existed in the eighteenth century before the recognized beginning of Romanticism as a cultural movement. Therefore, the social aspect of Romanticism is not restricted to the French Revolution and political issues related to it. History should be considered as a process of transformation instead of a series of incidents. As I mentioned earlier in my introduction, Löwy and Sayre proposed to consider Romanticism as a worldview that was 'coextensive' with capitalism, as it was 'essentially a reaction against the way of life in capitalist societies' (ibid.). The Romantic critique of modernity was expressed 'in the name of values and ideals drawn from the past (the precapitalist, premodern past)' (ibid.). Because of this characteristic, it has frequently been deemed nostalgic and reactionary. Nevertheless, the romantic reference to the past is a strategy of appropriation, and what the Romantics would like to recover are those qualities of life that had been marginalised, or even destroyed, in the process of modernity. Thanks to the formation of the Romantic worldview, artistic movements and schools of thoughts that came after Romanticism often showed certain Romantic tendencies in order to confront problems of modernity.

The persistence of Romanticism is closely related to the development of modernity. Saree Makdisi holds a similar view to Löwy and Sayre, as he notices that Romanticism is 'new' because it is born out of the collision of the traditional and the modern, and he also sees the connectedness of Romanticism to the modern condition that is even more pervasive today:

> [R]omanticism celebrates the pre- or anti-modern at the moment at which that eradication is just beginning. Such celebrations are not unique to Britain, and can be located wherever the process of modernization comes into contact with 'traditional' cultures and ways of life; it is in this sense that [R]omanticism marks the inception of a new culture of modernization, of which the late twentieth-century phenomenon of globalization appears as the climax. (10)

This passage makes a crucial observation, not only for its affirmation of Romanticism's role as the beginning of the cultural aspect of modernity, but its understanding that Romanticism and globalisation—arguably the most important

issue of our present-day world—are inherently different phases of the same 'new culture of modernisation'. It asserts a consequential relationship between Romanticism and our contemporary epoch. In his reading of Book Seventh of Wordsworth's *The Prelude*, Makdisi shows how the city, London, comes to represent abstract space:

> Wordsworth's London, seen at street-level, is torn apart by the pressures of this incessant movement, as though the centripetal forces draining Britain and the world *into* London 'from hour to hour' are finally overcome by centrifugal powers—such as 'the rash speed/ Of coaches travelling far'—drawing people and 'the string of dazzling wares' to the *outside*. Or rather: as if the titanic clash and endless interaction of these centripetal and centrifugal attractions and pressures left London in an endlessly-revolving 'dance', a vacuum, caught and whirled around without direction, without end, and without mercy, existing simultaneously as its own place *and* as everywhere else, and hence – finally – as nowhere at all, as sheer abstraction. (Markdisi's emphasis; 27)

Abstract space is the space of accumulation. It has the power of subsuming all spaces; it reduces things into forms and quantities. It tends to homogenize individuals by erasing their differences. In the vast and rapid movements of urban space, individuals become 'swarm of inhabitants', and where they live is an 'undistinguishable world…/ amid the same perpetual flow/ Of trivial objects melted and reduced/ To one identity' (*ll*. 699-704). Under the forces of abstract space, city dwellers 'lose their humanity: the city itself becomes the inverse of the mythically ideal organic community to which Wordsworth wants to "return," or in other words, the space into which would be drained the hopes and products of that community' (Makdisi 27). Wordsworth experiences a crisis of perception. Senses and feeling cannot lead to any meaning; life is reduced to the passing of time, which is just counted mechanically. There is no real sense of 'humanity' or 'community' as there is no space for subjective experience and collective memories. Abstract space is a dominant space of the state and capitalism, highly developed in terms of system and power, but is also 'violent' because it continuously conquers and reduces other spaces:

> London constitutes the heart of the network against which romantic spaces and communities of otherness would be defined. It is a growing spatial metaphor for the experience of a modernization that not only attracts and drains away the strength and vitality of the pre- or anti-modern spaces which are defined against it, but destroys and consumes the heterogeneous traces and relics of those spaces through absorbing and incorporating them

> into itself, funneling their alternative and autonomous synchronic histories into its own unilinear, universalist, and diachronic history. (ibid.)

Abstract space as the product of modernity, maintains the centrality of a linear, progressive and universal concept of history. It regards the space of the past, the irrational, nature and non-Western civilizations as other spaces. These spaces may have their own histories and differences, but abstract space claims superiority over these spaces and makes use of them for its own purpose.

Reading Romantic poetry in terms of space will provide a new perspective to understand its historical significance, which is different from the view of historicism. In recent years, the old hierarchy of time and space has been radically undermined. One reason for the discontent with time is the teleological connotation attached to it. Historicism is temporally oriented. It was greatly influenced by Hegelian dialectic, which offered a conception of history as a progress of rationality that led to the realisation of freedom, which was the crux of Enlightenment, and it became the historical worldview of the Western-centred modernity: 'historicist thought linearized time and marginalized space by positing the existence of temporal "stages" of development, a view that portrayed the past as the progressive, inexorable ascent from savagery to civilization, simplicity to complexity, primitiveness to civilization, and darkness to light' (Warf and Arias 2). The imagination of a linear movement along time is no longer sufficient for investigating the situation of human beings. Philosophers actively seek new ways to solve problems arising from the old model of temporality and revise concepts derived from it. Edward Soja relates such discontent and the need for a spatial conceptualization of human social life in his *Postmodern Geographies* by referring to Foucault. Foucault asserts that 'the present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed' (quoted in Soja, 10). Soja allies himself with Foucault and criticises the prevalence of 'historical epistemology' and the '"historical imagination" in defining the very nature of critical insight and interpretation':

> So unbudgeably hegemonic has been this historicism of theoretical consciousness that it has tended to occlude a comparable critical sensibility to the spatiality of social life, a practical theoretical consciousness that sees

> the lifeworld of being creatively located not only in the making of history but also in the construction of human geographies, the social production of space and the restless formation and reformation of geographical landscapes. (10-11)

This renewed interest in understanding human social life in terms of space and place gives rise to the study of human geography, which is also influential in a lot of human science subjects such as urban planning, ecological and environmental studies, sociology and even cultural studies.

Edward Soja is one of the major founding figures in the shift of critical paradigm which we now generally designate as 'the spatial turn'. In the above quoted passage, Soja's use of the phrase 'social production of space' obviously refers to the ground-breaking work, *The Production of Space*, by French Marxist spatial philosopher Henri Lefebvre. However, Lefebvre's concept of space is not restricted to 'geographies'; he attempts to construct a new philosophy which bridges different strands of philosophy. *The Production of Space* criticises the Cartesian and (post-) Kantian metaphysics tradition, revises (post-)Marxism, and at the same time evaluates Lefebvre's contemporaries (including Foucault, Derrida and Lacan, for instance). This 'spatial turn' of critical theory is extensively associated with contemporary urban and social studies, and literary critics generally discuss and apply its concepts to modernism and postmodernism. Moreover, there is indeed very little explicit mentioning of literature in *The Production of Space*. Nonetheless, I maintain that spatial analysis should also have its place in Romanticism, precisely because Lefebvre spatializes Marxist philosophy and provides an experiential dimension to it, which is especially interesting for reading Romanticism. Spatial analysis will provide insights for understanding the acts of Romantic poetry, and hence enable a more dynamic conception of its role in social space.

Although spatial analysis is not altogether an uncommon method in the study of Romanticism, adaptations of the theory of Lefebvre in Romantic studies are rather few. The theory's potential has not been fully explored. In his 'Romantic Space: Topo-analysis and Subjectivity in *The Prelude*', Philip Shaw demonstrates one way of using space as a critical tool for reading Wordsworth's *The Prelude*. He criticises the theory of 'Romantic transcendence' of the Yale School and the New Historicist politicisation of Romantic literary texts, pointing out that both trends of

criticism 'lose contact with the Real' (64). Discussions of 'Romantic transcendence' configure the Romantic subject in the realm of the aesthetic, In the case of the latter, 'history becomes "text" and no longer figures as lived experience' (ibid.). This is achieved by blurring the boundary between history and text, reducing lived world and lived subjectivity to textuality. Shaw suggests reading Romantic space in terms of 'everyday life'. Instead of considering Romantic space as other spaces as indicated in Makdisi's argument, Shaw regards it as a space where the Romantic subject experiences the interaction of inner space of the mind and the social space of everyday life.

Shaw's approach is a reading of the 'interplay' of 'mental space' and 'social space' in *The Prelude*. 'Romantic space' is an arena of the aesthetic effort of the Romantic subject confronting the threat of 'social space'. To use Kristin Ross' dramatic metaphor, Shaw's analysis is achieved 'by imagining the lived experience of actors in particular oppositional moments' (quoted in Shaw; 78). 'Social space' and 'mental space' find their metaphorical equivalences in the poem: 'social space' is represented by political events or the crowded city, while 'mental space' is represented by the Wordsworthian subjectivity and the landscape integrated by the subject. Shaw argues that:

> In *The Prelude*, […] whenever social space threatens to overwhelm the self, to return it to the body, as in Revolutionary France, the 'power of landscape' intervenes as a kind of supplement or mark to relegate social space to the background and to reaffirm the mental space of imagination. (80)

In fact it is quite strange for Shaw to equate Lefebvre's 'mental space' to Wordsworth's space of imagination. In *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre identifies three 'fields' of social space: 'physical space', 'mental space' and 'lived space', to trace their theoretical separation in the development of modern thought and knowledge. He points out that the epistemological tradition of modern Western philosophy established by Decartes with his cogito creates a cleft between the mind and the body. It is clear that in *The Production of Space*, the abstract mental space is a space of scientific and objective knowledge, of the rationalists and empiricists: 'an epistemological (mental) space—the space of discourse and of the Cartesian cogito' (Lefebvre's emphasis; 61). The breach of 'physical space' and 'mental space' actually results in sterility of life and stops the dialectical movement of the process of

becoming; but in 'lived space', with the reassertion of the body, life's differences and possibilities are regained. For Lefebvre, 'social space' is the 'total field', the world and its history as a whole; it encompasses the three spaces but is also produced by them. The idea in Shaw's essay that 'social space' is the 'synonym of "everyday life"' in Lefebvre is probably Shaw's adaptation of Lefebvre's terms. The spatial equivalence to 'everyday life'—if we would like to find one—would be the 'lived space'. In Lefebvre's theory, poets and their poetry belong to the 'lived space'. Hence, it is inappropriate to confine imagination to the 'mental space' because that will make imagination incapable of making new creation and space for social life, which is definitely not what demonstrated in *The Prelude*, nor is it what Lefebvre really means with his theory of social space and spatial triad.

While it is justified and appropriate for Shaw to emphasis lived experience for comprehending Romantic poetry, which has, to a certain extent, lost its significance in some major Romantic criticisms in recent years, I would contend that it is more important to see Romantic space as a kind of lived space, a component of social space, than as a space that shows the antagonistic interaction of mental space and social space.

In *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre begins with an inclusive and systematic critique of various conceptions of space. For Lefebvre, space should not be conceived as simply a physical and geometrical 'empty area' (1). Space is also not purely 'mental', as perceived in the epistemological tradition—'mental' in terms of mathematics, or the Aristotelian concept as one of the 'categories which facilitated the naming and classing of the evidence of the senses', or the Cartesian 'realm of the absolute', or the Kantian 'a priori realm of consciousness' (1-2). Lefebvre maintains that space is always at the same time epistemological and practical, and therefore he proposes that space should be considered 'social'. In contrast to the perspective of classical Marxism, which focuses on social production in space, Lefebvre directs us to investigate the production of space. '(Social) space is a (social) product', Lefebvre writes, 'Social space will be revealed in its particularity to the extent that it ceases to be indistinguishable from mental space (as defined by the philosophers and mathematicians) on the one hand, and physical space (as defined by practico-sensory activity and the perception of "nature") on the other' (27). The space that we used to

talk about and live in is not neutral; it is constantly marked by human activities, produced and reproduced. Space is 'social' because 'every society—and hence every mode of production with its subvariants (i.e. all those societies which exemplify the general concept)—produces a space, its own space' (Lefebvre, *Production* 31). It does not only contain different levels of production: '(1) biological reproduction (the family); (2) the reproduction of labour power (the working class *per se*); and (3) the reproduction of the social relations of production', but also 'symbolic representation' which 'serves to maintain these social relations in a state of coexistence and cohesion. It displays them while displacing them—and thus concealing them in symbolic fashion' (*Production* 32). Lefebvre's spatial model of society is a complex one, with multi-levels and multi-sections, and 'in reality, social space "incorporates" social actions, the actions of subjects both individual and collective who are born and who die, who suffer and who act' (*Production* 33). The complexity of space is also a product of its development through time. The production of space has a history, and time leaves its traces on space; therefore, we can say that space embraces and embodies history.

In order to provide a theoretical framework to grasp the spatial reality and analyse the production of space, Lefebvre proposes a conceptual triad which identifies three components of social space: spatial practice, representations of space and representational space.[1] In the first chapter: 'Plan of the Present Work', of *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre attempts to preliminarily define the three components[2]:

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[1] There are two translations for '*les espaces de représentation*': 'spaces of representation' and 'representational spaces'. While 'spaces of representation' is a more literal translation and more immediately understandable than 'representational space', it's meaning could be rather misleading. According to the definition delineated by Lefebvre, the term designates spaces that are directly lived and experienced. Although such spaces are loaded with images and symbolic meanings, they are not abstract representations; rather, they interact with the body and are perceptible through senses.

[2] We must bear in mind that Lefebvre's definitions should not be taken as fixed and inclusive descriptions of the three components, since they are to be returned over and over again throughout his work. In each context these components reappear they demonstrate a certain aspect of Lefebvre's concern for social space, and hence acquire more complex significances in his project.

1. *Spatial practice* The spatial practice of a society secretes that society's space; it propounds and presupposes it, in a dialectical interaction; it produces it slowly and surely as it masters and appropriates it. From the analytic standpoint, the spatial practice of a society is revealed through the deciphering of its space. […]
2. *Representations of space*: conceptualized space, the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers, as of a certain type of artist with a scientific bent—all of whom identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived. […] This is the dominant space in any society (or mode of production). […]
3. *Representational spaces*: space as directly *lived* through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users' […]. This is the dominated—and hence passively experienced space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate. It overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects. (Lefebvre's emphasis, 38-39)

The three components of this triad exist in a dialectical relationship in producing social space. They can be regarded as 'concepts', 'levels' or 'moments'—but the triad should not be 'treated as an abstract "model"' (Lefebvre, *Production* 40). Among the three definitions, that of 'representational spaces' appears to be the most confusing and problematic. To a certain extent, 'representational spaces' have an 'abstract' aspect because they also exist on a symbolic level. However, there are a few crucial differences between 'representations of space' and 'representational spaces'. 'Representations of space' is space of '*savoir* (knowledge) and logic, of maps, mathematics, of space as the instrumental space of social engineers and urban planners […]. Space as a mental construct, *imagined* space' (Elden 190). In other words, this kind of space is the space of the intellect, science and objectivism. Its foundation is rationality, and hence it emphasises logic and consistency. Contrarily, 'representational spaces' are 'produced and modified over time and through its use', they are 'spaces invested with symbolism and meaning, the space of *connaissance* (less formal or more local forms of knowledge), space as *real-and-imagined*' (ibid.). Moreover, 'representational spaces', as Lefebvre points out: 'need obey no rules of consistency or cohesiveness. Redolent with imaginary and symbolic elements, they have their source in history—in the history of a people as well as in the history of each individual belonging to that people' (*Production* 41). 'Representational spaces' have various subjective and lively aspects: 'childhood, memories, dreams, or uterine images and symbols (holes, passages, labyrinths). […] It embraces the loci of passion, of action and of lived situations' (*Production* 41-42). Qualitative difference,

liveliness and dynamic contingency differentiate 'representational spaces' from 'representations of space'. According to Lefebvre, 'spatial practices' are the space perceived, 'representations of space' are the space conceived, and 'representational spaces' the space lived.

The production of space has a history. The social space of Western history transforms from absolute space to historical space, abstract space, contradictory and differential space. However, it would be erroneous to think that the history of space proceeds in a linear and unidirectional way. The aim of Lefebvre to spatialise history is precisely to take advantage of the 'present-ness' of the reality of space. A history of time is different from a history of space because the former is diachronic and the latter, synchronic; the significance of this difference is that diachronicity attends to continuity and linear progress, while synchronicity asserts discontinuity, juxtapositions and collisions. Space is no longer the inert setting for history to occur. It embodies history and engenders changes. The spaces of the past never disappear; they survive and precipitate in history and form the basis for the later production of space, as Lefebvre maintains: 'The past leaves its traces; time has its own script. Yet this space is always, now and formerly, a present space, given as an immediate whole, complete with its associations and connections in their actuality' (*Production* 37). Lefebvre also rejects any precise chronology of the history of the production of space, as he cautiously points out that 'the history of space cannot be limited to the study of the special moments constituted by the formation, establishment, decline and dissolution of a given code' (40).

As we enter a capitalist and neo-capitalist era, there is an increasing tendency in the domination of 'representations of space' over 'spatial practices' and 'representational spaces.' Along with the rise of capitalism, advancement of science and technology, industrialization and urbanization was the emergence of 'abstract space'. This coincided with the industrial and political revolutions in the eighteenth century. Intellectually, it employed the epistemology of Enlightenment as its base of knowledge; socially, 'labour is differentiated into an abstract form and social wealth thereby aspires to the possibility of infinite mobility, global hegemony' (Smith 57). Therefore, abstract space is the space of accumulation—the accumulation of wealth and knowledge. Abstract space is characteristic of the pervasive power of

'representations of space': 'The imposition of abstract space, in which social difference is continually flattened and "crushed" through the state as well as the economy […]. Representations of space gain disproportionate power over spatial practices and spatial representations' (ibid.). It signifies the dominance of mental space over the physical and the lived space. In abstract space, individuals are homogenized, personal differences are supressed, and the body is evaporated. Paradoxically, abstract space can be very concrete, as it is realized in the systems and institutions that control our daily life:

> The primary tendency in abstract space is the disappearance of the qualitative and its replacement by quantitative practices of measurement, exchange, and calculation. These are exemplified in the mass production, economic rationalization, social scientific management of space, urban planning, and bureaucratically controlled mass consumption that increasingly determine the experience of citizens in capitalist societies. (Dimendberg 24)

Lefebvre criticises the prevalence of abstract space for its adverse effects on human beings. He endeavours to re-assert the agency of human subjectivity by turning to the lived space of everyday life.

The crucial difference between Lefebvre's theory of social space and the economic structure of classical Marxism or the ideological apparatuses of structural Marxism lies in the differentiation of the perceived, the conceived and the lived (i.e. 'spatial practice', 'representations of space' and 'representational spaces'). Dimendberg notices the agency of men in the use of space: 'Lefebvre suggests that any space appropriated by human beings will inevitably engage both their bodies (spatial practice) and their imaginations (spaces of representation)' (23-24). Human habitation in a society, that is, our corporeal and real experience in lived space is endorsed with creative dynamics and possibilities. The meaning of such difference is immense for understanding social space and human subjectivity. Social and economic authorities seize the power to manipulate 'spatial practices' and 'representations of space', but as an individual, a subject of society exists in and experiences the three realms simultaneously; therefore, the lived space, though 'passively experienced', is where the production of new spaces could be possible. How is this so? By 'passively experienced' Lefebvre actually aims to deliver space back to bodily and corporeal experience, which includes senses, feelings, memory,

desire and imagination. While in abstract space, conceptualized space is put into practice, and social subjects are being regulated to fit into a planned structure, but human actions, sensations and imaginations are different—in using space we at the same time imagine it in our own way. Contradictions will inevitably surge to the surface in the lived experience of inhabitants in space:

> [C]ompletely fresh contradictions have come into being which are liable eventually to precipitate the downfall of abstract space. The reproduction of the social relations of production within this space inevitably obeys two tendencies: the dissolution of old relations on the one hand and the generation of new relations on the other. Thus, despite—or rather because of—its negativity, abstract space carries within itself the seeds of a new kind of space. I shall call that new space 'differential space', because, inasmuch as abstract space tends towards homogeneity, towards the elimination of existing differences or peculiarities, a new space cannot be born (produced) unless it accentuates differences. (Lefebvre, *Production* 52)

Poets are social subjects—they cannot escape from 'spatial practice', and they are as well subjected to the conceptually structuralizing power of society (i.e. in spatial terms, 'representations of space'), but they actively seek to 'describe' their experience in 'lived' space. Poetry, like other arts, gives forms to an articulation of contradictions and experiments with difference: 'In music or poetry, […] difference is what engenders the repetitive aspect that will make that difference effective. Art in general and the artistic sensibility bank on maximum difference […]. Art puts its faith in difference: this is what is known as 'inspiration', or as a 'project'; this is the motive of a new work' (Lefebvre, *Production* 395).

Lefebvre's very general description of the significance of Art might seem unspecific for literary critics. This should not be surprising because *The Production of Space* is a philosophical work on space. However, commentators also express doubts on how differential space could come about. Dimendberg notes that: 'Apart from a few brief references to the struggles of urban and social groups, Lefebvre has little to say about the agents or spatial practices involved in the emergence of differential space' (33). Perhaps it is in fact impossible to state certain methods or models for the emergence of differential space, for if such space is born from a lived experience of a body of difference, it must also entail contingency, and the situations could be numerous. Dimendberg's suggestion is to see *The Production of Space* as 'an ontology of forms and relations of spatiality' (ibid.). As we have discussed earlier,

historicism maintains a dominant conception of history. Other histories, such as that of different individuals, or that of different social groups, are subjected to the reality presupposed by the dominant history. In her *Wordsworth's Great Period Poems*, Levinson investigates the operation of Romantic ideology in Wordsworth's poetry. She argues that in his poetry, 'historically produced difference is mobilized into spatial and doctrinal design, and where there was unworkable, unspeakable loss, there is redemptive, figural definition' (4). The figuration of nature in 'Tintern Abbey' is critically interpreted as a 'wilfulness which binds us to a fetishized past, as to our particular dreams of the future, forcing us thereby to live a discontinuous, inauthentic present' (38). Levinson contests that Wordsworth's attention to the 'pastoral prospect' in Wye completely ignores the industrial changes in the landscape, and hence 'Tintern Abbey' is exemplary of Romanticism's 'suppression of a historical consciousness' (45). Such suppression displaces the historical significance of 'Tintern's devaluation', that is, those 'irresistible socioeconomic forces allegorically and immediately inscribed in the town, along the river banks, and within the ruin itself'—forces that 'Wordsworth had himself abetted' because of his own social position (Levinson's emphasis; 35). Levinson sets up an opposition of socio-economic reality and the figuration of the poem. However, is it possible to conceive the poem as an enactment of Wordsworth's experiential reality? To use Lefebvre's terms, the landscape near Tintern Abbey is a kind of representational space which Wordsworth's memory overlays. His life-time has inscribed his personal meaning on the space of that particular place, by invoking nature and memory, Wordsworth establishes his own connection to the place. Wordsworth's poem foregrounds the coming-into-being of the lived space, as the space is no longer 'passively experienced' but consciously re-invented. Salvesen's study of Wordsworth, *The Landscape of Memory*, indicates the significance of memory: 'An awareness, then, of the autonomous power of memory, or its mode of action, and, above all, of its deep moral influence, is exemplified in "Tintern Abbey"; and this awareness is closely related to Wordsworth's personal sense of time' (39).

Romanticism took place during the formation of abstract space. However, as we have seen in previous discussion of Romanticism's relationship with modernity, Romanticism was at the same time a critique and a constituent of modernity.

Romantic space, then, must embody the complexity of such relationship and the contradictory characteristics of the transforming period. Romantic representational space is often 'the lyrical space of legend and myth, of forests, lakes and oceans', which 'vies with the bureaucratic and political space to which the nation states have been giving form since the seventeenth century. Yet it also completes that space, supplying it with a "cultural" side' (Lefebvre, *Production* 231). It makes use of absolute space and historical space as its basis. It would be interesting to consider a few questions that Lefebvre proposes by the end of his discussion of abstract space:

> Might not Romanticism be said to have lived through—even if it misunderstood—the transitional moment that separated abstract spatiality from a more unmediated perception? Was the Romantic movement not in fact shot through—and hence actuated—by this particular antagonism, even if it has been ignored in favour of more dramatic ones? (*Production* 290)

It was a typical preoccupation of the Romantics to revive 'unmediated perception', and such preoccupation also involved an interest in understanding perception and its relationship with the mind and human sensibility. Not only did Romantic philosophers engage in explaining the working of the mind, this was also one of the major subjects of Romantic poetry. However, the deeper the Romantics contemplated on the subject, the farther away they were from 'unmediated perception', because their perception became more consciously mediated by the intellect and language. The Romantics borrowed the language of abstraction when referring to the 'forms of nature' or an 'intelligible universe'. When there was an excessive emphasis on the mind's creation and self-consciousness, the separation of 'abstract spatiality' and 'unmediated perception' of mankind was actually aggravated, in this sense we could say that Romantic space actually 'completed' abstract space. Although Enlightenment ideals such as making the universe intelligible and the emancipation of humanity induced the formation of abstract space, these ideals are still common hopes of mankind. Romanticism shares these Enlightenment ideals, and therefore it also shows some of the characteristics of Enlightenment. The answer to Lefebvre's question: 'Is there not a certain Romantic poetry that exists precisely on this threshold?' is certainly affirmative. However, while the means of Enlightenment is rationality, that of Romanticism is imagination. There is a sense of anxiety of meaninglessness and estrangement among the Romantics because of the aftermath of

French revolution and other adverse effects brought by the social changes of capitalism. The Romantics have not forsaken their hopes for an understanding of the world and human freedom, but what they would like to achieve is a more organic and liberal life, both spiritually and materially, for mankind. In Lefebvre's comment on Heidegger's articles on dwelling, he speaks positively of the possibility of dwelling poetically: 'Even though this "poetic" critique of "habitat" and industrial space may appear to be a right-wing critique, nostalgic and atavistic, it nonetheless introduced the problematic of space. The human being cannot build and dwell, that is to say, possess a dwelling in which he lives, without also possessing something more (or less) than himself: his relation to the possible and the imaginary' (*Revolution* 82). Heidegger's spatial critique is essentially Romantic. Although the genealogy of British Romanticism may be different, that spirit is often present in British Romantic poets. By taking up just 'those spheres of life and behaviour which existed as mere undercurrents to the main stream of bourgeois rationalism' (to use Mannheim's words), the Romantics try to envision alternative modes of social life. Romantic poetry as the work of their writers, is part of their lived experience; it does not only embody the interaction of various forces in the development of modernity, it also enacts how the Romantics actively engage in rethinking and re-envisioning the relation of man and the world. Romantic space is in this sense, a lived space that interacts with its social space.

Because of the special historical situation of formation for Romanticism, it is possible to see that it actually anticipates later philosophical critiques of modernity. Philosophical movements in the nineteenth and twentieth century more or less inherited different aspects of the Romantic spirit as a critique of modernity: Marxism criticizes capitalism, and phenomenology proposes a return to the world before knowledge. In order to study the space of Romantic poetry as a lived space, I would complement Lefebvre's theory with Merleau-Ponty's philosophy. Although they represent two distinct strands of philosophy of space, i.e. the Marxist and the phenomenological, there are interesting similarities and connections between them. Both Lefebvre and Merleau-Ponty are interested in the material, spatial aspect of being: 'Merleau-Ponty advocated the shifting of philosophical attention away from abstract intellectual analysis and toward the concrete, as it is experienced by all

human beings' (Gill xii). If Marxist concerns are about the social aspect of human life, those of phenomenology would be about the more subjective and experiential aspect. These aspects are necessary for an investigation of lived experience. Moreover, Lefebvre and Merleau-Ponty are both influenced by the thoughts of Marx on history and Heidegger on being-in-the-world.

Merleau-Ponty begins his major work, *Phenomenology of Perception*, with criticisms of empiricism and intellectualism in order to develop an embodied phenomenology. The phenomenal body is the grounding of Merleau-Ponty's philosophy, as he asserts that the body is our primordial experience of the world. His concern with perception is also a concern with bodily experience of space. The world is neither ready-made to be grasped nor completely constituted by the mind. Our being-in-the-world is a corporeal embedding in the 'phenomenal field', in which the living body experiences and communicates. Taylor Carmen lucidly summarises Merleau-Ponty's ideas:

> Perception is not a private mental event, nor is the body just one more material object set alongside others. We lose sight of perception itself when we place it on either side of a sharp distinction between inner subjective experiences and external objective facts. In its most concrete form, perception manifests itself instead as an aspect of our bodily being in the world. (78)

Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of embodiment is 'a theory grounded on the basic concepts: "space," "time," and "lived world" (*monde vécu*)' (Schmid 38). Similar to Lefebvre, Merleau-Ponty also differentiates space into three levels: physical space, geometrical space and our experience of space. By referring to psychological experiments on 'oriented space', Merleau-Ponty concludes that 'we cannot understand […] the experience of space either in terms of the consideration of contents or of that of some pure unifying activity; we are confronted with that third spatiality…which is neither that of things in space, nor that of spatializing space' (289). This 'third spatiality' Merleau-Ponty refers to here is the space that we live in. It is 'a lived space' which includes 'the mythical space, the space of dreams, of schizophrenia, and of art. This space is based on the relationship of the subject to his or her world and is embodied in the corporeality of this subject' (Schmid 38).

There is an existential connotation in Merleau-Ponty's concept of perception, that we are already in the world before reflection begins. As he says, 'it is of the

essence of space to be always "already constituted", and we shall never come to understand it by withdrawing into a worldless perception' (*Phenomenology* 293). However, the world does not appear in its entirety when we perceive it. Our understanding of life is always in a process of coming-into-being, which is realised through the body's experience and reshaped by that experience. It is within this spatial and corporeal structure of being that Merleau-Ponty re-considers the notion of history and society.

Romantic poetry's re-creation of modern life necessarily relies on the performative act of the poetic language. Although the Romantics did not use the term 'performative' (for it was still not invented in their age, of course), they were highly aware of the dynamic and active characteristic of language, and they consciously used language to do things. In Lefebvre's *Introduction to Modernity*, he provides a reading of the social significance of Romanticism's symbol in the essay 'Towards a New Romanticism?'. He relates his own time to Romanticism and makes a comparison between them. The twentieth century was also a period of change, but much more globally: 'The *world* revolution—through which the world will become a "world"—is happening, in ways which are stranger, richer and more unexpected than were ever imagined a century ago' (Lefebvre's emphasis; *Modernity* 250). By considering the commonalities of Romanticism and the present, Lefebvre attempts to distil from Romantic lived experience the aspiration and utopian image of the Romantics, which were mixed up with ideology in the reality of rapid social change. Among a few theories regarding what Romanticism was about, there is one that proposes that Romanticism was 'generally characterized by a reaction against previous ideas', additionally:

> What the romantics saw around them and within themselves was no longer a world governed by constants and explicable by encyclopaedic knowledge; in the name of their lived experience they rejected scientism and positivism, as well as the encyclopaedic mentality, but all they found in their place was a chaos of contradictory feelings in a society riven with upheavals, convulsions and irresolvable conflicts. This offered their extravagant subjectivities a total—or apparently total—adventure. (*Modernity* 291)

Hegel's theory attends more to the 'subjective' aspect of Romanticism, that 'the spirit withdraws from the external world and into its own intimacy with itself' (Lefebvre, *Modernity* 292). Lefebvre notices a contradiction in the inward turning to

subjectivity of the Romantics and the profound social change that they were facing—why would they prefer an inner world of the self to the 'historical moment'? Why were they not satisfied with (bourgeois) democracy that led to the decline of authoritarian hierarchies and promoted the liberation of individuals? The horrifying aftermath of the French Revolution disillusioned many Romantics of course, but for Lefebvre, besides the political reason there was another social reason, that during the Romantic period, 'throughout Western Europe, there was a clear and dramatic conflict between the ideology of the bourgeoisie (which was coming into power in England and gaining power in France by a supreme struggle), with its *idealized* slogans of universal reason, happiness, peace, equality and fraternity, and the social and economic reality which lay hidden beneath it' (Lefebvre's emphasis; *Modernity* 295). Lefebvre feels that this was even a more influential reason because no matter if it was pre-revolution or post-revolution, the revolutionary ideals had to confront the reality and undergo a certain transformation which inevitably involved lived contradictions. Lefebvre writes: 'Romanticism had entered into lived experience, resolving (up to a point) the conflict between the stupidity of the Philistines (bourgeois ideology, the manners and usages of the bourgeoisie) and the aspiration to live life to the full' (*Modernity* 300). Such Romantic lived experience is embodied in the literary works of the Romantic period:

> Romantic symbolism was a social fact, a matter for sociology. […] Unlike externalized ideology, romanticism did not function as a spectacle […] Fictional characters […] became approachable figures through symbolic mediations grafted on to old mythic traditions which were 'modernized' in the process. These figures helped to give the symbols reality, by contributing to their elaboration; they also facilitated their entry into 'lived' experience. (ibid.)

The symbol is a social product that embodies human experience. Its significance lies more in its expression and meaning rather than its function of signification. This differentiates symbols from signs and signals. Symbols have a strong anthropological aspect in different historical periods. They are expressively telling means of communication from the past:

> Symbols are expressive rather than significant. They are rich in varied meaning, ambiguous and sometimes contradictory: a given monument may not only symbolize or express a historical period, but other things as well: the life of one or several superimposed groups who adopted a conception of

> the world, or perpetuate it into the present, the coming together of people who accept that conception, the rituals which unite them, etc. (Lefebvre, *Modernity* 280)

Images have similar functions, according to Lefebvre. Romantic literature 'was a reaction against the social insecurity of the individual who had rejected the dominant ideology', and Romanticism 'tried to resolve some of the contradictions of bourgeois society in an *idealized* way, with symbols and images, values and fictions, making them part of a totality—a representation of the cosmos' (Lefebvre's emphasis; *Modernity* 301). The word 'idealized' has been stressed twice in different contexts. The first refers to 'idealized' ideology, the second to the 'idealized' Romantic resolution. In the former, there is certainly a political dimension ('slogan'), 'idealized' because the ideology is a reductive, abstract and superficial representation of the proposed ideals. In the latter, it is idealized because the Romantic's resolution involves an attempt to unite with the Absolute. Lefebvre differentiates the utopian picture of Romanticism from 'ideology' although perhaps in lived experience they are confused, but from an analysis of symbols and images, the utopian pictures can be recognized. In the Romantic dramatization of lived experience, the Romantics seek freedom and harmonious communion of the world and mankind: they appeal to the universal consciousness of truth in religion, they turn to nature for reviving man's connection with the world, they look into childhood, myth, the pastoral, the medieval etc. for discovering all the qualities that are lost as the cost of modernity. The emphasis on subjective experience, on individuality, on the one hand, completes the bourgeois society as 'the world of every man for himself'; on the other, Romanticism also 'confronts the bourgeois "world" with its own image' (Lefebvre, *Modernity* 302). Romanticism dramatizes a lot of this kind of contradiction. Lefebvre observes: 'When we examine the lives and works of the romantics in detail, we see that the dialectic of romanticism is made up of divisions and strange reversals (and how strange indeed: they map out the path for the dialectic of alienation-disalienation-realienation-redisalienation) which render romanticism and the lives of the romantics themselves so dramatic' (*Modernity* 312). Interestingly, closet drama was a significant genre in Romantic literature. Lefebvre further explains:

> On close scrutiny, then, romanticism appears not only as a contradiction but as an explosion of interconnected contradictions at varying levels of

> consciousness and depth—some objective, others subjective. According to this analysis, the common element for the romantics and the national forms taken by romanticism would be the relation between possibilities and reality, a relation which was fictitious and dreamed of, but at the same time, lived out in praxis: in other words, the relation between possibilities and historical contradictions, the contradictions of that era. (ibid.)

As I have mentioned in my introduction, Lefebvre sees in Romantic literature an emergence of an 'emotional realism'. This is closely related to the expressiveness of the Romantic symbol. Besides the dramatization of the tension between the individual and the social, the Romantic symbol is also endowed with an emotive aspect. Experience and feeling, for the Romantics, can be embodied in language. Furthermore, the meaning of symbols is not arbitrary. It has its source in nature, or the subjective experience. In fact, the issue of the Romantic symbol itself is relevant to the abstraction and alienation brought by rationalism and capitalism; scientific conceptions attempt to make everything visible and deny the 'meaningfulness' of things not yet explicable by science, or things that are not explained in a scientific or logical manner.

Lefebvre aptly observes that the symbol is important in Romanticism. Lefebvre asserts a richness in meaning of the Romantic symbols, and that they are able to connote ambiguous meanings. However, this seems to be a different position from that of the Romantics who believe that symbols have their own meanings inherently and they can express the meaning effectively, as Coleridge puts it: 'by a symbol I mean, not a metaphor or allegory or any other figure of speech, but an actual and essential part of that, the whole of which it represents' (*Lay Sermons* 79). Somehow the Romantics' essentialist position might seem strange, for how can we determine that the symbol expresses exactly what it means? How should we understand the significance of the Romantic symbol? In his *The Genealogy of the Romantic Symbol*, Nicholas Halmi responds to present-day's critics' criticism on the 'self-mystified and self-contradictory characteristics of Romantic symbolist theory—its differentiation of symbol from allegory, its refusal to distinguish between image and meaning, its conflation of the relations of part and whole and of identity and difference, its denial of the possibility of interpreting the symbol' (25). He argues that:

> The Romantics' claim that the symbol, defined as inherently and inexhaustibly meaningful, existed equally and equivalently in diverse ontological and temporal realms—art and nature, antiquity and modernity—indicates that the principal concern of their symbolist theory was not in identifying, still less in interpreting, actual symbols, but instead in establishing an ideal of meaningfulness itself. (19)

There is a whole intellectual and social context to the sense of an urgency of establishing this 'ideal of meaningfulness' in the Romantics. Coleridge's poem, 'Human Life', quoted in my introduction, echoes Novalis' comment that 'The world's meaning has been lost. We are left only with the letters'. We are returning to the discussion of the modern social situation that has been discussed so far; the use of symbol, for the Romantics, is their strategy of resolving the lived contradiction of human aspiration to attaining 'meaning' and the chaos of the reality. Halmi asserts that:

> the theorization of the symbol in the Romantic period may be understood as an attempt, however illogical and methodologically dubious in itself, to foster a sense of the harmony of the human mind with nature, of the unity of seemingly disparate intellectual disciplines, and of the compatibility of individual freedom with a cohesive social structure—all for the sake of reducing anxiety about the place of the individual in bourgeois society (especially in the aftermath of the French Revolution and ensuing European wars) and about the increasing dominance of mechanistic science (which, by opposing mind to nature as subject to object, undermined the traditional basis on which the world's meaningfulness had been assumed). (24)

If we accept Halmi's argument, then, the interpretation of the meaning of Romantic symbols and the assertion of the Romantic symbolist theory should not be understood literally and directly. Since the Romantics had the desire to foster a communion of the man and the world, the creation of Romantic symbols would be an enactment of this desire. The Romantics would endorse the meaning that Romantic symbols bear by appealing to the power of imagination and sense experience. The purpose that Halmi argues for the project of theorizing symbols of the Romantics concurs with our general understanding of Romanticism: 'The basic problem of romanticism: the vindication of imaginative thought in a world grown abstract and material' (Feidelson 4). The Romantic symbol, therefore, cannot be read in terms of representation or signification, which means criticizing the essentialist claims of the Romantics would be missing the point. I would suggest that Romantic symbols

should be understood in terms of performativity. I would also maintains that Romantic symbols are closely connected to the spatial experience of the Romantics—and the meaning of this proposition I hope could be elucidated throughout this project.

In 'Locationary Acts: Blake's Jerusalem and Hölderlin's Patmos', Angela Esterhammer discusses the functioning of what she calls 'performative phenomenology' in Romantic poetry. She analyses how Blake and Hölderlin 'create' the places—Jerusalem and Patmos, respectively—through language. Esterhammer points out that '[a]pocalyptic places in Romantic poetry are neither places perceived as external to the subject, nor the places from which objective visions can be perceived' ('Locationary' 180). Due to the non-referential relationship between the titles of the poems and the existence of the apocalyptic places, the two poems are better interpreted in performative terms. The places are brought into being only through the poets' naming of the places and the poetic utterances' positing of the places in an inter-subjective consciousness, which is also established performatively. This is achieved by an authoritative addressing voice to the readers (as in the case of Blake) or by a series of narrative and interpretative processes (as in the case of Hölderlin). In other words, there is a necessity of 'dialogic and hermeneutic relationships' for the existence of the apocalyptic places. These places 'coalesce in the spaces that the very concepts of vision and utterance have opened up between subject and object, seer and vision, speaker and addressee' and the places are brought 'into existence […] in/as the texts themselves' ('Locationary' 180). Eventually, through the poems of Blake and Hölderlin, our experience of the places is renewed as they are fashioned in a way different from the biblical version. Esterhammer further points out that:

> their rewriting of apocalyptic place is fully representative of Romantic sensibility. This includes, in general, the emphasis on processes and relations that was displacing Enlightenment models of representation and inquiry. The modification of the specular experience of biblical apocalypse into a discursive or dialogic mode of revelation is in sympathy with aspirations (reflected, for instance, in Goethe's Faust) to replace the subject-object model of scientific investigation with a more experiential way of knowing. ('Locationary' 188)

The Romantics' concern with this 'more experiential way of knowing' is what we used to know as the Romantic preoccupation with subjectivity, including the consciousness, imagination and sense experience etc. What Esterhammer attempts to show in her analysis is that the experience of poetry is at the same time a cognitive activity and a communicative act which is constitutive of human subjectivity.

In her substantial exploration of Romantic views on language from a performative perspective, entitled *The Romantic Performative*, Esterhammer compares Romantic inquiries into the active aspect of language with concepts of performativity developed in the twentieth century. She notices that the Romantic philosophy of language pays substantial attention to language's acts on human subjectivity. In contrast to the theory of performative language developed by J. L. Austin, who examines what utterances do in themselves or to the others as they are pronounced, the Romantic conception of the performative aspect of language investigates what language does to the speaking subject and the speaking context. Therefore, Esterhammer proposes that 'Romantic theory can provide a necessary critique of speech-act theory as it has been formulated by twentieth-century analytic philosophers. It does this because of its greater and, in the literal sense of the word, wonderful attention to the speaking subject as a subject-in-process' (*Romantic Performative* 19). Esterhammer indeed contributes to the understanding of the theory of performative language by connecting language with the making of human subjectivity, and discovers that this is particularly typical in Romantic theories of language. Moreover, she also argues that the act of language on subjectivity necessarily takes place in a dialogic setting, even if the speaker and the addressee are the same individual: '[w]hat makes the Romantic conception of the speech act unique and powerful, […] is precisely that it fuses the two classical contexts for the understanding of language—cognition and communication' (*Romantic Performative* 8).

These new understandings of language that stem from Romanticism are greatly useful for understanding the use of Romantic symbol and Romantic poetry's re-creation of lived space. Turning to Romantic philosophers and linguists such as Herder, Fichte, Humboldt and Bernhardi etc., Esterhammer examines their

preoccupations with the way language determines 'being'. She summarizes the Romantic concepts and proposes that:

> Subjectivity, even being itself, begins to be defined as a series of verbal or, at the very least, responsive relationships to objects and to other subjects. This book therefore pays a good deal of attention to Romantic re-evaluations of the verb 'to be', to modes of subjective and social being, and to the relationship between being and representation. For the interpretation of 'to be' as a verb-substantive, thus as both an act and a state—and thus as a phenomenon that resembles becoming or even performance—lies at the heart of the Romantic speech act. (Esterhammer's emphasis; *Romantic Performative* 8)

If the performative aspect of the verb-substantive, as Esterhammer maintains, 'lies at the heart of the Romantic speech act', the Romantics' assertion of the expressive meaningfulness of the symbol would gain a supportive theoretical ground: since language is a necessary dimension of being to the extent that it is part of being, the creation of Romantic symbol could serve the purpose of giving meaning to being. Earlier in this chapter I have quoted from Dimendberg that *The Production of Space* is an 'ontology' from a spatial perspective. Indeed ontology must have a spatial dimension because being would be impossible without the sense of space. Therefore, besides the dramatization of the Romantics' experience of the lived contradiction and resolution, Romantic poetry is also performative in the sense that it re-creates the lived space, which can be understood as the Romantic establishment of the Romantic subject's being. In fact, this re-creation can be conceived as part of the dramatization because it is precisely a tactic of achieving the Romantic resolution that the Romantics employ.

Moreover, it would be useful here to have a certain idea of the role of language for human lived experience as understood by Merleau-Ponty. In most studies of the performative, 'Merleau-Ponty' would not be a common name.[3] However, the performative implications of Merleau-Ponty's language as embodiment and the phenomenological implications of the performative have not gone unnoticed. Walter Cerf points out that Austin's thought is 'tinted by a descriptive attitude made popular by phenomenology and by a holism in conflict with traditional English atomism and in harmony with existentialism from Heidegger to Merleau-Ponty'

[3] For a detailed study of major strands of performativity, see James Loxley's *Performativity*.

(352). In *Speech Act Phenomenology*, Lanigan suggests that 'the speech act theory is a necessary first step toward a phenomenology of human communication in that the theory indicates the ways in which a logical account of language as an abstract system (language) cannot adequately account for the phenomenology of speech (parole) as the communicative behaviour of human experience (langue)' (2). Speech act theory necessarily entails an experiential dimension of language. Furthermore, language also has an ontological significance for human beings to which speech act theory should attend. For Lanigan, Merleau-Ponty's view on language can adequately provide a perspective on this issue, as his 'existential phenomenology utilizes a critique of living and lived *experience* which is the essence of being a person, of encountering other people, and of the history which they constitute by sharing and inhabiting a common world' (Lanigan's emphasis; *Speech Act* 86). The experiential and spatial aspects of communication are impossible to be separated. In his later study, *Phenomenology of Communication*, Lanigan explains why in communication, the speaking subject can enjoy the 'freedom' of establishing a 'space' for expressing his meaning, the keyword is 'context':

> Communication is a discourse practice in which my speaking (*parole parlante*) is a *choice* that establishes a *context*. […] Communication, as a choice that grounds a context, is the horizon of freedom confirming that 'I am given to myself' (Lanigan 1977, pp. 86ff.). It is only on this infrastructure of practice that freedom can manifest the informational, albeit functional, distinction of spatialized space, which is the physical world represented in *langue* and that of the social lived-world of spatializing space re-presented in *parole* (Jameson 1972). (Lanigan's emphasis; 73)

Here we see an interesting association of the 'physical world' as 'spatialized space' to *langue* and the 'social-lived world' as spatializing space to *parole*. This differentiation is significant: if language is just considered as formal, abstract signification, the physical world can just be represented conceptually; it is 'spatialized' in the sense that it is theorized. On the contrary, the context of speech is a 'choice' of the speaker: he creates the context for what he says. As a result, in social communication, speech spatializes in the sense that it makes space.

In addition to the issue of context, Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of language is also significant in two ways, which Jerry Gill designates as 'embodiment as speech' and 'speech as embodiment'. For the former, the question would be how to

'say things without words'; for the latter, the question would be how to 'do things with words' (xviii). I will attempt a comparison of Merleau-Ponty's 'embodiment as speech' and Coleridge's understanding of nature as symbol. Following this will be a discussion on 'speech as embodiment' and Wordsworth's assertion of the creativeness of poetry.

In Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, the body's embedded-ness in the world means a spatial and temporal interaction of the embodied subject with the world: 'The body is the vehicle of being in the world, and having a body is, for a living creature, to be intervolved in a definite environment, to identify oneself with certain projects and be continually committed to them' (*Phenomenology* 94). It is through this continuous interaction that we establish our meaning in the world; in the process of realisation of the self, our body is our means of 'communication with the world' (*Phenomenology* 296). Gill tries to put this idea in another way, that: 'Our very existence already comprises a medium of communication; our embodiment functions as a form of speech' (88). We can particularly look into this matter by focusing on the chapter 'The Thing and the Natural World' in *Phenomenology of perception*. Merleau-Ponty explains how, in tactile experience, the body's movement of touching makes recognizable a thing. His example is the perception of weight. Things have different weights, and from our experience of lifting different weights by our hands, gradually we develop a way of interpretation of the weights of things. However, if the conditions of lifting change, for example we lift a thing by our feet, or we lift it in water where there is hydro pressure, this new context of perception will affect our previous interpretation of the weight, then we could not determine the weight of the object in the same way. In perception, the constancy of weight becomes irrelevant. Knowledge of things through perception depends significantly on the memory of the body's sense experience. Visual experience is similar: 'the movement of one's own body is to touch what lighting is to vision' (*Phenomenology* 367). Merleau-Ponty then goes on to explain why in perception there is an interaction of the body and the thing, he writes: 'I am able to touch effectively only if the phenomenon finds an echo within me, if it accords with a certain nature of my consciousness, and if the organ which goes out to meet it is synchronized with it' (ibid.). This 'echo' will be from our previous experience, our memory—but it is not just a simple recall of that

memory, it should be some kind of similar context, some kind of likeness that can facilitate meaningful interpretation, and that the recollection of the past memory by the body will elicit the synchronization of the perceiving subject and the object. For Merleau-Ponty, this is the way that the body facilitates its communication with the world:

> The thing as presented to sight (the moon's pale disc) or to touch (my skull as I can feel it when I touch it), and which stays the same for us through a series of experiences, is neither a *quale* genuinely subsisting, nor the notion or consciousness of such an objective property, but what is discovered or taken up by our gaze or our movement, a question to which these things provide a fully appropriate reply. (*Phenomenology* 370)

The thing that 'I' perceive is not a thing in and for itself, nor is its existence just the outcome of my own consciousness. Our body's movement to touch the thing or our gaze of the thing connotes our motor intention of knowing that thing, as if we are asking what it is—because we can connect the present experience with previous experience, by touching or looking at the thing we come to know its identity. This interaction of perception and memory is our communication with things in the world:

> The object which presents itself to the gaze or the touch arouses a certain motor intention which aims not at the movements of one's own body, but at the thing itself from which they are, as it were, suspended. And in so far as my hand knows hardness and softness, and my gaze knows the moon's light, it is as a certain way of linking up with the phenomenon and communicating with it. (*Phenomenology* 370)

This communication is comparable to that of language. 'There is a symbolism in the thing which links each sensible quality to the rest', as Merleau-Ponty says, 'The relations between things or aspects of things having always our body as their vehicle, the whole of nature is the setting of our own life, or our interlocutor in a sort of dialogue' (*Phenomenology* 372-373). Our contact with the world is not just a physical coexistence, rather it is communication and dialogue; this contact forms the premise of our being-in-the-world.

In Coleridge's theory of symbol, there is a famous concept that he proposes: he conceives Nature as a symbolic language. In a Notebook entry of Coleridge, he records 'a meditative moment during his sojourn on the island of Malta in 1805, a time when Coleridge felt lonely and isolated, a stranger in a strange land. One night, looking out the window of his apartment onto the harbour of Valletta, Coleridge saw

the shape of the moon as it glistened upon the still water, and intuitively he felt the importance of this familiar image in a foreign land' (McKusick, 'Symbol' 221):

> In looking at objects of Nature while I am thinking, as at yonder moon dim-glimmering thro' the dewy window-pane, I seem rather to be seeking, as it were *asking*, a symbolical language for something within me that already and forever exists, than observing any thing new. Even when that latter is the case, yet still I have always an obscure feeling as if that new phaenomenon were the dim Awaking of a forgotten or hidden Truth of my inner Nature / It is still interesting as a Word, a Symbol! It is Logos, the Creator! and the Evolver! (CN ii, 2546) (Quoted in McKusick; ibid.)

Peculiarly, this experience is very similar to the visual perception that Merleau-Ponty discussed in the quoted passages. The image of the moon glimmering is familiar to Coleridge because he has seen it before. Therefore even though the land is new to Coleridge, the moon has a personal implication for him and he is able to feel his communication with the vision. This perception is not just a recognition of the moon, it at the same time recalls Coleridge's reflection on the meaning of symbol, which he must have thought of for a long time, and he has been formulating some understanding of the question in the past. At this moment of seeing, the action calls forth a 'seeking', almost like posting a question to the image. The moon image in this present moment, appears in a new context, and synchronizes with Coleridge's preceding experience and thoughts. The communication leads to a renewed unity with nature, a feeling that he can understand the language of nature because that language was hidden in him. McKusick explains Coleridge's 'seeking' as the hunger of our 'inner Nature':

> For Coleridge the image of the moon presents itself as the answer to an unformulated question, the response to a calling-forth of his lonely soul to the beckoning universe. In this context, nature is more than just a set of fixed, aloof objects; the moon offers itself as an oblique fulfilment of desire, a modality by which the hunger of our 'inner Nature' may find satisfaction in the external world. Coleridge here examines the way that nature may become a 'symbolical language' that offers a response to the seeking, or *asking*, of the human spirit. (ibid.)

This interpretation emphasizes the existential need for seeing the symbolism of nature. This 'desire', this 'hunger', I would understand as the poet's longing for establishing the meaning of the world, particularly its meaning in relation to the self. Therefore, Coleridge's experience is not merely one of the many experiences of

perception, it is more profound in the sense that it embodies the self's existential quest. This idea is a crucial one for Coleridge. Nature as symbol is an inspiration for Coleridge to contemplate the literary symbol. McKusick makes reference to Susanne K. Langer's *Philosophy in a New Key: A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite and Art* and *Feeling and Form: A Theory of Art*, and she discovers in the writings of Coleridge 'a firm point of reference upon which to ground her discussion of symbolism as a new key for philosophy' (Quoted in McKusick; 227). For Langer, Coleridge's theory of symbol promotes the idea that:

> [T]he literary symbol does not merely *describe* the world of ordinary experience; rather, it *re-presents* that world through rich sensory images that (at least momentarily) create an imaginary realm of 'virtual space' and 'virtual time' (as Langer terms the illusive dimensions of an alternative reality). (McKusick's emphasis; 'Symbol' 227-228)

The literary symbol embodies a perceptual and experiential, hence phenomenological, 'virtual space' and 'virtual time'. The lived time and space being told through the literary symbol is not a mere representation of the poet's actual lived time and space, rather, it is a reworking of the experienced lived time and space. It is a creation by the poet with willed literary consciousness to establish meaning. Moreover, it is not simply a subjective figure meaningful just for the poet; with its embodiment of history and culture, it would be communicable to the readers; as the poet's works are read by others, the meaning of the literary symbol will be renewed: 'Evidently, for Coleridge, the making of symbols is a two-part process: poetic images emerge fully formed from the crucible of the creative imagination, but they do not become symbols, laden with historical and cultural meaning, until they are appropriated and reconstituted by the awareness of a reader' (McKusick, 'Symbol' 229).

Besides seeing embodiment as language, Merleau-Ponty's language theory also proposes the idea that language is embodiment. Language is an aspect of the human's inhabitation of the world, and it is regarded as an important part of his project of an embodied phenomenology. Merleau-Ponty's idea that language is a verbal gesticulation can help us to understand the 'texture' of language. He asserts that 'the spoken word is a genuine gesture and it contains its meaning in the same way as the gesture contains its' (*Phenomenology* 213). For Merleau-Ponty, language is an institution which the 'first-order speech', that is, the creative, poetic language

inaugurates, and then this kind of speech will eventually sediment into 'second-order expression'. The relation between the two types of language is dialectical. According to *Phenomenology of Perception*:

> If we therefore say that the body expresses existence at every moment, this is in the sense in which a word expresses thought. Anterior to conventional means of expression, which reveal my thoughts to others only because already, for both myself and them, meanings are provided for each sign, and which in this sense do not give rise to genuine communication at all, we must, as we shall see, recognize a primary process of signification in which the thing expressed does not exist apart from the expression, and in which the signs themselves induce their significance externally. (192)

For Merleau-Ponty, 'speech in the speaker, does not translate ready-made thought, but accomplish it' (*Phenomenology* 207). Merleau-Ponty maintains a difference between sedimented language and authentic language—authentic language is the productive and creative language, most commonly expressed in literature. In *The Prose of the World*, authentic language is discussed in terms of the 'speaking' language (in opposition to the spoken language), 'which creates itself through its expressive acts' (10). Furthermore, Merleau-Ponty particularly points out that when taking the emotive dimension of language into account, language is not arbitrary:

> If we consider only the conceptual and delimiting meaning of words, it is true that the verbal form—with the exception of endings—appears arbitrary. But it would no longer appear so if we took into account the emotional content of the word, which we have called above its 'gestural' sense, which is all-important in poetry, for example. It would then be found that the words, vowels and phonemes are so many ways of 'singing' the world, and that their function is to represent things not, as the naïve onomatopoeic theory had it, by reason of an objective resemblance, but because they extract, and literally express, their emotional essence. (*Phenomenology* 217)

This 'emotional essence' has ontological significance for Merleau-Ponty, because as long as that emotion is originated from an experiential experience of the self's existence in the world, the language as an expression of it is also an act of creating that emotion.

This emphasis on the vitality of language's expression of feeling probably has its root in Romantic emotional realism. In his article on 'Romanticism and language', William Keach traces Wordsworth's ideas in the 'Preface' of *Lyrical Ballads* to his reading of Condillac. In the summer of 1790, William Wordsworth first visited France 'when, as he says in *The Prelude*, the country was "standing on

the top of golden hours,/ And human nature seeming born again" (1850, vi.340-1). He returned in November 1791 and stayed for more than a year, during which time it is quite likely that he was exposed to the philosophy of Condillac, then at the height of its importance in French revolutionary intellectual culture' (106). Keach argues that 'for all its claims to signaling a new departure in poetic practice rooted in a new conception of poetry's authentic linguistic base, bears the stamp of Lockean and Condillacian principles' (107). Historically, Wordsworth's concept of language certainly bears the influence of thinkers of his age. There was a view that 'language necessarily reflects its social determinations as well as the individual acts of mind of a particular speaker or writer; speech and writing are to an important degree relative productions of a particular language culture, whether local or national' (ibid). In contrast with this constructivist view of language, Wordsworth's own critical view is to provide insights into communication and expression, that is, the performative aspect of poetic language. Keach observes that 'Wordsworth continually appeals to an ideal that words may be naturally rather than arbitrarily related to thoughts, and through thoughts to things' (ibid). In the 'Preface' to *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth criticises the phenomenon that 'the arbitrariness of language is viciously evident in "what is usually called poetic diction" (*Prose*, I, 130) and in self-consciously new poetic artifice' (ibid.). He distinguishes his poetic experiment from that contemporary poetry which manifested 'false refinement or arbitrary innovation'. He draws two principles to defend the language of poetry from being arbitrary: 'One of these is emotive and expressive: "all good poetry" takes its origin in "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (*Prose*, I, 148). The other is, or would appear to be, social' (Keach 108). For Wordsworth, language is not arbitrary since it is the way that we give shape to feelings and establish connections with others. It is a dimension of our existence that contributes to the formation of this existence in our *use* of language. Merleau-Ponty's idea of language as verbal gesticulation echoes Wordsworth's idea here, as Merleau-Ponty quotes from Goldstein: 'As soon as man uses language to establish a living relation with himself or with his fellows, language is no longer an instrument, *no longer a means*; it is *a manifestation, a revelation of intimate being and of the psychic link which unites us to the world and our fellow men*' (*Phenomenology* 228). Language would not be arbitrary if it is this

‘manifestation’ of our experience and coexistence with other people, because it actually brings our existence and our connectedness with the world into being. In the coming chapter, Wordsworth’s assertion will be examined in detail and it will be situated in the context of his own poetic practice.

CHAPTER TWO

The Embodied Subject and Poetic Act in Wordsworth's *The Prelude*

Critical interpretations of *The Prelude* have undergone a sea-change since the early twentieth century. Wordsworthian scholarship which took up a philosophical perspective proceeded from contextualising Wordsworth's poetry intellectually within the British empiricist tradition, to asserting an affinity of the Wordsworthian mind with German idealism. Later in the century, M. H. Abrams and Geoffrey Hartman, in their different ways, inspired by philosophers such as Hegel and Heidegger, investigated a phenomenological and existential dimension of *The Prelude*. Moreover, *The Prelude* also became a favourite touchstone for theories such as psychoanalysis, deconstruction, feminism, new historicism etc., when these theoretical approaches flourished vigorously in literary studies of last century. Wordsworth's elaborate exploration of the human consciousness by contemplating the growth of his own poetic mind manifests an inquisitive spirit for which the intellectual influences are difficult to pin down. Critics are incessantly intrigued by recurrent passages which are particularly ambiguous and baffling in a Worsworthian manner, altering between passivity and activity, indeterminacy and affirmation, sometimes inward-turning but at other times spiritually elevated. While it is generally accepted that Wordsworth's poetry and poetic ideas demonstrate the impact of associationism, some other critical comments contend for a conceptual resemblance to Romantic transcendental philosophy. Although thematic investigation particularly on the significance of the body in *The Prelude*, or more generally in Wordsworth's poetry, is relatively rare. This is perhaps not surprising because Wordsworth's poem celebrates the creativity of the mind the most. However, the body is definitely relevant, as its sensations and feelings play a crucial part in Wordsworthian perception and imagination. The apparent anonymity of the body does not preclude its crucial influence on the subject in *The Prelude*; rather, it is more likely that the expression of the body is so closely woven with the mind and the world that its role has been underestimated and relatively unnoticed in existing criticisms of the poem. More recent criticisms have been increasingly aware of this fact. Alan Richardson in his two studies, *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind* and *The Neural Sublime: Cognitive Theories and Romantic Texts*, recognises

the importance of the brain and the development of cognitive science for understanding the Romantic interest in the working of the mind. In the former, Richardson argues for a manifestation of 'Romantic' character in the neuroscience of the time and physiological psychology's intersections with Romanticism. He develops a 'cognitive historicism' for understanding Romantic writings in the latter. The studies show that Romantic writers' awareness of the meaning of the body for the human mind is more sophisticated than we have expected. Richardson points out that: 'Wordsworth's psychological poetry frequently does root mental growth in embodied experience, most notably in *The Prelude*' (*Science* 33). In his reading of the 1799 version of the text, Richardson discovers 'the sensory and cognitive "organs" celebrated in *The Prelude*':

> Thus day by day
> Subjected to the discipline of love,
> His organs and recipient faculties
> Are quickened, are more vigorous; his mind spreads,
> Tenacious of the forms which it receives. (II *ll*.280-284)

Richardson maintains his argument by observing that in the context of the late 1790s, the phrase 'organic sensibility' 'overlaps significantly with related terms like Darwin's "sensorium" and Cabanis' "sensibilité." It implies a mind shaped by and realized in bodily organs' (*Science* 71). *The Prelude* shows that 'A genuine poetic sensibility, for Wordsworth, is one that continues to register the permeation of thought with feeling and remains in touch with the sensational, bodily, and emotive origins of mind' (ibid.). In the Romantic period, psychological physiology was not an unusual interest among the intellectuals. The role of the body is not just instrumental or functional: the body is much more than a biological sensory receptor, or a natural physical existence which facilitates the actions of the subject; it maintains a complex relationship with the mind and the world.

As commonly recognized, Romanticism has selfhood as one of its prime concerns. Because of the various influences from eighteenth century trends of philosophy, the formation of the Romantic concept of the 'self' was shaped by Lockean empiricism and Kantian idealism. Charles Rzepka observes that:

> Like Kant, the Romantics advanced beyond the Cartesian and Lockean position—obviously, there is no self that can appear introspectively except the self that, as consciousness, has experienced a world that it has made

> somehow meaningful and coherent. The Romantic self, however, like the Kantian self and the Cartesian and Lockean self, was still exclusively identified with mind. (12)

However, Wordsworth as a poet of feeling, his conception of the self and his concerns about the mind are much more 'organic' than that of both Locke and Kant. Wordsworth is highly aware of the significance of man's relation with nature and man as a social being, or, as he puts it in the 'Preface' to *Lyrical Ballads*, that he is 'a man speaking to men'. Wordsworth's poetic preoccupation manifests an important aspect of human existence:

> For having a sense of one's identity depends on the ability not only to introspect in a Kantian fashion but also to accept completely the possibility of one's becoming conscious of oneself as embodied in the eyes of another. A real sense of personal identity depends, at the most primitive level, on the assumption of embodiment. (Rzepka 12-13)

With this notice of the prominence of the body, then, we are also paying attention to the spatial aspect of Wordsworth's poetry. His autobiographical account of 'the growth of a poet's mind' is certainly temporal, but to a significant extent, spatial too. Wordsworth's poetry attests to the fact that: 'To have a form of the "world for me" the "I" must already be understood to be engaged in some spatial, mutually determining relationship with the world of things and others' (Rzepka 16). Hence, the significance of the body as holistic and living, whose existence is both temporal and spatial, personal and social, receptive and responsive, would be the subject of this chapter. I will try to illuminate some interesting aspects of *The Prelude* in terms of the body, with the help of Merleau-Ponty's theory of embodiment. Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology suggests that the subject's knowledge of the world and its ontological relationship with the world are established through perceptual experiences of a *living* body. Human consciousness is incarnated in a body which is intentional and primarily situated in the phenomenal field. Our being-in-the-world is an on-going communication and interaction with the natural and human world. Curiously, Merleau-Ponty's philosophy corresponds to Wordsworth's poetic exploration, as Merleau-Ponty writes in his *Phenomenology of Perception*: 'The primary truth is indeed "I think", but only provided that we understand thereby "I belong to myself" while belonging to the world' (474). Hence, this chapter is also an

attempt to offer some insights in response to the comment that Celeste Langan makes in her interesting study on the significance of 'walking' in Wordsworth's poetry, *Romantic Vagrancy*: 'The underrecognized contribution of phenomenology is to remind us that the body does not walk as the consequence of (ideological) representations that are then relayed to the material nervous system of the body' (26). The body has both epistemological and ontological significance. Through a thorough recount and examination of his interaction with the external world in *The Prelude*, Wordsworth does not only represent his understanding of that interaction, he also enacts it. If, as Robert Langbaum contends, '[t]he process of experience is for the romanticist a process of self realization, of a constantly expanding discovery of the self through the discovery of its imprint on the external world', *The Prelude*, as 'a process of self realization', is part of Wordsworth's lived experience, and it can be considered a production of lived space. (25-26).

I will mainly draw textual evidence from the 1805 version of *The Prelude*, because it is more substantial than the two-part 1799 or five-book 1804 *Prelude*, and it is considered closer to what Wordsworth initially envisaged as an unprecedented poetic project of an exploration of the self. Moreover, this version was roughly composed during Wordsworth's 'Great Decade' (1797-1807), a period of the poet's vocation that Stuart Allen observes that 'Wordsworth transforms his poetry into a dialectical and materialist art that, through a "specialist" sensitivity to quality of feeling, is uniquely positioned to critique public and private life' (xii).

Before I go on to elucidate Merleau-Ponty's theory on body and perception, it would be necessary to briefly survey his criticism of empiricism and intellectualism; examples of empiricist and idealist readings of *The Prelude* will also be examined and interpreted in relation to Merleau-Ponty's criticism of the two schools of thought. Merleau-Ponty's critique of empiricism in his *Phenomenology of Perception* begins by surveying three fundamental aspects of the empiricist mechanism of perception: 'sensation', 'association' and 'the projection of memories'. He systematically draws examples from psychology, most prominently Gestalt psychology, to refute assumptions of empiricist epistemology.[1] In classical studies,

[1] During 1935 to 1939 when Merleau-Ponty taught as a lecturer (*agrégé-répétiteur*) at the *École Normale Supérieure* in Paris, he 'attended Aron Gurwitsch's lectures on Gestalt psychology and in

perception is investigated analytically in terms of sensation and the objective world. Sensation is considered a 'unit of experience' which builds up our perception. It is in the first place defined as 'the way in which I am affected and the experiencing of a state of myself' (*Phenomenology* 3). Under such a definition, sensation is the impression produced in the subject. 'The sensed' is originally meaningless in the objective world and unknown to me, but when I encounter it, it becomes my 'sense-experience' (ibid.) it is suggested that 'pure sensations will be the experience of an undifferentiated, instantaneous, punctual impact' (ibid.). However, in our living experience, it is impossible to perceive and conceive just pure impressions; hence, pure sensation is in fact an abstract concept. Merleau-Ponty illustrates this by considering 'a white patch on a homogeneous background', and points out that we do not sense the patch independently:

> All the points in the patch have a certain 'function' in common, that of forming themselves into a 'shape'. The colour of the shape is more intense, and as it were more resistant than that of the background; the edges of the white patch 'belong' to it, and are not part of the background although they adjoin it: the patch appears to be placed on the background and does not break it up. (*Phenomenology* 4)

The patch and the background have to be perceived as a whole and in relation to each other. The patch is notable to us as a 'patch' only because it is put against the background. Therefore, such 'elementary perception' is 'already charged with a *meaning*' (ibid.). To define sensation theoretically and reduce it into an isolatable form does not correspond to our actual experience. For sensation to be possible it must have a background, and experiential perception always takes place amid things and within a context: 'the perceptual "something" is always in the middle of something else, it always forms part of a "field"' (ibid.).

Empiricism maintains that our knowledge of the world depends on our experience through the traditional five senses. It also regards 'sensation' as the basis

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1938 completed his first major philosophical work, *The Structure of Behavior*' (Carmen 4). Merleau-Ponty's use of Gestalt psychology is not a simple acceptance and adaptation of Gurwitsch's ideas and findings. His discussion shows a very meticulous and skilful reading of the psychological experiments and theories for delineating his own philosophy of perception. Although some of the ideas of Gestalt psychology are considered out-dated now, this school of psychology nonetheless inspired Merleau-Ponty significantly.

of experience. According to Locke, human beings are born without any innate ideas; our mind is just like a 'blank tablet' ('*tabula rasa*') on which 'sense-data' are imprinted. These 'sense-data' are received as sensory stimuli and stored in the brain for combinations and conceptualisations. Empiricists view sensation as the experience of sensing: 'to sense is to have qualities' (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology* 5). Quality is not viewed as 'an element of consciousness, but a property of the object' (ibid.). A red patch on a carpet is 'the sensed'; and sensation is to perceive 'red' as 'an element in a spatial configuration' (ibid.). In this case the objective world is ready-made for perception. The meaning of the perceived is external and determinate: 'analysis, then, discovers in each quality meanings which reside in it' (ibid.). However, Merleau-Ponty points out that the empiricist idea is problematic because it is equally not true to our actual experience. The objective world as a world taken 'in itself' is a prejudice because such a view overlooks and dismisses ambiguity. The two definitions of perception discussed so far are based on idealised analyses of sensation. 'Quality' of the perceived object is 'mistaken' in two different ways:

> One is to make it into an element of consciousness, when in fact it is an object for consciousness, to treat it as an incommunicable impression, whereas it always has a meaning; the other is to think that this meaning and this object, at the level of quality, are fully developed and determinate. (*Phenomenology* 6)

Empiricist theories attempt to provide epistemological explanations of how our mind comes to know the world through experience. The world is treated as a determinate object, but the body also becomes an object because it consists simply of sense-organs that receive, transmit and decipher sense stimuli. For Merleau-Ponty, this kind of theorisation cannot sufficiently lead to a proper understanding of our ontological problems that concern the human consciousness and its relation with the world. The presupposed objectivity of the world is a result of reflection which provides the basis of scientific thought: 'The determinate quality by which empiricism tried to define sensation is an object, not an element, of consciousness, indeed it is the very lately developed object of scientific consciousness' (*Phenomenology* 7). The world perceived by this scientific consciousness is a

second-order world of reflection, and is abstracted from our actual experience. Perception understood in this way is analytic and works as an epistemological tool.

In empiricist philosophy, the mechanisms of 'association' and 'projection of memories' are employed to configure and endow significances to sensory data. 'Association of ideas' was largely discussed among empiricist British philosophers in the eighteenth century. Associationism accounts for the connection and regulation of ideas in the mind. It is conceived as a key process of the human perceptual imagination and acquirement of knowledge about the world. In his *The Association of Ideas and Critical Theory in Eighteenth-Century England*, Martin Kallich summarises two types of constitutive principles agreed by British philosophers for associationism: '(1) casual, or chance, or unnatural associations, according to contiguity in time and place; and (2) more regular, or natural associations, according to resemblance, contrariety, and causality' (14). These principles function in making sense of the conglomeration of presently received sense data, and they also appeal to memories for comprehending the present by making connection with past experiences. However, following his critique of the empiricist assumption of atomistic sense data, Merleau-Ponty proceeds to point out that 'association' and the 'projection of memories' do not answer appropriately and adequately our understanding of meanings of things by the consciousness. When we see a patch, it is not just a summation of sense data. According to associationism, the patch will recall memories of experiences of seeing similar figures, which contribute to our knowledge of the word 'patch' for us to recognise it as a 'patch'. Nevertheless, 'the "association of ideas" which brings past experience into play can restore only extrinsic connections, and can be no more than one itself, because the original experience involved no others' (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology* 17). The appeal to past experience does not explain the present 'intrinsic' connections of the elements of the figure, which are not mere qualities but the substantial meaning as a whole. The significance of the present patch for the perceptual consciousness cannot be generated simply by identifying the present with the past, because the associationist principles in fact recourse to 'a system of substitutions in which one impression announces others without ever justifying the announcement' (ibid.). This is an infinite regressive process since it does not explain how the original consciousness

comes about. Since we perceive things as in a perceptual field which is itself already a 'horizon of meaning', the present has its own significance before our consciousness makes any associations or appeals to memory for understanding. The perceptual whole presupposes sensation rather than resulting from sensation:

> There are not arbitrary data which set about combining into a thing because *de facto* proximities or likenesses cause them to associate; it is, on the contrary, because we perceive a grouping as a thing that the analytical attitude can then discern likenesses or proximities. This does not mean simply that without any perception of the whole we would not think of noticing the resemblance or the contiguity of its elements, but literally that they would not be part of the same world and would not exist at all. (*Phenomenology* 18-19)

Only by perceiving the whole can resemblance or contiguity be possible. Merleau-Ponty is concerned with a description of 'direct experience', a returning to phenomena, which relieves perception from its function of laying the foundations of knowledge assigned by empiricism so as to reveal its primordial significance for our being-in-the-world.

Moreover, the necessity of understanding perception by situating it in a 'perceptual field' is also demonstrated by the roles of recognition and memory. It is assumed that memory works to bring about recognition. For example, when we read a book, 'the speed of the eye leaves gaps in the retinal impressions, therefore the sense-data must be filled out by a projection of memories' (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology* 22). However, this explanation ignores the pre-existing recognisability of the appearance of the words which makes the book readable, in Merleau-Ponty's words: 'in order to fill out perception, memories need to have been made possible by the physiognomic character of the data' (ibid.). Otherwise, without such recognition one would not know what memories to retrieve; in other words, perception is intentional and perspectival in relation to the present context as well as the perceiver: 'Before any contribution by memory, what is seen must at the present moment so organize itself as to present a picture to me in which I can recognize my former experiences' (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology* 22-23). The 'projection of memories' is a bad metaphor because recognition does not work by recalling directly from the past—recognition already exercises its significance at the moment:

> When we come back to phenomena we find, as a basic layer of experience, a whole already pregnant with an irreducible meaning: not sensations with gaps between them, into which memories may be supposed to slip, but the features, the layout of a landscape or a word, in spontaneous accord with the intentions of the moment, as with earlier experience. (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology* 25)

The empiricist conception of the role of memory in perception is an over mechanistic view which neglects the spontaneity of the living subject. Memory is not a storage of sense data from which past information can be accurately retrieved according to some associative principles. Rather, it is in constant communication with the present which is enabled by instantaneous recognition and intentionality of the consciousness.

To put the issue in a larger context, then, Merleau-Ponty further criticises that empiricism tends to dismiss the cultural and emotional aspects of perception:

> Now, for empiricism, 'cultural' objects and faces owe their distinctive form, their magic power, to transference and projection of memory, so that only by accident has the human world any meaning. There is nothing in the appearance of a landscape, an object or a body whereby it is predestined to look 'gay' or 'sad', 'lively' or 'dreary', 'elegant' or 'coarse'. Once more seeking a definition of what we perceive through the physical and chemical properties of the stimuli which may act upon our sensory apparatus, empiricism excludes from perception the anger or the pain which I nevertheless read in a face, the religion whose essence I seize in some hesitation or reticence, the city whose temper I recognize in the attitude of a policeman or the style of a public building. (*Phenomenology* 27)

Empiricism makes the cultural world an illusion by regarding it as a random result of the associative force of the mental activity of an individual acting on the extrinsic connections of things in the world. The understanding of human emotions of others is an outcome of an introspective withdrawal of the consciousness to its own data pool of past experiences and memories. For Merleau-Ponty, in contrast, perception is 'impoverished' by empiricism and 'becomes purely a matter of knowledge' (*Phenomenology* 28). It neither truthfully describes the structure of our living experience nor accounts for in what ways the natural and cultural world changes and re-creates in perception.

Considering Wordsworth's intellectual and historical background, it is not an unexpected move to relate his poetic ideas to the British empiricist philosophy. In existing Wordsworthian criticism, David Hartley's influence on the poet is widely

accepted. This is the proposition of American critic Arthur Beatty in his study, *William Wordsworth: his Doctrine and Art in their Historical Relations*. Wordsworth's knowledge of British empiricist philosophy developed by thinkers such as John Locke and David Hartley was obvious because of his intellectual relationship to William Godwin and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who were attracted by the philosophical ideas of Locke, Berkeley and Hartley. Beatty particularly investigates the manifestation of Hartley's associationism in Wordsworth's poetry. He points out that in Hartley's associationism, 'passion, or emotion, is secondary to ideas, that is, to intellect: and it is also not primary, but "factitious," that is, generated by association' (115). This secondary nature of 'emotion' is exemplified by certain passages in *The Prelude*, and Beatty quotes this one as an example:

> ⋯the earth
> And common face of Nature spake to me
> Rememberable things; sometimes, 'tis true,
> By chance collisions and quaint accidents
> (Like those ill-sorted unions, work supposed
> Of evil-minded fairies), yet not vain
> Nor profitless, if haply they impressed
> Collateral objects and appearances,
> Albeit lifeless then, and doomed to sleep
> Until maturer seasons called them forth
> To impregnate and to elevate the mind,
> --And if the vulgar joy by its own weight
> Wearied itself out of the memory,
> The scenes which were a witness of that joy
> Depicted on the brain, and to the eye
> Were visible a daily sight; and thus
> By the impressive discipline of fear,
> By pleasure and repeated happiness,
> Of obscure feelings representative
> Of things forgotten, these same scenes so bright,
> Though yet the say was distant, did become
> Habitually dear, and all their forms
> And changeful colours by invisible links
> Were fastened to the affections. (1850 *Prelude*, I *ll*.586-612)

For this passage, Beatty proclaims that 'this is pure associationism, both in the doctrine of the extrinsic nature of feeling and in the quite definite naming of the particular passions of fear and pleasure as the leading forces in this association and transmutation of feeling' (116). He further pursues his argument by quoting a famous

passage from the 'Preface' to *Lyrical Ballads*, in which Wordsworth asserts that 'poems to which any value can be attached, were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man who being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility had also thought long and deeply.' Base on Wordsworth's emphasis on contemplation and thought, Beatty concludes, 'that is to say, Poetry proceeds from feelings; but the only feelings which are aesthetic ones are those which have their origin in intellectual ideas: any other emotion, or feeling, is not worthy of poetry' (117).

Beatty's interpretation, I would suggest, is a partial understanding of Wordsworth. What Wordsworth also claims in the 'Preface' to *Lyrical Ballads* is that by the 'repetition and continuance' of the act of 'continued influxes of feeling modified and directed by our thoughts', 'feelings connected with important subjects' 'will be nourished', resulting in a person 'in some degree enlightened, his taste exalted, and his affections ameliorated'. To adapt Merleau-Ponty's terms, what Wordsworth refers as 'feelings modified and directed by our thoughts' are similar to our intentionality in perception, and those changes that Wordsworth names are changes in the structure of perception and our being-in-the-world. Nevertheless, Arthur Beatty's study was an early example of investigating Wordsworth and *The Prelude* from the perspective of empiricism. Wordsworthian critical interpretations revolve around associationism have still been frequently discussed and become more sophisticated in the twentieth century up till now.

John Hayden in his article, 'Wordsworth, Hartley, and the Revisionists', expresses a sceptical attitude towards assertive claims of a straightforward influence of Hartley's associationism on Wordsworth. For Hayden, even though Wordsworth's poetics shows similarities of associationist ideas, it is because of the pervasiveness of the theory by the end of eighteenth century in Britain. He writes:

> If true, if associationism assumed the popular proportions it seems to have, the influence of David Hartley on William Wordsworth is considerably more difficult to trace than Beatty and others have been aware in the absence of external evidence. For although Hartley was an important figure in the history of associationist psychology, he was not the only eighteenth-century figure involved […]. (98)

Hayden largely repudiates Beatty's certainty of the influence of Hartley's associationism on Wordsworth, including the evidence, the passage on 'feeling' in Wordsworth's 'Preface' to *Lyrical Ballads*, that Beatty employs to demonstrate Hartlean influence. He comments: 'Hartley insisted that human affections are derived solely from ideas: "Our passions or affections can be no more than aggregates of simple ideas united by association" (I, 368). Arthur Beatty claimed that Wordsworth followed this Hartleyan proposition clearly' (102). Of the nine points of similarity that Beatty listed, Hayden only agrees on the third one: 'the secondary and derivative nature of emotion' (ibid). However, as I may eventually show in this discussion, this point is also problematic. In contrast to Coleridge, Wordsworth was cautious of reading too much philosophy, although Hartley's associationism might be a study of psychology—but still, Wordsworth's thinking cannot be explained by psychology alone. Wordsworth is a poet of sense experience, only in that his account of his experience shows a fascinating understanding of the working of the human mind comparable to that of philosophers, and he himself mentioned that he 'yearn[s] towards some philosophic song'. Wordsworth is a poet of refined sensibility and thinking, as John Hayden claims: 'Wordsworth, I suspect, was a more independent and original thinker than he is often given credit for' (118). The influence of associationism on Wordsworth is arguably not so specific, and it is just one of the many critical interpretations of Wordsworth. The poet might well just have appropriated the associationist ideas for his own use. The appearance of empiricist terms in Wordsworth's writing did not necessarily imply the exact meaning of the terms in their original empiricist theory, sometimes Wordsworth employed some of the technical words quite unspecifically. After all, he was a poet, not a philosopher.

In the 'Introduction' to his *Associationism and the Literary Imagination*, Cairns Craig traces the genesis and development of associationism so as to draw connections between its philosophical exposition and aesthetic discussion among eighteenth century British philosophers. Associationist theories were pervasively influential; notable expositors include David Hume, John Stuart Mill, David Hartley and his follower Joseph Priestley etc. Merleau-Ponty's criticism of empiricism is largely quite general and particular discussion of individual empiricist thinkers is rare. This is understandable because his refutation of empiricism was not new to the

intellectual sphere of humanities and social sciences. In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty mainly draws ideas from psychology, and his thinking developed from his readings of late nineteenth century and early twentieth century psychologists, who reviewed and rectified previous strands of psychological theories. He chiefly considers perception through sensation in empiricism and associationism as mechanistic processes, during which the mind is largely a passive entity. This is a philosophical and scientific view of empiricism and associationism that Merleau-Ponty focuses on in order to set about his elucidation of his phenomenology of embodiment. Yet in various aesthetic discussions of associationism, philosophers actually have different understandings of the activity of the mind and the body. Cairns Craig points out that in the thought of both Joseph Priestley and Archibald Alison, aesthetic experience is generated by an active mind. Priestley does not concur with the passive aspect of Hartley's associationism, and he believes that 'the pleasure that the mind finds in the exercise of its own faculties is similar to the pleasure that we find in the exercise of our bodies' (Craig 22). For Priestley, good works of literature should be able to 'disturb our normal trains of association' so as to provoke the mind to actively construct new connections like 'entering upon a new world' (Craig 23). The experience of the new introduced by these works excites the intensity of the mind, and it is comparable to the exercise of the body precisely because the mind is also corporeal:

> This muscular associationism assumes that judgements of taste are, by and large, transpositions of bodily experience to intellectual activity, and that when our intellectual capacities are put to 'moderate exercise' they give us a pleasure which cannot be produced by the indolence of passive association nor the pain of more demanding intellectual effort. It is an aesthetic which is thoroughly Hartleian, because it is founded on the fact that the mind is corporeal and experiences the same pleasure from the active exercise of its own capacities as does the body. (Craig 23)

Moreover, the strength of aesthetic pleasure produced is dependent 'as much on the constitution and experience of the recipient as it does on the elements of the work itself, and that even for a particular individual, the greater the fitness of the mind, the more pleasure it will take in demanding works and the less it will find in the easier ones which it might, at an earlier stage in its development, have enjoyed' (ibid.). In other words, the reception of a work for an individual is related to the apprehensive

capacity and the degree of sophistication of the mind. However, the activity of the mind that Priestley concerns does not resolve the problems that Merleau-Ponty raises. The metaphor of 'entering upon a new world' for the effect of the novelty of a work on the faculties of the reader's mind assumes the *possibility* of the revelation of the world in entirety. The newness is already inherent in the work ready for the mind to explore. It is also crucial to recognise that Merleau-Ponty's concern for the body is different from the associationist one, because the body, as much as the corporeal mind, as seen in Priestley's argument, is an isolated entity which receives and reacts according to its own capacity. Although the mind has to work its way to receive new ideas and make new associations, the process is after all unidirectional and finite. A more capable mind can exhaust the ideas of a work and reach a higher level of apprehensiveness. In short, the corporeal mind conceived here is teleological. It seems that this interpretation cannot account for the effect of renewal of understanding upon re-reading of the text, which could be very different from, or even paradoxical to, previous readings. Moreover, is it also possible that the sense of 'new' is a result of culture rather than capacity? While Priestley attributes what one can read from a new text to 'new association', Merleau-Ponty might attribute to 'intentionality'.

Cairns Craig also investigates evidence of the influences of associationism in Wordsworth's poetics and poetry. Before commenting on Wordsworth, Craig points out that in Abram's *The Mirror and the Lamp*, he 'gives to Coleridge's imagination' the centrality for contributing to the development of Romantic aesthetics; however, Abrams' judgement on Wordsworth makes him seem 'schizophrenic'. Craig disagrees with Abrams' proposition that 'only in his poetry, not in his criticism, does Wordsworth make the transition from the eighteenth-century view of man and nature to the concept that the mind is creative in perception, and an integral part of an organically inter-related universe' (*Mirror* 104). For Craig, Abrams' view in considering the 'Preface' to *Lyrical Ballads* as a 'document in the rise of expressivism' is not an adequate understanding. Craig contends that:

> What Wordsworth is asserting is precisely *not* an emotivist conception of poetry: the poet's 'feelings' are directed by thoughts which are 'the representatives of all our past feelings'—that is, by memories shaped by association; these in turn produce 'habits of mind' which, because of their

> efficiency, act as though 'blindly and mechanically' but in fact are of 'such a nature and in such connection with each other' that they will be similar to the feelings of the reader, 'if he be in a healthful state of association'. (87)

Although it is true that Wordsworth also concerns the working of poetry on the reader's mind, it seems to me that the particular passage of the 'Preface' ('For all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings. […] and his affections ameliorated') Craig quotes is primarily on the experience of the poet himself. Because when Wordsworth talks about 'a man, who being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility, had also thought long and deeply', he has already identified that the subject would be somewhat 'more than usual'. The 'representatives of all our past feelings' forms the context for the 'spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings'—the repetition of this act could be 'habits of mind' of the poet, but not necessarily the readers. After all, Wordsworth is attempting to explain how the feeling in his poetry comes about. For the feeling to be powerful and elevating, that is, not superficial and transient, it must be grounded by 'thought', and therefore, it is both sensual and intellectual.

While intellectualism sets out to oppose empiricist doctrines about our knowledge of the world, Merleau-Ponty thinks that it is equally inadequate in providing a satisfactory account of perception. Intellectualism can be broadly understood as rationalism and cognitivism. Although it is not exactly idealism, intellectualism has a philosophical pedigree descended from Cartesianism and Kantian idealism. Intellectualism believes in the power of constitution of the mind. Reflection is able to reach an understanding of the world for consciousness itself. In his investigation of the intellectualist idea of 'judgement', Merleau-Ponty complains that intellectualists pass too easily from sense experience to 'judgement'. For example in Descartes' *2nd Meditation* he mentions that while what he sees from the window are just hats and coats, he will judge that he sees people. Perception is reduced to intellection and one's knowledge of the world is constructed by the intellect. However, every experience of perception has its own context and background which is confined to a temporally and spatially existing body. Merleau-Ponty aptly points out that: 'what intellectualism lacks is contingency in the occasions of thought' (32); which means that the intellectually constituted world is

limited by contingency from the very beginning. As Taylor Carman lucidly put it: 'What intellectualist theories of perception fail to acknowledge, according to Merleau-Ponty, is the embodiment and situatedness of experience, for they reduce perceptual content to the free-floating cognition of a disembodied subject' (65).

Contrary to Arthur Beatty, Morse Peckham's idealist interpretation of the Wordsworthian imagination assigns an active and dominant role to the mind. He spots particular passages from *The Prelude* in which the mind unequivocally takes up a superior position in commanding the world, for instance this one:

> [⋯] passages of life in which
> We have had deepest feeling that the mind
> Is lord and master, and that outward sense
> Is but the obedient servant of her will. (XI *ll*.269-272)

For Peckham, Wordsworth is particularly Kantian in moments like this, although, since Wordsworth is a poet, his ideas differ slightly from Kant sometimes. Peckham believes that, for Wordsworth,

> The mind, […], was exquisitely adapted to the outer world, and that world was equally adapted to the mind. Of the union of the two he speaks as of a wedding and a consummation, the offspring of which is creation. Yet in comparison to the mind, the world is passive, although a wise passiveness is necessary to prepare the mind for the consummation. … From the inviolate self issues forth the power to relate man to his world, and this act of relation is the act of the creation of value. We see intuitively, through unconscious powers, into the structure of order of which the visible universe is a symbol. Really it is not too distant a position from Kant's notion that the structural power of the mind is a guarantee that the world has structure, even though the mind cannot create a structure which corresponds to the structure of the world. (116)

Although Peckham proposes a contrasting interpretation of Wordsworth to Beatty's, his argument is also partial. He neglects moments in *The Prelude* when 'nature' or 'the universe' is described as 'active' and the subject situated in nature sometimes appears particularly passive. Moreover, there are many occasions in *The Prelude* showing neither that 'the mind was exquisitely adapted to the outer world' nor vice versa. For Merleau-Ponty, empiricism and intellectualism are actually 'two sides of the same coin' (Carman 60):

> Empiricism cannot see that we need to know what we are looking for, otherwise we would not be looking for it, and intellectualism fails to see that we need to be ignorant of what we are looking for, or equally again we

> should not be searching. They are in agreement in that neither can grasp consciousness in the act of learning, and that neither attaches due importance to that circumscribed ignorance, that still 'empty' but already determinate intention which is attention itself. [For both doctrines] the indeterminate does not enter into the definition of the mind. (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology* 33)

By drawing on Merleau-Ponty's theory of an embodied subjectivity, we may be able to see that the Wordsworthian imagination and creativity is more informative and revealing about the nature of human subjectivity and experience than empiricist or intellectualist interpretations could accommodate. The body occupies a central position for orienting one's being-in-the-world. Since it is a concrete presence among other things and beings, the body is the primordial point which relates us to both nature and the human world. Merleau-Ponty explains:

> for if it is true that I am conscious of my body via the world, that it is the unperceived term in the center of the world toward which all objects turn their face, it is true for the same reason that my body is the pivot of the world: I know that objects have several faces because I could walk around them, and in that sense I am conscious of the world by means of my body. (*Phenomenology* 94-95)

As the body is part of the world, it is made perceptible to me when the world acts upon it in various ways. At the same time, consciousness or the mind has to rely on the living body's experience. The motility of the body enables me to explore the multifarious aspects of the world which contribute to the development of my consciousness.

In *The Prelude*, bodily perception is often represented through seeing and hearing. The eye and the ear are endowed with the symbolic meaning of the mental power of imagination. Yet, isn't the literal meaning of the eye and the ear equally important? Although on the surface Wordsworth's descriptions may suggest a dissociation between the mind and the body, but upon a closer reading of the text it is actually revealing that Wordsworth is far from promoting a mind/body dichotomy. I am going to use the following passage taken from Book Third as an example:

> ⋯ for I had an eye
> Which in my strongest workings evermore
> Was looking for the shades of difference
> As they lie hid in all exterior forms,
> Near or remote, minute or vast—an eye

> Which from a stone, a tree, a withered leaf,
> To the broad ocean and the azure heavens
> Spangled with kindred multitudes of stars,
> Could find no surface where its power might sleep,
> Which spake perpetual logic to my soul,
> And by an unrelenting agency
> Did bind my feelings even as in a chain. (III *ll*.156-167)

There are two very different interpretations of the working of perception here, especially concerning the 'eye'. Eric Gidal reads these lines in terms of empiricism: 'Wordsoworth actively constructs knowledge through his faculties of perception and comparison. Both internal emotions and external perceptions are united through a peculiarly empirical account of poetic agency' (97). On the contrary, Nancy Yousef reads it in relation to a Cartesian mind by referring to the mentioning of 'madness' in the few preceding lines: 'Solipsistic panic is transformed into visionary conviction: "I had a world about me— 'twas my own. / I made it: for it only lived to me. / And to the God who looked into my mind' (3:142-144). This is the "abyss of idealism" […] The enthusiast is […] vulnerable to the charge of lunacy. Wordsworth's admission […] introduces the possibility that his experience is a type of madness (albeit in the guise of a denial)' (130). Gidal's interpretation is not very clear on how the 'poetic agency' comes about, although the metaphor of 'a chain' is rather empiricist. Moreover, Yousef seems to lean towards the Wordsworthian emphasis on his internal vision, and regards his denial (i.e. 'It was no madness' of line 156 omitted in the about quote) as a 'guise'.

If we just read the lines literally, Wordsworth seems to take for granted that the 'agency' has the power of uniting things of the external world and transforming them internally for himself. Here, the 'eye' is actively 'looking' and surveying the external world. In contrast to some other passages in which nature is personified as some animated being that imparts knowledge to the poet, it is quite difficult to differentiate in these lines whether it is the 'eye' or nature that 'spake perpetual logic' to the poet. Furthermore, it is also fairly reasonable to believe that the 'unrelenting agency' is not a disembodied mind but an incarnated subjective consciousness that is embedded perceptually and emotionally in the external world. Moreover, we may also notice the scope of visual sensation in this passage. The 'eye' does not only attend to minute details such as 'a stone, a tree, a withered leaf',

but also vast panoramic fields such as 'the broad ocean and the azure heavens' and 'multitudes of stars'. Yet, the 'eye' is still not all-encompassing, and what it is able to see can never be exhausted, so it 'could find no surface where its power might sleep'. The visual sensation described in this passage somehow corresponds with Merleau-Ponty:

> We may summarize … by saying that any sensation belongs to a certain field. To say that I have a visual field is to say that by reason of my position I have access to and an opening upon a system of beings, visible beings, that these are at the disposal of my gaze in virtue of a kind of primordial contract and through a gift of nature, with no effort made on my part; from which it follows that vision is prepersonal. And it follows at the same time that it is always limited, that around what I am looking at a given moment is spread a horizon of things which are not seen, or which are even invisible. Vision is a thought subordinated to a certain field, and this is what is called a sense. (*Phenomenology* 252)

Nevertheless, we may notice a difference of this passage from that of Wordsworth. Merleau-Ponty's description of the visual sense is quite passive here, while the Wordsworthian 'eye' is active. Is this a contradiction then? I would suggest that it is not. Because further to Merleau-Ponty's argument of the sense experience, he posits the importance of a bodily intentionality in the self-world synthesis. He contests that, 'for the object to exist in the eyes of the subject, it is not enough for this "subject" to fix his eyes on it…he must in addition know that he is …watching it, … his action must be entirely given to himself, and finally this subject must be nothing other than what he is conscious of being' (*Phenomenology* 276). The Wordsworthian subject who perceives is a consciousness that is aware of itself. I would explain further with reference to the context of these quoted lines. In an earlier part of Book Third, Wordsworth expresses a dislike of his college education, he would rather gain his 'knowledge' from nature. There is a fundamental difference in the situation between these two kinds of learning. While in the 'lecturer's room', knowledge is abstractly imparted, on the contrary, nature is closely related to the body. Wordsworth's walking 'along the fields' can be understood as an exercise of what Merleau-Ponty terms 'motor intentionality', an 'intentional engagement with the world—that is, intentional contact that is not mediated by representations' (Romdenh-Romluc 158).

Although empiricist thoughts can provide an explanation of knowledge of the world, such explanation posits the objectivity of the world prior to the human

consciousness. Because empiricism is unaware of the experiential aspect of perception, the 'objective' truth it asserts is actually prejudiced. Hence, phenomenology sets out a different philosophical method for exploring the perception of *being*. The phenomenological emphasis of Merleau-Ponty on experience and an interactive relationship between consciousness, body and the world is particularly useful for understanding Wordsworth's *The Prelude* since the project of Merleau-Ponty interestingly concurs with Wordsworth's in various ways even though they are apparently unconnected thinkers of different times.

Furthermore, another interesting similarity between Wordsworth and Merleau-Ponty is their examination of the subject as an existence coming-into-being. This issue could be analysed by looking at the issue of memory. The portrayal of the working of memory in Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology shows a peculiar resemblance to *The Prelude*. After criticising the notion of 'the projection of memories' in empiricism, Merleau-Ponty proposes a much more complex operation and significance of memory in our consciousness. He asserts that phenomenology has to describe how our consciousness:

> by its own vitality, and without carrying complementary material into a mythical unconscious, […] can, in course of time, modify the structure of its surroundings; how, at every moment, its former experience is present to it in the form of a horizon which it can reopen—'if it chooses to take that horizon as a theme of knowledge'—in an act of recollection, but which it can equally leave on the fringe of experience, and which then immediately provides the perceived with a present atmosphere and significance. (*Phenomenology* 25)

The act of recollection is not just a mental recall upon some past experience from the storage of memories. It has the power of altering the self's spatial existence, and more importantly, it challenges our usual conception of a linear temporality. Life's horizon is reopened, and former experience is reconstituted in relation to the current surroundings so as to acquire a new significance for the present. Again, this implication of the act of recollection is prominent in *The Prelude*. For instance, in Book Second we find this interplay of the past and the present, which leads to an anticipation of the future:

> For I would walk alone
> In storm and tempest, or in starlight nights
> Beneath the quiet heavens, and at that time

> Have felt whate'er there is of power in sound
> To breathe an elevated mood, by form
> Or image unprofaned; and I would stand
> Beneath some rock, listening to sounds that are
> The ghostly language of the ancient earth,
> Or make their dim abode in distant winds.
> Thence did I drink the visionary power.
> I deem not profitless those fleeting moods
> Of shadowy exultation; not for this,
> That they are kindred to our purer mind
> And intellectual life, but that the soul—
> Remembering how she felt, but what she felt
> Remembering not—retains an obscure sense
> Of possible sublimity, to which
> With faculties still growing, feeling still
> Have something to pursue. (II *ll.*321-341)

Harold Bloom refers to this passage and proclaims that '[n]o passage in *The Prelude* is more central, and nothing is a better description of Wordsworth's poetry' (149). Bloom rightly sees the importance of the 'possible sublimity':

> What his soul felt in different encounters with Nature, he will not always remember. How is it felt is recalled, and this retains that obscure sense of possible sublimity that colors all of the poetry of the Great Decade. As the soul's faculties grow, the soul is in danger of becoming content, of ceasing to aspire, but is saved from such sleep by the sense of possible sublimity. (ibid.)

This passage is also significant because of its conceptualisation of the operation of memory and its importance for achieving a more sophisticated understanding of being. In this passage, we may find Wordsworth's poetic version of Merleau-Ponty's version of our being-in-the-world. Different from that of Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty's being-in-the-world is not just an ontological state of dwelling but an unceasing spatial and temporal interaction between the embodied subject and otherness. Spatially, the Wordsworthian subject is often localized in a natural landscape, where he would 'Have felt whate'er there is of power in sound / To breathe an elevated mood, by form / Or image unprofaned'—along with the use of the word 'heaven', the absolute space of nature and the divine is no longer inert: be it pantheism or personification, animated nature is regarded as a respected other and it has the power to interact with the embodied subject. The body's interaction with the world *is* communication, so Wordsworth can hear 'The ghostly language of the ancient earth'.

This 'Romantic' communion with the world is 're-presented' by Merleau-Ponty in lucid prose: 'Space and perception generally represent, at the core of the subject, the fact of his birth, the perpetual contribution of his bodily being, a communication with the world more ancient than thought' (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology* 296). At the same time, the subject also experiences a temporal synthesis through perception. The present life's horizon opens and with the act of remembrance, former experience is presented to Wordsworth once again and the present experience is modified. The spatial synthesis and temporal synthesis are intertwined. Merleau-Ponty sees in this mode of synthesis the 'essence of time':

> [T]here would be no present, that is to say, no sensible world with its thickness and inexhaustible richness, if perception, in Hegel's words, did not retain a past in the depth of the present, and did not contract that past into that depth. […] It is true that I find, through time, later experiences interlocking with earlier ones and carrying them further, but nowhere do I enjoy absolute possession of myself by myself, since the hollow void of the future is for ever being refilled with a fresh present. […] [E]very synthesis is both exploded and rebuilt by time which, with one and the same process, calls it into question and confirms it because it produces a new present which retains the past. (*Phenomenology* 279)

The Wordsworthian vision is an anticipation and a pursuit of a continual establishment of inter-relationship with the world. Because the embodied existence is a process of coming-into-being, the subject can never be sure of what exactly it is pursuing, which means there is no teleological end for life and one has to encounter life's essential openness again and again as long as he lives and interacts with the world.

The above analysed structure of Wordsworth's subjective synthesis usually takes place at 'spots of time'. In his essay, 'Wordsworth and the "Spots of Time"', Jonathan Bishop sets out to 'isolate the genuine elements in Wordsworth' by putting the passages of 'spots of time' together. Wordsworth introduces the concept of 'spots of time' in these lines: 'There are in our existence spots of time, / Which with distinct preeminence retain / A renovating virtue', and he goes on to elaborate on the 'virtue' (XI *ll.*257-259):

> whence, depressed
> By false opinion and contentious thought,
> Or aught of heavier or more deadly weight
> In trivial occupations and the round

> Of ordinary intercourse, our minds
> Are nourished and invisibly repaired—
> A virtue, by which pleasure is enhanced,
> That penetrates, enables us to mount
> When high, more high, and lifts us up when fallen. (XI *ll*. 259-267)

Bishop examines some similar characteristics of different 'spots of time', and discovers that 'The "spots" […] are embodied in a special vocabulary' (147). He induces a few common elements of these moments that form a story: 'a story which, so far as it is interpretable, tells of the fears, curiosities, and guilt of childhood' (148). Bishop sees the repeated recollection of earliest memories a reveal of what is suggested in a psychoanalytic article, 'the central core of each person's psychodynamics, his chief motivations, form of neurosis, and emotional problem'; and Bishop further explains the earliest memories, 'Selected and distorted to express their possessor's "nuclear emotional constellation," they persist through life' (ibid.). It seems to me that this aspect of the self that Wordsworth offers is an advanced example to illustrate what Merleau-Ponty would refer to as the intention of the body:

> But then what is this intention? I 'consider' the triangle, which is for me a set of lines with a certain orientation, and if words such as 'angle' or 'direction' have any meaning for me, it is in so far as I place myself at a point, and from it tend towards another point, in so far as the system of spatial positions provides me with a field of possible movements. Thus do I grasp the concrete essence of the triangle, which is not a collection of objective 'characteristics', but the formula of an attitude, a certain modality of my hold on the world, a structure. […]The construction possesses a demonstrative value because I cause it to emerge from the dynamic formula of the triangle. It expresses my power to make apparent the sensible symbols of a certain hold on things, which is my perception of the triangle's structure. It is an act of the productive imagination and not a return to the eternal idea of the triangle. (*Phenomenology* 449-450)

In this example, Merleau-Ponty believes my perception of the triangle is firstly presupposed by the spatial orientation in relation to my body ('provide me with a field of possible movements'), and the triangle is recognized by 'an act of the productive imagination'—the structure of this perception is 'the formula of an attitude, a certain modality of my hold on the world'. Comparatively, in Wordsworth, what the structure of the 'spots of time' might reveal would be a kind of 'modality' of his being in the world which involves the 'productive imagination', and also the 'psychodynamics', including the 'chief motivations, form of neurosis, and emotional

problem'. Wordsworth's example is an advanced one not only because his re-presentation of the 'spots' is more complicated than seeing a triangle, but its exploration of the relationship between imagination and feeling is powerful. In Book Sixth, Wordsworth recounts the experience of crossing the Alps. Bishop asserts that here 'we see the heroic quality of the poet's mind; instead of allowing his feelings simply to be, his pen put down until the spasm passes, he sets out to express what he feels' (150). This is a moment in which 'imagination' suddenly seizes the poet: 'Imagination!—lifting up itself / Before the eye and progress of my song / Like an unfathered vapour, here that power, / In all the might of its endowments, came / Athwart me' (*ll*. 525-529). Bishop sees a potentially destructive energy of the imagination's effect on the self in the image of the Nile:

> In such strength
> Of usurpation, in such visitings
> Of awful promise, when the light of sense
> Goes out in flashes that have shewn to us
> The invisible world, doth greatness make abode,
> There harbours whether we be young or old.
> Our destiny, our nature, and our home,
> Is with infinitude—and only there;
> With hope it is, hope that can never die,
> Effort, and expectation, and desire,
> And something evermore about to be.
> The mind beneath such banners militant
> Thinks not of spoils or trophies, nor of aught
> That may attest its prowess, blest in thoughts
> That are their own perfection and reward—
> Strong in itself, and in the access of joy
> Which hides it like the overflowing Nile. (*ll*. 532-548)[2]

In Wordsworth's account of imagination, it seems that following sense experience there is often a suspension of it: 'when the light of sense / Goes out in flashes that have shewn to us / The invisible world, doth greatness make abode, / There harbours whether we be young or old', but only because of these 'flashes' can the mind see 'the invisible world'—a world that the self has been developing throughout time and through its experience in space. For Wordsworth this process and the operation of the process are the 'greatness' of being. The momentary revelation is a joyful experience,

[2] I quote from the 1805 version of *The Prelude*, which is different from Bishop's use of the 1850 version. This is to keep the consistency of the current project.

for it establishes a unity with the world, making the self at home with it. Moreover, it also suggest the infinitude of such communication, the feeling is awe-inspiring: 'The psychic reserves locked in the key experiences of his life are at rare moments available to a mind strong enough to face them, to address a lifetime to their articulation' (Bishop 152). If 'the access of joy' is like 'the overflowing Nile', the body would be the land that it flows through. This spatial metaphor implies a spatial effect of imagination and feeling while writing poetry. This poetic embodiment manifests the coming-into-being of the self-consciousness, and the interpretation would be a disagreement with critics who 'see the experiences the "spots" record in quasi-mystical terms' (Bishop 147). The Wordsworthian imagination does not originate from some mystical external power, but from the subject's own embodied existence. For Bishop, the poem exemplifies 'poetical fullness and imaginative authority' (ibid). The image of the Nile also implies destructiveness; therefore, the courage of Wordsworth to confront the experience by writing poetry is actually heroic.

The Prelude is a poetic embodiment which brings into being the being-in-the-world of the Wordsworthian subject which we have been discussing. The poem is phenomenologically performative—here, I am using the term 'performative' in the sense of both 'speech act' and 'performance'. While the embodied subject is constantly in need of returning to its historical density in order to renew its meaning of existence, the act of writing by Wordsworth precisely enacts this recurrent act of recollection and creation of a new synthetic relationship with the world. In 'The Mapping of Meaning in Wordsworth's "Michael"', Sally Bushell proposes the idea of the 'spatialized speech act': 'The spatialized speech act concerns saying and enacted doing in a temporal and physical location that bears upon meaning; it introduces specific elements of time and space, allowing for multiple layerings of meaning over time' (43). The fact that there were at least four versions of *The Prelude* prompts us to recognise that poetry composition is a process of writing and re-writing that constitutes a 'spatialized speech act'. Wordsworth's continuous revision of the autobiographical poem can be understood as his endeavour to reopen life's horizon in order to reconstitute his being-in-the-world. In other words, poetry

composition can be conceived as an event that propels and enables him to re-discover and re-create the meaning of his life.

I am going to illustrate my point by discussing the significance of Wordsworth's recollection of a scene in which he encounters an unfortunate working father with his sick baby in London, which was not included in the 1805 version but added to the 1850 version of *The Prelude*:

> Me, rather it employed, to note, and keep
> In memory, those individual sights
> Of courage, or integrity, or truth,
> Or tenderness, which there, set off by foil,
> Appeared more touching. One will I select;
> A Father—for he bore that sacred name—
> Him saw I, sitting in an open square,
> Upon a corner-stone of that low wall,
> Wherein were fixed the iron pales that fenced
> A spacious grass-plot; there, in silence, sate
> This One Man, with a sickly babe outstretched
> Upon his knee, whom he had thither brought
> For sunshine, and to breathe the fresher air.
> Of those who passed, and me who looked at him,
> He took no heed; but in his brawny arms
> (The Artificer was to the elbow bare,
> And from his work this moment had been stolen)
> He held the child, and, bending over it,
> As if he were afraid both of the sun
> And of the air, which he had come to seek,
> Eyed the poor babe with love unutterable. (1850 *Prelude*, Book Seventh *ll*.598-618)

In Wordsworth's memory, there are 'individual sights' which evince the effulgence of human emotions and behaviours, which he will constantly recall, especially when he confronts the 'foolishness' and 'madness' in the city life of London. His witness of the action of the father, which shows 'love unutterable'—love not articulated but unmistakably conveyed in his gesture—is related again in the present context of writing this 1850 version. The passage was not in the 1805 version of *The Prelude*, in which the speaker just passes from a critique of the 'foolishness' and 'madness' of the city life to an experience of estrangement as he walks in a crowd of people on the street. His remembrance and addition of this particular scene demonstrate an advancement in his sympathetic understanding of human relationships, and that he is more convinced of its importance for the alienating modern life. Language is used to

embody this re-creation of the meaning of a past memory so as to endow a present significance to it. The very act of 'relating' the story is a live performance. Merleau-Ponty describes the body's relation to memory a 'communication with time and space', saying:

> The part played by the body in memory is comprehensible only if memory is, not only the constituting consciousness of the past, but an effort to reopen time on the basis of the implications contained in the present, and if the body, as our permanent means of 'taking up attitudes' and thus constructing pseudo-presents, is the medium of our communication with time as well as with space. The body's function in remembering is that same function of projection which we have already met in starting to move: the body converts a certain motor essence into vocal form, spreads out the articulatory style of a word into audible phenomena, and arrays the former attitude, which is resumed, into the panorama of the past, projecting an intention to move into actual movement, because the body is a power of natural expression. (210-211)

The body speaks not only in the sense that it is a biological vocal instrument, but is itself powerful in expressing and communicating to a 'pseudo-presence' of being, no matter whether it is an imagined other or the past selves of the subject.

As we encounter the issue of communication, there is yet one more performative dimension in Wordsworth's act of recollection and act of poetry writing. As any reader of *The Prelude* could recognize, there is an addressee for the poem, who is Wordsworth's close friend, Coleridge. Certainly he is not a random presence in the poem but a necessary character that enables Wordsworth's purpose of establishing an interpersonal relationship through poetry writing. We discussed earlier the embodied subject's synthesis with the world, but its synthesis with the Other is equally crucial. If text is considered a bodily existence, it also functions just like an embodied subject that communicates.

As we have seen in Chapter One, for Merleau-Ponty, language is a means of connecting the body to the world, so language itself is a gesture, an embodiment. Wordsworth's act of writing *The Prelude* might provide an illustration of this proposition. I have quoted from Keach that Wordsworth believes in a 'special virtue of the ineluctable subjectivity of language', that it is able to 'transcend or transvalue the arbitrariness of language'. This is particularly true when poetry is employed to

express feeling that has arisen by recollection. In his recollection of the past in poetry, Wordsworth is enacting the communication of the past and the present:

> In the writing of the *Prelude*, memory becomes […] both mode and subject matter. The poetry must be read as a material embodiment of Wordsworth's past, no less than as a spiritual reincarnation of its meaning: it must be read, that is, in support of his own desire to give 'as far as words can give/A substance and a life to what I feel'. (Salvesen 87)

The poem is a material existence for Wordsworth, not because of its objective characteristics, but its very embodiment of meanings—substantial meanings that he discovers and feels of life. Salvesen argues that 'memory in Wordsworth cannot be studied as an aspect of the Imagination; it is an independent force, and it is an independent literary idea' (35). Indeed, this is one of the insights that Wordsworth formulates in *The Prelude*. Memories are not just raw materials for the imagination to work upon, rather, it is the deep rootedness of temporal being. Its influence is immense to an extent that it might direct imagination. Since memory is a major constituent of the identity of the self, the production of feeling from memory would not be arbitrary because it is from the self's concrete existence: 'For Wordsworth, memory was not something to be classed in "the cabinet of sensations"; it was a whole mode of feeling' (Salvesen 43). This 'mode of feeling' functions as time's inscription on the body every time the self encounters different experiences the world endows to the subject, hence it has an ontological significance: 'Memory has to do not only with specific emotions but also with states of being, continuities of feeling' (Salvesen 20). Feeling is time's imprint on the body. As poetry facilitates the past-present synthesis and incites feelings in the subject, poetry arguably has a spatial dimension for the poet as he experiences it as embodiment. For Wordsworth, his poetic words are substantial but not merely textual.

By using poetry to chart memory's provocation of feeling, Wordsworth is realising and dramatizing these two aspects of human existence, which could be invisible, elusive and unaware of if one does not specifically examine them. In his *The Philosophic Mind*, Alan Grob asserts that 'Wordsworth's views on identity between 1797 and 1800 […] are radically empirical' (56). I am not going into detail to analyse if these views were also a Wordsworthian appropriation of empiricism, but Grob's consequent observation is an insightful one: 'What Wordsworth records in

these early books is a personal experience of sensed disparity between present and past so intense and so vivid that it extends well beyond purely mental phenomena to affect, in a very literal sense, the physiological pulse of our being' (57). 'The physiological pulse of our being' is a vivid and aptly applied term to describe *The Prelude*. The experience of recollection in poetry is not just internal or psychological, as Grob further explains:

> It is not just the turbulent emotions of childhood that, overflowing their apparent psychic boundaries, carry with them 'that giddy bliss / Which, like a tempest, works along the blood' (*Prelude*, I, 611-12), for the spiritual calm of maturity works in the same way, reaching out beyond mind to body, so that even as the poet reflects upon the passionate season of childhood, he is made aware of the positive change that the present has brought him, a new consciousness of the self experienced physiologically, 'A tranquillizing spirit' that "presses now/ On my corporeal frame' (*Prelude*, II, 27-28) (ibid.)

Grob's language here is very concrete, indeed, since for Wordsworth, this is a material, bodily experience; the change of consciousness is a change, a renewal of the self's relation with the world, and this necessarily entails a change in the experience of space. To a certain extent, it is through this appropriation of, in Salvesen's words, 'the experience' as 'a sensuous and a spiritual totality', that Wordsworth is able to establish unity with nature. This unity has to be presupposed by the embodied existence of the Wordsworthian subject:

> Wordsworth is always much more aware of the presence of landscape, of its surrounding influence, than of any pictorial qualities it might have. His sense of being not merely related to it, but of being in it, part of it, precludes any very objective view. […] the unifying force of nature is what creates it and holds it together, and this force is conveyed by Wordsworth's emotion rather than by his observation. He responds to a landscape rather than observes it: he feels it, almost, rather than sees it: the eye, for Wordsworth, was a sensuous medium, predominant, but actively part of his whole presence in the landscape, not a mere ocular instrument for observing data to be correlated with literary emotions. (Salvesen 69)

Salvesen is expressing eloquently the holistic experience of the body within the landscape. He rejects an atomistic empiricist view that the eye is an 'ocular instrument for observing data to be correlated'. The looking subject maintains a dynamic relationship with the landscape he views. The relationship is in fact not that of 'subject-object' but because of the flow of emotion, it is genuinely an intersubjective relationship.

Wordsworth's attempt to vitalise poetic language and endorse it with the power of truthful expression of feeling is also an attempt at suggesting the possibility for poetry to effect changes on the level of lived space, even if it is not, strictly speaking, a spatial practice (in Lefebvre's terms). Stuart Allen in *Wordsworth and the Passion of Critical Poetics* explores Wordsworth's purpose: 'He proposes that poetry is feeling, that the arrangement of language as verse itself produces pleasure, and that metered pleasure makes it possible for the reader to field a whole slew of emotions otherwise difficult to bear' (xi). For Allen, there are actually 'political implications' of poetry if poetry can enable readers to experience different feelings that are new to them. He notices in Wordsworth's argument in the 'Preface' to *Lyrical Ballads* an instance of the Whig aesthetic preoccupation with 'the centrality of affect to human being, and the need to regulate said affect' (ibid.). He asserts that: 'Wordsworth derives from Whig aesthetics the notion that feeling has a critical, or cognitive, component—that it can make judgements, particularly on social, political and philosophical matters' (xi-xii). Allen presents a reading of 'The World is too Much with Us' that argues against critics who criticise it as an example of Wordsworth's 'aestheticisation' of nature. In this view, Wordsworth is actually performing the same fault of capitalism that he originally criticises. Wordsworth laments that nature has been subjected to man and become over used by human beings. However, 'for some commentators, the poem unwittingly turns nature into something that can be consumed by the poet', and Wordsworth is 'blind to [his] own ideology' (xii). This is a criticism that is also applicable to other Wordsworthian poems on nature, especially when he is almost projecting himself on nature and attempts 'to innovate, to soar towards the absolute', to adopt Lefebvre's words. However, in Allen's reading, he notices a failure of the functioning of poetry in the following lines: 'It moves us not. Great God! I'd rather be / A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn' (*ll*. 9-10). These lines present a state of alienation. Allen explains that: 'they convey Wordsworth's loss of faith in poetry's ability to engage with the world through mimesis—that is, non-instrumentally. […]The poet's lack of an "enthusiasm' of sorrow about his sense of alienation is the fundamental problem. We have given our hearts away and poetry cannot restore us' (xiv). What Allen means by mimesis here connotes a theatrical aspect of the poem. The feeling of estrangement

in the poem is a mimesis of that produced by civilisation's consumption of nature, that 'the poem *stages* reason's demented activity' (Allen's emphasis; xiii). The poem is 'a critique of the damage human reason does to itself with instrumental rationality' in the way that it performs a 'mimic alienation—mimic[ing] the withering of feeling, and becomes a critical commentary on the "aesthticisation" of nature that it still strives to perform' (Allen xiii-xiv). Moreover, this mimic alienation also gives rise to the feeling of 'guilt and melancholy' of the poetic subject. By referencing Lukács, Allen points out that the acknowledgement or confession of the poet's betrayal of nature in lyric poetry actually 'flouts the ideology of second nature' (ibid.).

Allen's interpretation is an effective analysis of the working of poetry as a modern criticism. I would argue that the intersubjective unity that Wordsworth establishes with nature is also his poetic criticism of modernity. Ronald Gaskell, in his *Wordsworth's Poem of the Mind: an Essay on the 'Prelude'*, speaks of Wordsworth's personal experience in the period that he wrote 'Tintern Abbey'. At that time, 'nature offered itself as an escape from the moral and intellectual anguish of Salisbury Plain, the separation from Annette, and the British declaration of war on the French Republic' (4). Gaskell makes reference to Book Eleventh, in which 'Wordsworth speaks of the relief of that return to nature in 1793 as violent but superficial; a time when the eye, "the most despotic of our senses" (XI. 173), was master of the heart':

> Here only let me add that my delights,
> Such as they were, were sought insatiably.
> Though 'twas a transport of the outward sense,
> Not of the mind—vivid but not profound—
> Yet was I often greedy in the chace,
> And roamed from hill to hill, from rock to rock,
> Still craving combinations of new forms,
> New pleasure, wider empire for the sight,
> Proud of its own endowments, and rejoiced
> To lay the inner faculties asleep. (*ll*. 185-194)

That return to nature in 1793 was not an experience of a genuine unity with nature, because it renders nature an object for the consumption of the subject. The 'eye' is despotic' and it sees nature as an spectacle: 'from hill to hill, from rock to rock, / Still craving combinations of new forms'. The spectacle is the eye's abstraction of the landscape; the concrete landscape becomes a sequence of images. The experience is

probably analogous to modern tourism. The momentary 'degradation' is a contrast to what he has been feeling for nature since boyhood. He had 'loved nature more deeply, not only rejoicing in "the winds / And powerful waters" (XI. 140) but responding to them with his whole heart. And this deep love he had carried with him, he tells us, as late as his walking tour through the Alps in the summer of 1790' (Gaskell 5).

As any reader of *The Prelude* would know, the poem is addressed to Coleridge. The poem needs an audience for being a means of successful communication. The establishment of human communion is for Wordsworth analogous to the establishment of communion between mankind and nature. John Hogson comments that Wordsworth's thesis is: 'literature, like the mind which creates it, finds its great analogue and archetype in nature—is in essence and effect another nature' (150). Therefore, in Book Fifth, Wordsworth writes: 'This verse is dedicate to Nature's self / And things that teach as Nature teaches' (*ll*. 230-231). In the following lines, we are able to find an implication that Wordsworth regards nature as a significant other, comparable to a friend:

> Oh, where had been the man, the poet where—
> Where had we been we two, belov'ed friend,
> If we, in lieu of wandering as we did
> Through heights and hollows and bye-spots of tales
> Rich with indigenous produce, open ground
> Of fancy, happy pastures ranged at will,
> Had been attended, followed, watched, and noosed,
> Each in his several melancholy walk,
> Stringed like a poor man's heifer at its feed,
> Led through the lanes in forlorn servitude;
> Or rather like a stallèd ox shut out
> From touch of growing grass, that may not taste
> A flower till it have yielded up its sweets
> A prelibation to the mower's scythe. (*ll*. 232-245)

Wordsworth's syntax is significant here. On one level, nature was 'where' the poet and his 'belov'ed friend' had wandered within. They ventured through 'heights and hollows and bye-spots of tales' and enjoyed the rich 'indigenous produce'. On another level, since the poem is dedicated to 'the Nature's self', 'Where had we been we two, belov'ed friend' could also mean the companion of Nature, especially in those solitary walks. The word 'prelibation' is defined in the Norton edition as 'An offering of the first fruits, or of the first taste. In 1805 and 1850, 238-45, Wordsworth

has in mind the reduction of literature to edifying tales such as those of Thomas Day's *Sandford and Merton* (1783-89) and Maria Edgeworth's *Parents' Assistant* (1796-1801)' (164). These walks were laborious, as the poet was trying hard to gain 'the first taste', probably refers to an inspiration for his literature. Nature is 'the other' for Wordsworth, the significance of nature is comparable to that of a friend like Coleridge. For man and nature to co-exist harmoniously, leaving nature intact is an impossible ideal for human beings. However, if mankind can establish with nature a relationship similar to that of a respected friend, the coexistence will at least be a communion but not dominance. And this is more achievable because after all man will need to think from his own self, seeing the world from his own perspective.

In another passage in Book Eleventh, not only the Wordsworthian imagination and vision is concluded, the importance of the idea of coexistence and communication with the Other is more explicitly conveyed:

> And afterwards the wind and sleety rain,
> And all the business of the elements,
> The single sheep, and the one blasted tree,
> And the bleak music of that old stone wall,
> The noise of wood and water, and the mist
> Which on the line of each of those two roads
> Advanced in such indisputable shapes—
> All these were spectacles and sounds to which
> I often would repair, and thence would drink
> As at a fountain. And I do not doubt
> That in this later time, when storm and rain
> Beat on my roof at midnight, or by day
> When I am in the woods, unknown to me
> The workings of my spirit thence are brought.
> [⋯]
> I travel in these dim uncertain ways—
> [⋯]
> Once more in Nature's presence, thus restored,
> Or otherwise, and strengthen once again
> (With memory left of what had been escaped)
> To habits of devoutest sympathy. (*ll*.375-397)

There is an intriguing resemblance between Wordsworth's recognition of 'the workings of his spirit' to Merleau-Ponty's idea on the process of the inhabitation of one's being in space and time:

> In so far as I have a body through which I act in the world, space and time are not, for me, a collection of adjacent points nor are they a limitless

> number of relations synthesized by my consciousness, and into which it draws my body. I am not in space and time, nor do I conceive space and time; I belong to them, my body combines with them and includes them. The scope of this inclusion is the measure of that of my existence; but in any case it can never be all embracing. The space and time which I inhabit are always in their different ways indeterminate horizons which contain other points of view. The synthesis of both time and space is a task that always has to be performed afresh. (*Phenomenology* 162)

Merleau-Ponty's explanation of the relationship between body, time and space neatly account for Wordsworth's conception of the restoration of memory in Nature, which results in a 'strengthened' self with a 'devoutest sympathy' in the quoted passage. Some critics designate this Wordsworthian vision of the growth of the mind as the mind/nature dialectic of the consciousness. Yet we must always bear in mind that such dialectic is made possible through an embodied consciousness. The triumph of the mind or the sense of sublimity in Wordsworth is an advancement in self-knowledge of a subject which is fundamentally embedded in the world towards a more sympathetic and understanding synthesis with the world and 'the other'. Happiness comes from the discovery and creation of meaning for one's existence in the world, and the acquirement of a sense of coexistence and fruitful communication with other beings. At a certain moment the ambiguous world with all its earthly toils appears comprehensible, and the solitude of alienation is overcome. Yet after all, this new understanding is just transitory because the relationship between the self and the world is perpetually mutable and interactive. The spatial and temporal synthesis has to be performed again and life is renewed continuously. Nature itself is the absolute space: in Lefebvre's words, it is 'the bedrock of historical space and the basis of representational spaces' (*Production* 48). Merleau-Ponty describes in *Nature*:

> Nature is the primordial—that is, the nonconstructed, the noninstituted; hence the idea of an eternity of nature (the eternal return), of a solidity. Nature is an enigmatic object, an object that is not an object at all; it is not really set out in front of us. It is our soil (*sol*)—not what is in front of us, facing us, but rather, that which carries us. (4)

Because of nature's absolute identity, nature is an eternal presence. Nevertheless, it is because of our bodily embedded-ness in nature that it is available to become the basis of human representational spaces.

Further to the above discussion, the writing of the walking experience can actually be conceived as Wordsworth's tactic of 'creating' space. In *'Visionary Dreariness': Readings in Romanticism's Quotidian Sublime*, Markus Poetzsch discusses how Romantic writers actually create the space for dwelling through writing:

> More than merely encouraging a reconnection with local, domestic space, Romantic writers in a sense create the spaces they inhabit; for much as the act of sitting or walking or cooking is, according to de Certeau, 'a spatial acting-out of [a] place' (98), so the recollection and transcription of such movements in writing serve to construct and compose the space itself. (19)

Here we may recall our previous discussion on 'spatializing space' in speech act phenomenology. De Certeau's idea can be regarded as another way of affirming this 'spatializing' performative of writing. Poetzsche further explains:

> For de Certeau, walking or 'travel' is not simply a metaphor for story-telling but an instantiation of it. Our everyday movements literally 'open up' and 'invent space'. This creativity or inventiveness extends likewise to the recollections of travel and, moreover, to the textual inscriptions of such recollections […] Indeed, the writing of everyday life is inherently re-creative, assembling, ordering and configuring the motions and spaces of our yesterdays. (113)

This is particularly true in Wordsworth—he is certainly a poet of walking. The body's movement in walking is parallel to the hands' movement in writing. While walking on the land is 'a spatial acting-out of a place', writing would be an 'acting-out' spatially and temporally, because it necessarily entails memory. De Certeau's conception of writing convey a sense of the kind of performance of a post-modern subject. However, we should also attend to the temporal dimension of writing, which constitutes the 'thickness' of being of the Romantic subject.

The Romantic imagination is founded on the subject's embodied existence in the world. 'Being' as 'dwelling' does not only concern the problem of housing and cultivation, but the very existence of human being, which Heidegger refers to near the end of his essay as the 'real plight of dwelling':

> However hard and bitter, however hampering and threatening the lack of houses remains, the real plight of dwelling does not lie merely in a lack of houses. The real plight of dwelling is indeed older than the world wars with their destruction, older also than the increase of the earth's population and the condition of the industrial workers. The real dwelling plight lies in this,

> that mortals ever search anew for the nature of dwelling, that they must ever learn to dwell. (161)

In Charles Larmore's *The Romantic Legacy*, he criticises a common view that Romantic imagination is an attempt to transcend human actuality so as to reach a spiritual realm beyond reality. He uses the *Lyrical Ballads* of Wordsworth and Coleridge as an example of the Romantics fascination with the power of imagination for 'the recovery of *the magic of everyday life*' (Larmore's emphasis; 10). Larmore attempts to clarify the close relationship between 'imagination' and reality by calling the Romantic imagination 'creative-responsive imagination'—a concept which is engendered in Kant's view on the human mind and cognition. Kant's contribution to the Romantic idea of 'imagination' is precisely that the mind is 'active'. It responds and at the same time creates when it configures the reality of the world: 'What we call reality is not an order of the world that the mind has only to reflect; it is an image of the way things are that the mind projects. The mind responds to the world only by at the same time creating its own forms of understanding' (Larmore 23). In order to live in the world human beings have to find our own way of comprehending the world. In the process of making sense of the world, reality does not appear to us as it is in an objective way; rather, we always understand reality from a subjective perspective, in which our imagination must be creative so that we can understand reality in various possibilities. Eldridge makes the connection of imagination and life more overtly: 'the thought here is that without the exercise of imaginatively informed, thoughtful perception there is no human habitation of reality, no place in reality for human life. It is creative-responsive imagination that both finds habitations for mindedness within natural reality and envisions further ideal habitations in the face of present disappointments' (3). Consequently, the preoccupation with finding and envisioning 'human habitations' of the Romantic 'creative-responsive imagination' coincides with Heidegger's understanding of the 'real plight of dwelling'. The concept of 'creative-responsive imagination' helps us understand in what way Romantic poetry does not merely 'search' but may also 'search anew for the nature of dwelling'.

We have been seeing the similarities between Wordsworth's account of memory, perception, feeling, imagination and nature in *The Prelude* and ideas of

Merleau-Ponty's embodied phenomenology. In many ways it is interestingly recognisable that Wordsworth's experience incidentally concurs with Merleau-Ponty's observation, to the extent that it seems *The Prelude* anticipates Merleau-Ponty's philosophical speculation, even though Wordsworth and Merleau-Ponty lived in completely different ages. What might be common between them is, after all, their criticism of modernity. Wordsworth's attitude towards abstraction coincides with Merleau-Ponty, in that both see the 'death' of nature, albeit in different ways. Wordsworth famously rebukes man's 'meddling intellect', as we 'murder to dissect' in his short poem 'The Table Turned'. This is the same for science and art when they become over conceptual. Merleau-Ponty also laments that nature is no longer unified and the empiricist scientific nature is not the 'true' nature anymore: 'the natural world is … falsified…the nature about which empiricism talks is a collection of stimuli and qualities, and it is ridiculous to pretend that nature thus conceived is, even in intention merely, the primary object of our perception: it does in fact follow the experience of cultural objects, or rather it is one of them' (*Phenomenology* 28). Wordsworth also precisely expresses the same view that nature is a unity different from the conception of empiricism by addressing Coleridge in *The Prelude*:

> To thee, unblinded by these outward shows,
> The unity of all has been revealed;
> And thou wilt doubt with me, less aptly skilled
> Than many are to class the cabinet
> Of their sensations, and in voluble phrase
> Run through the history and birth of each
> As of a single independent thing.
> Hard task to analyse a soul, in which
> Not only general habits and desires,
> But each most obvious and particular thought—
> Not in a mystical and idle sense,
> But in the words of reason deeply weighed—
> Hath no beginning. (II *ll*. 224-238)

Wordsworth's use of 'reason' here hints at a Romantic attitude towards reason. Romanticism has inherited from the Enlightenment faith in the human intellect. However, the damaging aspect of scientific rationality is its abstraction of what was originally organic and united. 'Words of reason deeply weighed' can still help us to discover knowledge of the world: these words are 'deeply weighed' because they are loaded with an awareness of nature's ancient presence and the significance of

existence. Merleau-Ponty even goes far to question the presupposition of rationalism that perception can be objective: 'Science and philosophy have for centuries been sustained by unquestioning faith in perception' (*Phenomenology* 62). For Merleau-Ponty, 'the tacit thesis of perception is that at every instant experience can be co-ordinated with that of the previous instant and that of the following, and my perspective with that of other consciousness' (ibid.). He states his stand repeatedly throughout *Phenomenology of Perception*:

> [Perception] does not present itself in the first place as an event in the world to which the category of causality, for example, can be applied, but as a re-creation or re-constitution of the world at every moment. In so far as we believe in the world's past, in the physical world, in 'stimuli', in the organism as our books depict it, it is first of all because we have present at this moment to us a perceptual field, a surface in contact with the world, a permanent rootedness in it, and because the world ceaselessly assails and beleaguers subjectivity as waves wash round a wreck on the shore. All knowledge takes its place within the horizons opened up by perception. (240-241)

Some commentators actually criticise Merleau-Ponty for promoting a perspectival relativism. However, as Diana Coole points out: 'Merleau-Ponty was not simplistically advising philosophers to pay more attention to unreconstructed science or vice versa. He saw how each disciplinary field challenges the other's undialectical proclivities. Thus every positive science needs both "to understand itself" as a "construction based on a brute, existent world" and to incorporate hermeneutical sensitivity by discovering in facts their "spontaneous order, a meaning, an intrinsic truth, an orientation"' (124). Merleau-Ponty's finding is ultimately insightful for making us more conscious of the complexity of perception and its role in the formation of our knowledge of the world.

CHAPTER THREE

Imagination, Symbolic Perception and Coleridge's Poetic Space

In both his philosophy and poetry, Coleridge shows a continuous interest in the power of the imagination to facilitate and transform human perception for the creativity of the human mind, as well as attaining unity with the world. In one of his letters written in 1800, Coleridge summed up his intellectual project as 'a metaphysical Investigation of the Laws, by which our Feelings form affinities with each other, with Ideas, & with words' (*Letters I* 656). Coleridge's reading in philosophy and writing of poetry both contributed to this project. The project is a continuous examination of the relationships between experience ('Feelings'), thought ('Ideas') and language ('words'). For Coleridge, 'No man was ever yet a great poet without being at the same time a profound philosopher', as he wrote in Chapter XV of *Biographia Literaria*. However, even though Coleridge believed that he was investigating 'the Laws', his philosophical thinking could not be separated from his personal experience, as indicated by his combination of the two in *Biographia Literaria*. Furthermore, as what Coleridge aimed for was a huge project, it would be difficult to be systematic and consistent throughout the research, especially when Coleridge had to manage the tensions between different philosophical thoughts, philosophy and his religious belief, as well as the impact of his 'abstruse research' on poetry writing. 'Imagination' was a crucial theme that persisted throughout Coleridge's intellectual development. Coleridge went through a few stages that shaped his thinking on imagination. As many critics pointed out, the influence of the associationism of David Hartley on Coleridge was particularly significant in the early stage of his philosophical thought. Coleridge even named his first son 'Hartley' when he was born in September 1796. Hartley took as his source Lockian empiricism and the Reverend John Gay's 'Dissertation Concerning the Fundamental Principles of Virtue and Morality', in which Gay argued that people acquired their 'moral sense' from 'observation or from the Imitation of others' (Prickett, *Growth* 51). Hartley tried to develop a 'vibrationary hypothesis' to account for how 'observation' led to that 'moral sense' (ibid.). For this hypothesis, Harley proposed that '"ideas" did not appear and vanish independently; they were the product of little vibrations—or rather, "vibratiuncles". These, since they are modified by the unique individual pattern of

personal vibrations already present, will take a different particular form in each person. Each man has a particular and continuing personality because all his previous vibrations will modify the succeeding ones' (ibid.). Hartley's explanation of this continuous modification coincided with Coleridge's preoccupation with the creative power of the mind. For Hartley, although complex ideas were the result of association of simple ideas, their formations could not be reversible and we were not able to trace the origins of those ideas. As Prickett observes, Hartley's language is particularly vague when describing the formation of complex ideas in *Observations on Man*: 'there are also many Variations, some Oppositions, and numberless Additions', it is not clear if these are new ideas or pre-existing ideas; but Hartley affirms that it is 'the Use of Words that adds much to the number and complexness of our ideas' (Quoted in Prickett; 52-53). Hartley's ideas concurred with Coleridge's on the centrality of language in this process of the creation of more advanced thinking of the mind, yet, what caused Coleridge to turn away from Hartley was the mechanical aspect of the associationist theory. He later acquainted himself with the theories of idealist philosophers. In 1798, Coleridge 'named his new son "Berkeley" after the idealist philosopher, a choice which marks both the extent of his daily immersion in the abstract life of the mind, and the changing character of his intellectual position' (Everest 22). The influences from German Idealist philosophers, such as Immanuel Kant, Johann Fichte, and Friedrich Schelling, on Coleridge were immense too: 'about the time that he was first reading Kant, Coleridge came to repudiate Hartley with the same vehemence with which he had originally followed him' (Prickett 46). He was increasingly attracted to an understanding of the mind as an active, world-making agent of the self, that the mind actually partakes in the formation of reality.

Coleridge's theory of imagination is commonly explained with reference to the few passages in Chapter 13 of the first volume of *Biographia Literaria*. He distinguishes between imagination and fancy, and imagination is further differentiated into primary and secondary imagination. Coleridge's brief definitions of imagination and fancy are short and ambiguous. As a result, Coleridgean scholars attempt to understand and elaborate them more thoroughly by turning to Coleridge's philosophical thinking, which is similarly fragmentary and unsystematic. His

speculations and borrowings were dispersed throughout his various writings, from *Biographia Literaria*, *Notebooks*, *The Friend*, to his letters and lectures. Moreover, critics also hold completely different opinions towards the relationship between Coleridge's theory and practical criticism. James Engell sees *Biographia Literaria* as Coleridge's project of developing a theory of perception and imagination, which is put into application for literary criticism:

> [T]he first volume explores how we form and deal with perceptions, the products of primary imagination. The second volume examines the artistic transformation of perceptions and images, especially in poetry, and thus elucidates the work of the secondary imagination, which Coleridge makes clear, several times, is what we usually call poetic imagination. ('*Biographia Literaria*' 64)

'Imagination', for Coleridge, is the unifying force of poetry, as well as the creative power of the poet's mind; it is also a major theme of *Biographia Literaria*. The explicit passage that defines 'imagination' is actually very brief and suggestive. Coleridge writes:

> The primary imagination I hold to be the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and […] a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM. The secondary I consider as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the *kind* of its agency, and differing only in *degree*, and in the *mode* of its operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify. It is essentially vital, even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead. (Coleridge's emphasis; *Biographia* 304)

The terminology used in this passage heavily alludes to German idealism, which Coleridge turned his attention to out of a discontent of British empiricism and associationism. The influence from Kant on Coleridge can be traced back to around 1801 or 1802. However, Coleridge's theory is not a simple borrowing of the ideas of Kant. Critics hold different understandings regarding Coleridge's adaptation of Kant. In his 'Kant and Coleridge on Imagination', Robert D. Hume points out that 'Kant is refreshingly thorough and solid where Coleridge is sketchy and suggestive' (486). For Hume, Coleridge's thoughts are just some 'comments' drawn from his study of 'faculty psychology', and hence his theory is 'in need of elaboration and some correction' with reference to Kant (ibid.). When Hume compares the philosophy of

Kant and Coleridge's theory of imagination, he finds that 'Coleridge's distinction between primary and secondary Imagination might properly be made in Kant's system between cognitive Imagination and creative or aesthetic Imagination. The one is essentially ruled, the other is not' (489). Hume's conclusion is drawn with a position of 'draw[ing] a sharp distinction between Coleridge as theoretician and Coleridge as practical critic' (485). He is sceptical of the common view that 'Coleridge's theory of Imagination should somehow be applicable to practical criticism', and even goes on to refute such an attempt that 'to analyze parts of a poem (or even different poems) as supposedly related to Fancy or some variety of Imagination is grossly misleading' (ibid.). For Hume, Coleridge's theoretical distinctions are 'purely analytic and artificial' (ibid.). To a certain extent, Hume's attitude is justly reasonable. A direct application of Coleridge's distinctions in the way that Hume describes would be merely forcing a rigid theoretical yoke onto poems which are necessarily varied and 'organic', and reduce the significances of both the theory and poetry. Coleridge's 'system' of thinking is also sometimes incoherent and ambiguous in its effective application to literary analysis. However, Coleridge's philosophical reflection is rooted in his interest in poetry, and he attempts to find a philosophical foundation for the significance of poetry. The two aspects of Coleridgean thought should be considered together even if they have not been consistently presented.

In her essay, 'Coleridge's Theory of Imagination: a Hegelian Solution to Kant?', Kathleen Wheeler argues forcefully for Coleridge's awareness of the problems in empiricism, rationalism and Kantian idealism. In both essays of Robert D. Hume and Kathleen Wheeler, Coleridge's theory of imagination is discussed in relation to Kant, yet Hume and Wheeler arrive at completely opposite conclusions for the importance of Coleridge. Wheeler recognises Coleridge's awareness of a certain problematic 'inconsistency' between Kant's logic and aesthetic account of knowledge and reality, and Coleridge's theory of imagination actually attempts to cope with the problem. Coleridge initially turned to Kantian idealism for its response to the metaphysical and epistemological problems created by Descartes and the empiricists. Coleridge sees that in Cartesian rationalist philosophy, 'Our Senses in no way acquaint us with Things…the properties, which we attribute to Things without

us…this very *Outness*, are not strictly properties of the things themselves, but either constituents or modifications of our own minds' (Quoted in Wheeler; 'Imagination' 18). What we know about the world could only be confined to our minds' understanding; things exist themselves but we could not truly know them. Coleridge concurs with the rationalist perspective on the creativity of the mind, that there is a 'proper perceptive faculty', i.e. imagination, of the mind, but it fails to see the relation of this faculty with things. On the contrary, the empiricist perspective believes we can know the world through sense experience, that connections between things are already out there for us to perceive. The human mind is like a mirror of nature, which is rather passive. For Kant, and Coleridge as well, 'empiricists and rationalists alike failed to explain either the synthesis (relations) that constituted knowledge, or the means of bridging thought and existence' (Wheeler, 'Imagination' 19).

Kant tries to solve the problems that arise from mind-body dualism and subjective scepticism by distinguishing between phenomena and noumena. Kant's transcendental idealism identifies that the task of philosophy is to explain the possibility of synthetic *a priori* knowledge within the realm of phenomena. On the one hand, Kant justifies the objective validity of knowledge by claiming the universality of the system of categories of the mind and its synthesis of experience. On the other hand, he posits a transcendental realm of noumena, which is a realm of 'things-in-themselves' for providing 'experience'. Coleridge agrees with the synthetic reason of Kant but rejects his assumption of a realm of noumena, as Wheeler explains:

> If mind is set apart from the world, then of course a world external to it, and never truly known, becomes necessary to explain 'experience'. But, if mind is understood as simply a part of the world, a type of object related to other objects, then experience can be understood not as something arising from independent nature and independent mind, but, as Coleridge puts it, as something, upon reflection, distinguishable into subjects and objects. ('Imagination' 21)

Therefore, for Coleridge, Kant's idea of noumena commits the same error of thinkers such as Descartes and Locke, making the subject-object relation transcendent, which should be in fact relative (Wheeler, 'Imagination' 22). Coleridge insists on an 'organic unity of experience and self-consciousness' that the mind is subjected to its

categories just like the perceived things. Reason's synthesis applies to both the mind and things, and Coleridge calls such 'reason' 'self-consciousness' or 'I AM'. There is a 'history of Self-Consciousness', since it grows and develops as it synthesizes. Referring back to Coleridge's definition of imagination, Wheeler clarifies that, 'the finite acts of creation occur within the infinite "I AM"…perception itself is synthesis…Perception is primary imagination. That is, perception is the *context* for a distinction between perceiver and perceived, not the product of that duality' ('Imagination' 26).

The part of Coleridge's theory of imagination illuminated by Wheeler is very close to Merleau-Ponty's view in *Phenomenology of Perception*, in which Merleau-Ponty argues against empiricism and intellectualism in order to define perception as our being-in-the-world, as we have already discussed in the previous chapter. Merleau-Ponty's criticism of the idealists, chiefly Decartes and Kant, is that they posit an unmistakable 'I' for its existence and its knowledge of the world, as Merleau-Ponty says:

> Descartes and particularly Kant detached the subject, or consciousness, by showing that I could not possibly apprehend anything as existing unless I first of all experienced myself as existing in the act of apprehending it. They presented consciousness, the absolute certainty of my existence for myself, as the condition of there being anything at all; and the act of relating as the basis of relatedness. (*Phenomenology* x)

Central to Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology is the rootedness of the living body-subject in the world, that an individual does not only exist in space and time but literally inhabits space and time. For Merleau-Ponty, the world is already there before my analysis of it; the body exists as being-in-the-world and experiences it before reflection begins. Perception is perception in a phenomenal field—this presupposes the way we understand the world. This coincides with Coleridge that perception is the context. According to Wheeler's explanation, 'thought and reflection are intrinsic to experience' for Coleridge: 'Experience is not a private world of a perceiver outside the course of natural existence. Experience is, rather, modes of interaction of natural objects, amongst which the perceiver happens to be one. His experience is not of ideas, sensations, or impressions arising from a "real" substrate; it is of other real objects like himself' ('Imagination' 30). The perceiver is

the subject only in relation to other things as the object. What he understands about the world is not merely his creation, but the world as seen from his perspective, the synthesis of his experience of the world. The world has to be already existing so the mind can experience and synthesize it with its categories; yet, the world as a 'context' is 'not reified into a fixed, determined, static entity, nor is it a metaphysical "presence". Rather, it is a means of insisting upon the interactive, non-subjective nature of experience, such that "reality" is understood to reside neither in an absolute subject nor in the object, but in the experienced interaction between the two' (Wheeler, 'Imagination' 17-18). To distinguish Coleridge's use of the terms 'reason' and 'imagination', Wheeler suggests that 'reason' is 'the source of ideas', and 'imagination' is, as quoted by Wheeler:

> That reconciling and mediatory power, which incorporating the Reason in Images of the Sense, and organizing (as it were) the flux of the Senses by the permanence and self-circling energies of the Reason, gives birth to a system of symbols, harmonious in themselves, and consubstantial with the truths, of which they are the *conductors*. (Coleridge's emphasis)

Wheeler further explains: 'Imagination is the activity of embodying the ideas or truths ("the eternal relations of things") of the reason into symbols' ('Imagination' 32). Therefore, 'imagination' can be understood as the formation and making-sense of lived experience. Since 'imagination' is a symbol of 'reason', the individual mind shaped by imagination is representational of 'truth'.

Coleridge's theory of imagination represents an appropriation of the concept of 'reason' as developed from the Enlightenment. As John Beer points out in his selection of *Coleridge's Writings (Volume 4): On Religion and Psychology*, Coleridge's understanding of 'reason' is closer to the seventeenth century Cambridge Platonists than our contemporary concept (2). For the rationalist tradition, 'reason' is the human ability to discover the universal truth of nature, which is an abstraction of nature through human intellect. The mind and nature are separated as the absolute subject and object. Contrastingly, if 'imagination' is an embodiment of 'reason', and it is a finite representative of the infinite whole, because nature is also 'Imagination itself', nature and the human imagination are both 'related to reason as symbols of it, and so partake of its "intelligibility rendered Reality"' (Wheeler, 'Imagination' 33). There was an intellectual context for Coleridge's thinking of 'reason' and

'imagination', and this context is commonly known as the pantheism controversy. The controversy, which characterized by Richard Berkeley as 'the crisis of reason', started off with 'the dispute between Jacobi and Mendelssohn over Lessing's Spinozism' (59). In a conversation between Jacobi and Lessing, Lessing told Jacobi that 'the orthodox notions of the Deity' no longer suited him, and there was 'no other philosophy than the philosophy of Spinoza' (McFarland, *Pantheist* 78). Upon the death of Lessing, Moses Mendelssohn planned to write a memorial essay on Lessing, and Jacobi suggested him to 'avoid certain topics in his essay, or treat them with special care' because Lessing was a Spinozist in his last days (McFarland, *Pantheist* 79). The published essay by Mendelssohn showed an attempt to 'extenuate the whole matter by postulating a morally and religiously acceptable "purified pantheism"' (McFarland, *Pantheist* 81). Jacobi and Mendelssohn had a vigorous dispute over Lessing's Spinozism. In *Über die Lehre des Spinoza in Briefen an Herrn Moses Mendelssohn*, Jacobi expresses his view that Spinozism was atheism, and he believes that 'all human knowledge is based on faith' (McFarland, *Pantheist* 81-82). Jacobi sets up an opposition between 'reason' and 'faith', and he argues that 'reason' is dangerous because it leads to nihilism; his aim was, as Richard Berkeley explains: 'to dethrone reason in favour of faith, which amounts to a deliberate attack on the values of the enlightenment' (63). The controversy between Mendelssohn and Jacobi elicited a vigorous discussion from German philosophers to defend reason and pantheism. Coleridge was also attracted to the controversy, because Jacobi 'sparked the crisis that threatened Coleridge's sense of integrity as a thinker and a poet. Jacobi seemed to demonstrate the inevitability of Spinozism, and the potential horrors that might ensue if the icy nihilist view of Spinoza was right' (Berkeley 68). Rookmaaker in his *Towards a Romantic Conception of nature* observes that Coleridge attempted 'to incorporate' Spinozist rationalism or German idealism 'in his empiricist position' (122). Coleridge tried to formulate his philosophy which connected the imagination of human perception and nature's manifestation of the divine in order to maintain an understanding of the unity of the world.

Coleridge's poetic writings, for most of the time, are not mere literary representations of his philosophical speculation; they enact a certain moment in which the thinking interacts with life events and environment; they also express

transitional feelings. They are an embodiment of lived experience, including that of philosophical speculation, as well as the effect of such speculation. Three of the four poems that are going to be discussed in this chapter are categorised as the 'conversation poems': 'The Eolian Harp', 'This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison' and 'Dejection: an Ode'. The term 'conversation poem', originally the subtitle of 'The Nightingale', was applied by George McLean Harper to a group of Coleridge's poems which demonstrated similar poetic structures (Magnuson 32). 'Conversation' connotes meanings that might not be familiar to contemporary readers: according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, it means 'the action of living or having one's being in a place or among persons; the consorting or having dealings with others; living together; commerce, intercourse, society, intimacy'; it also refers to a 'circle of acquaintances, company, society; manner of conducting oneself in the world or in society; behaviour, mode or course of life'. Hence, 'conversation' implies one's engagement in a community, an establishment of relationships with others. Moreover, the communion is not restricted to human beings: the presence of nature is not only contextual but also symbolic. The conversation poems have their particular addressees, but nature is also figured as a participant that 'converses' with the poetic subject. Although the representation of nature, as well as the man-nature relationship, in 'Dejection: an Ode' are markedly different from that in 'The Eolian Harp' and 'This Lime-tree Bower my Prison', I would contend that to consider these poems collectively can reveal a deeper operation of human subjectivity. From 'The Eolian Harp', through 'This Lime Tree Bower my Prison', to 'Dejection: an Ode', Coleridge illustrates the necessity of the self's situated-ness in the world, that is, its interaction with the world and others, for its existence. He also attempts to attach religious and literary significance to this existence. The literary significance is further explored in 'The Garden of Boccaccio'.

'The Eolian Harp' is an exploration of the possibility of drawing an analogy between the creativeness of nature and that of human mind. It shows a harmonious relationship between lovers, as well as man and nature. It has 'love' as one of its themes, which includes both the lovers' and the man-nature relationship; indeed, the two types of relationships reflect each other, and they are maintained by the divine power that gives life to the human and natural world. The poem demonstrates various

philosophical influences, including that of associationism, the English Platonists and the pantheist controversy, on Coleridge's poetic representation of a creative universe. The Platonists believed that 'the mind is partly an architect of its own knowledge, that there is a reciprocity between nature and the mind of man' (Brett 39). Cudworth in his *True Intellectual System* argues that the human mind does not just passively receive knowledge through the senses, on the contrary, it has the 'formal idea and nature of a house or palace, which nothing but an active intellectual principle can reach into' (594). He believes that the order and unity of nature are derivative from the Divine Mind just as 'containing the plot of the whole mundane music' (598). 'The Eolian Harp' was written between August and October of 1795, and R. L. Brett notices that this was just after Coleridge had been reading Cudworth's *True Intellectual System*. Cudworth's use of the harp as the metaphor to illustrate the creation of 'nature's intellectual music and harmony' by the 'active principle' is echoed in Coleridge's poem (Brett 39-40). However, the poem was revised several times and thus has a few versions. I will be using the 1828 version reproduced in the reading text of *Poetical Works* edited by Mays. Coleridge shows much interest in the image of the Eolian harp and uses it to embody a pantheistic speculation, but he does not totally agree with it. In the last stanza of the poem, Coleridge's wife rebukes his bold philosophical speculation. This might be regarded as an attempt to avoid the accusation of being unorthodox, yet it could also be a reminder of the limitation of the analogy between the creative mind and God's creative principle, that the former is after all perspectival, presupposed by a bodily perception, while the latter is omnipotent and ubiquitous. This contrast is already being set up in the first stanza. The poem begins with a situation in which the body plays a central role:

> My pensive Sara! thy soft cheek reclined
> Thus on mine arm, most soothing sweet it is
> To sit beside our cot, our cot o'ergrown
> With white-flowered Jasmin, and the broad-leaved Myrtle,
> (Meet emblems they of Innocence and Love!)
> And watch the clouds, that late were rich with light,
> Slow saddening round, and mark the star of eve
> Serenely brilliant (such should wisdom be)
> Shine opposite! How exquisite the scents
> Snatched from yon bean-field! and the world so hushed!
> The stilly murmur of the distant Sea
> Tells us of Silence. (*ll*. 1-12)

From the very beginning of the poem, body contact is a way of communication. The intimacy of the lovers parallels the intimacy of human space and nature, that is, the proximity of the cot and its overgrown jasmine and myrtle. Sensations are richly presented, not only that of the sight but all the tactile, auditory and olfactory stimulations are distinctive. Although the natural world in the stanza is expressing itself in various ways, it still conveys a sense of quietness. Richard Berkeley recognizes the paradox of 'silence' in this first stanza: 'silence is not really an absence in any simple sense at all. Rather it is a marker for an absence; it is what is left that tells you that there is an absence. But a marker is itself a presence, so that silence paradoxically brings this absence into presence' (16). 'Silence' is how the infinity of nature or God—an omnipresent existence—is perceptible to human beings. Since the existence is not concrete, it seems to be an absence. However, although it is not directly visible or tangible, it is still implied by the 'murmur of the distant Sea':

> The sea tells us of silence because it knows about silence, because the waves with their 'stilly murmur' are transient forms produced by enigmatic forces working in the silence of the deep. Waves and their murmur peter out and flow back into themselves; waves are made of the sea, so they are, metaphorically, made of silence. The sound of the sea tells us of silence because we think something like this when we hear it. (Berkeley 16)

The sound of the sea acts also as a symbol for the silence of the infinite. The word 'tells' immediately evokes an analogy of the symbolic significance of the murmuring sea and spoken language. The silent infinity can be symbolised by transient forms because the unseen force activates worldly things so as to make itself noticeable. 'Symbol', for Coleridge, 'always partakes of the reality which it renders intelligible; and while it enunciates the whole, abides itself as a living part in that unity of which it is the representative' (*Statesman's Manual*; quoted in Wilson 46).

This analogy is further explored in the image of the Eolian harp. In the second stanza of the poem, the image of the Eolian harp being swept by the breeze mirrors the intimacy of the lovers in the first stanza:

> How by the desultory breeze caressed,
> Like some coy maid half yielding to her lover,
> It pours such sweet upbraiding, as must needs
> Tempt to repeat the wrong! And now, its strings
> Boldlier swept, the long sequacious notes
> Over delicious surges sink and rise (*ll.* 13-19)

Kathleen Wheeler comments on the musicality of the language here, that 'the meanings of the words are flooded into oblivion by the power of their music' (*Creative Mind* 74). Although music is being represented by words here, the effect of the sound takes over the importance of the words, especially through the use of alliterations, assonance and consonance in line 16-19. In this melodious passage, '[l]anguage trembles […] as close to the brink of dissolution into a realm of non-verbal experience and beauty' (Wheeler, *Creative Mind* 75). The next few lines intensify the musical quality, besides the use of sounds, magical similes create an imaginary atmosphere: 'Such a soft floating witchery of sound/ As twilight Elfins make, when they at eve/ Voyage on gentle gales from Fairy-Land,/ Where Melodies round honey-dropping flowers,/ Footless and wild, like birds of Paradise' (*ll*. 20-24). The music from the harp gives a dreamy and mystic aura. The music of nature is not contrived or regulated; it manifests a kind of lively energy, almost uncontrollable, as indicated in the simile of the wild 'birds': 'Nor pause, nor perch, hovering on untamed wing!' (*l*. 25). These unorthodox images actually markedly contrast with the second half of the stanza, which apparently conveys religious connotations:

> O the one life within us and abroad,
> Which meets all motion and becomes its soul,
> A light in sound, a sound-like power in light,
> Rhythm in all thought, and joyance every where—
> Methinks, it should have been impossible
> Not to love all things in a world so filled;
> Where the breeze warbles, and the mute still air,
> Is Music slumbering on her instrument. (*ll*. 26-33)

In these few lines, 'the one life' can be understood as a parallel of the wind, yet, since 'the one life' resides 'within us and abroad', this is also the omnipresence that 'meets' and drives the wind—which is itself a form of 'motion'. The description of the music here is different from that in previous lines. The 'soul' brought forth is 'a light in sound, a sound-like power in light'—brightness is emphasized, and the symmetry of the words also gives a sense of regularity. All these indicate the presence of a higher intelligence, which is the vital power behind all motions and growth. The contrast in this stanza foreshadows the tension between pantheist thought and faith which comes in the following stanzas.

The implication of the Eolian harp and the 'one life' is often discussed in relation to pantheism. However, as Richard Berkeley points out, 'the poem itself does not try to articulate a specific pantheism, rather it allows for a wide range of pantheisms and similar patterns of thought' (18). Being attracted to the contemporary philosophical discussions of his own time, Coleridge was concerned about 'the problem of how finite individuals are related to the infinite' (ibid.). This problem includes the question of how human beings get to know the world. As discussed earlier in the chapter, Coleridge was not satisfied with either the empiricist or idealist position. This was the reason why he was attracted to the pantheist controversy. However, Coleridge did not align himself to pantheism, as he held a reserved view towards the position of seeing God as the world. This is shown in Coleridge's critique of Priestley, as he notes that, '[Priestley] asserts in three different Places, that God not only *does*, but *is*, every thing.— But if God *be* every Thing, every Thing is God…Has not Dr Priestly forgotten that *Incomprehensibility* is as necessary an attribute of the First Cause, as Love, or Power, or Intelligence?' (*Letters I* 192-193). The idea that 'God not only *does*, but *is*, every thing' seems to be the view that is being expressed in the fourth stanza:

> And what if all of animated nature
> Be but organic harps diversely framed,
> That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps
> Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
> At once the Soul of each, and God of All? (*ll*. 44-48)

These few lines can be interpreted on two levels. On the first level, Coleridge is drawing an analogy between the harp being swept by the breeze and nature being animated by God ('one intellectual breeze'); on the second level, the 'one intellectual breeze' is 'the Soul of each' and 'God of All', which means that God is embodied in the 'breeze' and the world. Such an equation is being 'reproofed' by Coleridge's wife. The pantheist position is unorthodox because 'whether […] God is the World, or the World is God, the inevitable conclusion, the sense and *import* is—there is no other God than the World' (Wilson 43). Moreover, if 'God is the World', the view actually creates a paradox, because it is impossible that God as the infinite ('The Incomprehensible' of *l*. 59) be contained by the finite world. God is not to be fully comprehensible for worldly beings by reason. The view is also problematic because,

if everything, including human beings, is just different 'harps' for God, such a representation would be inadequate to account for the formation of individual consciousness because a harp is just passively animated by the 'breeze'. The poem itself does not affirm the pantheist position; it is at most a thought of the possibility. Nevertheless, the exploration of human existence in 'The Eolian Harp' reveals more complicity in the issue than the image of the harp conveys. It enacts a kind of lived experience, which consists a dialectic of bodily sensation and thought. It is through this dialectic that an individual comes to know the world. This enactment, including its dramatization of the creativeness of the interaction, depends on the literary creativeness of the poet.

Nature's creativity is certainly portrayed in 'The Eolian Harp'; however, the human mind seems to be too passive if we follow the analogue of the Eolian harp:

> Full many a thought uncalled and undetained,
> And many idle flitting phantasies,
> Traverse my indolent and passive brain,
> As wild and various as the random gales
> That swell and flutter on this subject lute! (*ll*. 39-43)

The brain here is submissive, it is not in control of its thoughts—it is half-conscious, not thinking in any specific way, and what comes to the mind is mere 'idle flitting phantasies'. It is just like the lute which receive stimulations from the breeze. The use of the word 'phantasies' and the wildness in these few lines echo the similes used in the harp passage. H. R. Rookmaaker Jr. observes that the harp image is actually not compatible with the 'one life' passage:

> [T]he harp image implies the idea of the essential passivity of man who is shaped and determined by external natural forces, whereas the 'one Life' notion involves activity on the part of man since it affirms a state of ideal harmony between inner and outer, the act of the creative imagination (man's influence on nature) being imaginatively fused with nature's influence on man. (34)

The harp image only represents one part of Coleridge's exploration of the issue concerned. The creativity of the mind, which is also known as imagination, is affirmed in the 'one life' passage, but just partially enacted in this poem. If we interpret the poem along with Coleridge's philosophical position, we may see that although the working of imagination is not fully manifested here, the experience of it

is dramatized. The 'one life' is not only present in nature, it is also 'within us', as Coleridge mentions in one of his letters about the Hebrew Poets: 'In the Hebrew Poets each Thing has a Life of its own, and yet they are all one Life' (*Letters II* 866). This 'Life of one's own' is a connecting point of all finite beings and God. An individual is creative because it is part of the divine creative force, and when it is in contact with nature, which also embodies the 'one Life', imagination's synthesis will work in a way that establishes unity. Brett explains the working of imagination as conceived by Coleridge: 'there was a parallelism between a vitalistic conception of nature and a view of the mind as creative in knowledge. As God created the world out of Chaos and gave it order and form, so the human mind imposes order and form upon the raw material of sensation' (41). In other words, when the human mind comprehends the world and formulates an understanding of reality, he exercises a kind of creativity that is similar to God's creation of the world, and this creativity is imagination. It is time for us to revisit Coleridge's definition of the primary imagination. The primary imagination is 'the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and […] a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM' (*Biographia* 304). John Beer contends that: 'it is clear from all he had to say about the Primary Imagination that it existed at a level removed from everyday perception, in a realm pertaining in some respects to the divine' (*Romantic Consciousness* 23). However, I would argue that the primary imagination still concerns 'everyday perception', because it is the faculty that facilitates human perception as we experience the world. Barth also comments that: 'For us, primary imagination is the faculty by which we perceive the world as ordered, much as Gestalt psychology has taught that we naturally shape our experience into meaningful patterns' (*Symbolic Imagination* 19). It relates us to the Divine because imagination is crucial for man to conceive the presence of God and the sublimity of the world which He creates, otherwise it would be impossible for man to understand the infinite, as Roomaaker puts it: 'Given that the imagination is active in perception, and given that external nature is essentially divine revelation, it necessarily follows that man should employ his imagination in such a way that it may increase—or at least does not interfere with—his susceptibility to the divine forces of nature' (122). Primary imagination enables an interaction between finite

individuals and nature, and through the interaction, we are able to meet other worldly beings and be united with the 'one Life'—such unity will give rise to the feeling of joy, as mentioned in Coleridge' poem.

However, there is certainly a difference between man's creativity and God's creativity. The finite mind's creation is not the world itself, but a reality of the world as comprehended by and synthesized with an individual consciousness. Just as nature is symbolic of the infinite, the human mind's creation of his reality is also symbolic. For Coleridge, a symbol 'was the means by which we create and experience "reality"' (Prickett 70). Therefore, the ability of symbolizing is crucial to imagination. The process of the development of personal consciousness is a process of symbolizing our experience of the world, as Prickett puts it: 'The final and satisfactory outworking of the principle of the Imagination was in the vision of the human mind as an essentially symbolic, and symbolizing instrument—in an ever unfolding growth of consciousness' (70). This idea is already taking shape in 'The Eolian Harp'. The music of the Eolian harp in the second stanza, as McSweeney notices, is symbolic: 'The dominant trope in the passage, synaesthesia, functions as a Coleridgean symbol in absorbing sensory particulars into a perceptual totality and thus linking part to whole' (76). What's more, imagination is never a mere mental activity, as indicated in the poem, since it inherently involves sensation and perception. Coleridge is different from the Platonists or idealists, because 'the "mind" was to him both organism *and* consciousness' (Prickett's emphasis; 71). Coleridge also attaches a psychological dimension to imagination, which is the feeling of joy in the mind-world engagement. Although for a person of faith, 'joy' may have its source in the religious belief, yet for Coleridge, an active participation of the subject is a necessary condition for achieving the feeling. Only through mutual interaction can one realize this feeling of happiness: 'Joy or joyance is the name of this feeling; it presupposes the supersession of onlooker consciousness by participatory consciousness' (McSweeney 76).[1] In fact, just as 'Silence' can only be

[1] Merleau-Ponty has also expressed a relevant, and to a significant extent, similar, idea in *Phenomenology of Perception*: 'the system of experience is not arrayed before me as if I were God, it is lived by me from a certain point of view; I am not the spectator, I am involved, and it is my involvement in a point of view which makes possible both the finiteness of my perception and its opening out upon the complete world as a horizon of every perception' (354).

told through the 'still murmur of the distant Sea', the 'one Life' can only be felt through communication. McSweeney believes that the third and fourth stanzas 'that ultimately [take] one beyond sensory-perceptual experience […] into vertiginous neo-Platonic musings' are 'less integral to the poem than the one-life passage' (77). However, I tend to concur more with Richard Berkeley's view that the 'what if' passage enacts Coleridge's uncertainty, and it 'dramatizes the metaphysical tensions working in his mind' (18). The third and fourth passages act as a comparison to the 'one life' passage, as the two offer different understandings of the man-nature relationship. This uncertainty precisely renders the poem an enactment of lived experience, as existence is not transparent to the self in the first place.

It is difficult to grasp the complexity of Coleridge's thoughts because he tries to maintain two aspects of human existence simultaneously: the metaphysical and the religious—the religious is to be manifested through the metaphysical. Poetry is Coleridge's way of achieving this purpose, because poetry is a form of secondary imagination, which, as quoted previously, 'dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify' (*Biographia* 304). Stephen Prickett explains that 'To "idealize" […] is still an aesthetic and evaluative activity; to "unify", on the other hand, is essentially structural. For Coleridge, the imagination was a way of bringing simultaneously into focus two otherwise unrelatable areas of experience in the act of artistic creation' (67). Moreover, 'to idealize and to unify' also have religious connotations. Poetry allows the poet to articulate the experience of re-creation and to exercise his imagination 'to idealize and to unify', even though it might not be successful—as it is an attempt, a 'struggle'.

Now we may return to our earlier discussion on the comparison of Coleridge's imagination and Merleau-Ponty's perception. Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology aims to investigate lived experience prior to reflection philosophically. Both Coleridge and Merleau-Ponty are not satisfied with either empiricism or idealism (intellectualism in Merleau-Ponty's case). For Coleridge, his thinking is centred on the idea of imagination; for Merleau-Ponty, he posits the embedded-ness of the body in the world as his presupposition. Merleau-Ponty argues against the method of analytical reflection, which believes it can 'can trace back the

course [of synthesis] followed by a prior constituting act and arrive, in the "inner man" […]—at a constituting power which has always been identical with that inner self' (*Phenomenology* xi). Merleau-Ponty disagrees that this 'inner man', this 'constituting power' is the starting point. This 'inner man' is just the result of reflection, as he writes:

> When I begin to reflect my reflection bears upon an unreflective experience; moreover my reflection cannot be unaware of itself as an event, and so it appears to itself in the light of a truly creative act, of a changed structure of consciousness, and yet it has to recognize, as having priority over its own operations, the world which is given to the subject because the subject is given to himself. (ibid.)

Nevertheless, he does not deny the presence of an 'inner self'. It is through a reflection upon lived experience that one affirms ones reality. The 'inner self' is not an 'impregnable subjectivity' that exists on its own (an 'inner man'), rather, it is a growing consciousness which is to be recognised when one reflects on how it comes about. This idea is illustrated in Merleau-Ponty's discussion of the 'tacit cogito'.[2] In the chapter on 'The Cogito' in *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty discusses the idea of 'cogito' as defined by his philosophy of embodiment and how it is related to language. It is different from the Cartesian cogito because it is not *a priori*, an absolute, unmistakable existence. He points out that 'the cogito at which we arrive by reading Descartes' is 'a spoken cogito, put into words and understood in words' (*Phenomenology* 467). It is through words that the cogito is identified, but it is mistaken by Decartes as the 'indubitable' subjectivity. Moreover, 'behind the spoken cogito, the one which is converted into discourse and into essential truth, there lies a tacit cogito, myself experienced by myself' (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology* 469). The 'tacit cogito' refers to a primary level of subjectivity which is pre-reflective. It is a perceptual consciousness, which arises from the contact of the body with the world, and Merleau-Ponty further describes: 'It does not constitute the world, it divines the world's presence round about it as a field not

[2] The term 'tacit cogito' might be misleading because Merleau-Ponty adapts the word 'cogito' from Decartes. Lawrence Hass points out that: 'Merleau-Ponty later repudiates this way of putting it, for instance, in *The Visible and the Invisible* (Evanston, 1968), p. 175. He does so, I believe, with excellent reason: this "tacit cogito" revives the sense of a substantial, thinking self, after he has worked so long in the chapter to undermine that notion' (233).

provided by itself; nor does it constitute the word, but speaks as we sing when we are happy; […] Silent consciousness grasps itself only as a generalized "I think" in [the] face of a confused world "to be thought about"' (*Phenomenology* 470). The 'thoughts' of the tacit cogito are 'generalized', that is, unspecific, almost intuitive, because they are uncertain and unnamed—'anonymous', as Merleau-Ponty puts it (*Phenomenology* 468). They are the lived experience we have when we encounter the world before we come to form systematic understanding of it through reflection. The state of the tacit cogito interestingly corresponds to the situation described in the third stanza of 'The Eolian Harp', where the body is represented as a half-conscious being. The few lines of 'Full many a thought uncalled and undetained/ […] Traverse my indolent and passive brain' are peculiarly fitting to articulate the 'curious structure' of the tacit cogito, which M. C. Dillon refers to as 'a self-consciousness which is unaware of itself in its fascination with the world' (105).

The presence of the 'tacit cogito' requires language to bring it into recognition. Merleau-Ponty believes that '[a]ny particular seizure' of the 'tacit cogito' 'demands that the subject bring into action powers which are a closed book to him and, in particular, that he should become a speaking subject. The tacit cogito is a cogito only when it has found expression for itself' (*Phenomenology* 470). Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological description is a kind of this 'seizure'; similarly, 'The Eolian Harp', and Coleridge's conversation poems with their recurrent pattern, also enact this performance—'bring into action'—of the 'powers which are a closed book to him'. For Merleau-Ponty, such powers are the body's being-in-the-world and its intentionality towards life; for Coleridge, the powers are primary and secondary imagination. There are three levels of performativity operating. Through these three levels of performativity we may discover the implications of the similarities, as well as differences between Merleau-Ponty's ideas and those of Coleridge on lived experience. The first level is what Monika M. Langer calls 'existence as action' (117). Since man's existence in the world is conditioned first of all by the body's contact with the world, the emergence of consciousness is a process of perceptual synthesis which begins with the self's interaction with the world, and the consciousness's recognition of the 'cogito' comes afterwards:

> My love, hatred and will are not certain as mere thoughts about loving, hating and willing: on the contrary the whole certainty of these thoughts is owed to that of the acts of love, hatred or will of which I am quite sure because I *perform* them. All inner perception is inad0equate because I am not an object that can be perceived, because I make my reality and find myself only in the act. (Merleau-Ponty's emphasis; *Phenomenology* 445)

Because perceptual synthesis is an ever on-going process, one's consciousness and the world will not be completely knowable to oneself. We know ourselves only in the making. There are situations in which experience comes from ourselves, such as love, hatred and will. In these cases 'we have the thinking self-coinciding with its own conscious states. To will and to know that one wills and to love and to know that one loves are the same act' (Marshall 194). However, 'not everything within us is true in the same way and there are degrees of reality within us just as there are in external perceptions' (ibid.). Even in situations of 'inner perceptions' we do not possess full knowledge of ourselves, because there are many different situations in which we might live. Merleau-Ponty further contends that 'If we are in a situation, we are surrounded and cannot be transparent to ourselves, so that our contact with ourselves is necessarily achieved only in the sphere of ambiguity' (*Phenomenology* 444). Nevertheless, as George Marshall points out, if it is possible that what we experience is in fact illusory, we might end up in endless doubt (195). For Merleau-Ponty, this problem is to be answered by returning to our contact with the world: 'It is through my relation to "things" that I know myself; inner perception follows afterwards' (*Phenomenology* 446). Langer explains that 'Our knowledge of ourselves is inherently mediated by our relationship to the world; hence "inner perception" is not self-sustaining, but depends upon our actually involving ourselves in experiences such as seeing something or doubting something or loving someone' (117). My reality does not exist in my thought but in my act of doing something. Our certainty of ourselves is established through action rather than thoughts.

The idea of 'existence as action' is also present in Coleridge's thought. Coleridge develops this idea by referring to language. Angela Esterhammer points out that Coleridge assigns language 'an absolutely central role in the cognitive process of understanding and experiencing reality—to the point where, in its ideal form, Logos is the principle that creates reality itself' (*Performative* 162).

Coleridge's idea of the centrality of language is compatible with his ideas that man's creativity is analogical to God's creativity, and symbol makes the world intelligible to the human mind, for if what we know about the world is facilitated by language and symbols, language would be the way that human beings create their reality, and it has a similar function as the world-creating Logos. In his study on language and its relationship with the world, *Logic*, Coleridge 'finds at the root of all language is primarily *action*, and concrete existence only insofar as it is a product of action' (*Performative* 174). Coleridge pays particular attention to the verb 'to be', as it shows that being is simultaneously an action and a state:

> The coexistence of action and being is encapsulated and made the basis of all language in Coleridge's foundational idea of the 'verb substantive': the 'I am', Latin *sum*, or Greek *eimi* that 'is the act of being' (L 26-17). 'I am' represents both an action and the state created by that action; as Coleridge explains elsewhere, 'you may take it to mean an act—and so it has the power of a Verb—or of a Thing, Substance, or State—and then it has the power of a Noun or Substantive' (SWF I: 797). (Esterhammer, *Performative* 175)

Esterhammer notices that Coleridge's idea actually foreshadows Austin's discovery that the distinction between constative and performative utterances has to be 'abandoned' because 'all utterances both state and perform' (*Performative* 176). In fact language's action is already taking place when we are in contact with others and the world. Coleridge's arrival at the idea that 'existence as action' encompasses two levels of performativity that I am trying to identify: lived experience in action (as in Merleau-Ponty's discussion) and subjectivity established through language. While the former belongs to the aspect of performance, the latter belongs to the aspect of speech act. Merleau-Ponty assigns the 'spoken cogito' to explain the linguistic performative aspect of subjectivity. In the process of reflection, thought finds the 'tacit cogito' and language expresses the 'tacit cogito'. One's knowledge of oneself is the 'spoken cogito', this is a part of the process of perceptual synthesis which comes after the pre-reflective, bodily lived experience.

Coleridge's understanding of the performativity of Logos is also related to the third level of performativity I would like to discuss, that is Coleridge's secondary imagination, defined by some critics as poetic imagination. For this level of performativity, unsurprisingly, Coleridge's exploration bears a much higher literary

consciousness that Merleau-Ponty. This is quite natural because Merleau-Ponty's primary concern is not artistic creativity in *Phenomenology of Perception*. However, he would certainly agree that artistic creativity is closely related to perceptual synthesis, as we will see later in this chapter when we have a look at his writing on Cezanne. The performativity implied in Coleridge's idea of the secondary imagination is one of the aspects of poetic language that makes it different from everyday language. The use of language in our everyday life is part of our lived experience (in Merleau-Ponty's sense, that is, pre-reflective); but for poetic language, as it comes from secondary imagination that 'dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create', it is not entirely pre-reflective and spontaneous. Poetic language, for most of the time, involves reflections. This is revealed by the many versions of manuscripts of poetry writing. Nevertheless, as existence is action, the formation of self-consciousness is a process that develops over time and space; the exercising of secondary imagination in writing poetry actually contributes to the part of perceptual synthesis through which the self knows itself as it 'struggles to idealize and to unify'. It is through secondary imagination that lived experience is recaptured and re-created in poetry, and the re-creation leads to different understandings of the self at different times throughout life. Poetry writing comprises a crucial part of the poet's existence, and therefore, it should also be considered his lived experience; or to put it in another way, poetry writing constitutes the poet's personal history just as much as his other lived experience.

The working of the secondary imagination is exemplified in 'This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison'. The poem tells of an experience of joy of the poet-speaker not directly through the contact with nature but through imagination. Reeve Parker in *Coleridge's Meditative Art* reminds us that '[w]hat the poet offers as a spontaneous monologue of immediate experience is informed by personal history and shaped by a significant literary consciousness' (20). The attainment of joy in the poem is as much an experience as a poetic creation. The poem magnifies an ordinary domestic accident and turns it into a spiritual experience. It also enacts life's drama of the dialectic of solitude and communication, which can be a source of poetic productivity. Rachel Crawford discusses Coleridge's bower poems in her *Poetry, Enclosure, and the Vernacular Landscape*. She notices that: 'During the romantic

period especially, the conventions of the bower were used to anatomize the process of poetic productivity. The solitary quester and the bower's female inhabitant became emblems for the generative conditions of inspiration and composition' (226). The bower as an 'enclosed space is embodied, feminine, productive, and shaped by artifice' (Crawford 227). It is culturally constructed as a symbol of productivity. This association of productivity with the bower may seem paradoxical, because the bower also signifies solitude and alienation. Crawford explains the operation by referring to a 'poetics of loneliness' that Coleridge explores: 'He puts into play a dialectic of poetic productivity within the confines of the bower which reveals that absence and loss form the primal condition of poetry' (233). The 'absence and loss' is represented by the image of the bower as a prison:

> Well, they are gone, and here must I remain,
> This Lime-Tree Bower my Prison! I have lost
> Beauties and Feelings, such as would have been
> Most sweet to my remembrance, even when age
> Had dimmed mine eyes to blindness! (*ll*. 1-5)

This opening immediately evokes an interplay of confined space and imaginary supposition. The prison metaphor expresses the poet-speaker's unwilling stay, and it foregrounds the poet-speaker's anxiety of alienation. It has already raised an existential problem, for the regret of having 'remembrance' of 'Beauties and Feelings' lost also means an uneasiness of being shunned from others and unable to make connection. With the lines 'even when age/ Had dimmed mine eyes to blindness', we could tell that for the poet-speaker, the anxiety of solitude is comparable to aging—it does not only deprive him of his liveliness but also his ability to 'see'. In the coming lines the poet-speaker imagines the scenes that his friends might encounter during their trip. His picturing of the landscape is not merely imaginary though; the poet-speaker has been 'told' about the 'roaring dell', so the imagination is as much the desire to witness the landscape himself as the hope of establishing shared experience. The 'roaring dell' passage, creates a witchery atmosphere with the dell 'o'erwooded, narrow, deep,/ And only speckled by the mid-day Sun' (*ll*. 10-11), and the 'branchless Ash, Unsunn'd and damp' (*ll*. 13-14). Parker comments that: 'the foreboding gloom, and the surreal movements of the dripping weeds constitute "a most fantastic sight!" the imagining of which generates

in the poet the sublime response he simultaneously attributes to his wandering friends' (44). He further suggests that the narrow chasm is 'an emblem of the grave and underworld, their winding journey through its preternatural gloom the type of an eschatological descent prior to salvation' (45). Moreover, the images of crossing and touching ('Ash from rock to rock/ Flings arching like a Bridge' [*ll*. 12-13] and the 'dark green file of long lank Weeds/ […] Still nod and drip beneath the dripping edge/ Of the blue clay-stone' [*ll*. 17-19]), may also imply a certain kind of interaction at work—when moving through this ambiguous, orderless and gloomy dingle, the poet-speaker's imagination is working its way to leave the alienated situation in the beginning.

As the poem proceeds, the poet-speaker's anxiety is gradually relieved as the imagined landscape moves from places of shadowy depth to places of openness:

> Now, my Friends emerge
> Beneath the wide wide Heaven—and view again
> The many-steeped track magnificent
> Of hilly fields and meadows, and the sea,
> With some fair bark, perhaps, whose Sails light up
> The slip of smooth clear blue betwixt two Isles
> Of purple shadow! (*ll*. 20-26)

The emergence to the panoramic landscape under the infinite sky signifies an opening of life's perceptual field. Besides spectacular natural scenes, images of coexistence are also remarkable in the passage; the fair bark's sails and the isles are not isolated entities, rather, they act towards each other ('light up'). The passage is followed by a sympathetic understanding of Charles Lamb's supressed desire for nature:

> My gentle-hearted Charles! for thou hast pined
> And hunger'd after Nature, many a year,
> In the great City pent, winning thy way
> With sad yet patient soul, through evil and pain
> And strange calamity! (*ll*. 28-32)

This sympathetic affect is significant for bringing the feeling of joy that comes to the poet-speaker's heart, and joy certainly connotes the religious dimension of the poem. The gladness that the poet-speaker feels for his friend takes his imagination to a renewed consciousness. The emotion is intertwined with the supposed gladness of Charles as he engages with Nature: 'So my Friend/ Struck with deep joy may stand,

as I have stood,/ Silent with swimming sense' (*ll*. 37-39). Both acts of communication restore life's richness and integrity.

Along with the exploration of the dialectic of solitude and communication is an enactment of spiritual experience. Parker's interpretation of the poem is based on the Christian practice of meditation for achieving spiritual experience. R. A. Durr sees in Coleridge's poems a pattern of 'the spiritual action of transcending the morbid condition of the alienated Soul through realization of "seeing"—the all encompassment of the Life of God' (521-22). The 'tradition of meditative Christian consolation' is not unfamiliar to Coleridge; a religious thinker that Coleridge read was Richard Baxter (Parker 28). Parker explains that: 'Baxter contends in *The Saints' Everlasting Rest* that the practice of meditative exercises in this world can raise the soul's powers to full affective awareness of the joys awaiting it in the "rest", or celestial afterlife' (29). Coleridge adapts 'Saint John's apocalyptic prophecy' which is 'mediated' by 'Baxter's treatise' as the ultimate model in the poem (ibid.). The pursuit of religious transcendence is evident in the 'seeing' of the 'Almighty Spirit':

> yea, gazing round
> On the wide landscape, gaze till all doth seem
> Less gross than bodily: and of such hues
> As veil the Almighty Spirit, when he makes
> Spirits perceive his presence. (*ll*. 39-44)

The change from 'gaze' to 'perceive' is noteworthy. The 'Almighty Spirit' is not to be seen visually; instead, his presence is to be felt, brought to recognition through the senses, but less 'bodily'. In 'Imagining into Nature', James Engell asserts that:

> The reality or being does not stand or fall through an act of individual perception. The being of any thing is guaranteed or insured only through the original creation and continued perception by the Divine, repeated—as Coleridge describes the primary imagination—by an act of perception in the individual 'I am.' Once this is accepted, each object is no longer a material thing but signifies a 'living Thing', mentioned in Coleridge's letter-text. Living things are visible 'signs' of the Divine language. (87)

In our earlier discussion we have seen this parallel between imagination's creativity and God's creativity. Here, although Engell maintains the derivativeness of the former from the latter ('only through the original creation'), he also emphasizes the necessity of repeated perceptual experience ('continued perception'). Because the act of perception carries the same kind of power as the Divine's creation, it is able to see

nature as 'living Things', and it is able to interpret the 'living Things' as 'signs' of the 'Divine language'. This interpretation is affirmed in the poem as Coleridge indicates the consequential relationship between the exercise of imagination and the recognition of Nature's greatness:

> Henceforth I shall know
> That Nature ne'er deserts the wise and pure,
> No Plot so narrow, be but Nature there,
> No waste so vacant, but may well employ
> Each faculty of sense, and keep the heart
> Awake to Love and Beauty! and sometimes
> 'Tis well to be bereft of promised good,
> That we may lift the Soul, and contemplate
> With lively joy the joys we cannot share. (*ll*. 60-68)

The word 'henceforth' implies the working of the poet-speaker's active reflection. He is trying to work out the logical relationship of the experience. The self will not know fully his being, nor will he comprehend the Divine in entirety; he can only infer the infinite from what he sees and feels in nature. When he says 'Nature ne'er deserts the wise and pure', using the active voice for nature could actually be a subjective projection, for nature simply exists: 'be but Nature there'. Yet recognizing nature's liveliness is important because it is an interlocutor that the poet-speaker communicates with. Nature must be both general and particular for man. Merleau-Ponty uses this characteristic of nature to illustrate the significance of embodied existence:

> The natural world is the horizon of all horizons, the style of all possible styles, which guarantees for my experiences a given, not a willed, unity underlying all the disruptions of my personal and historical life. Its counterpart within me is the given, general and pre-personal existence of my sensory functions in which we have discovered the definition of the body. (*Phenomenology* 385)

However, there is a major difference between Merleau-Ponty's philosophy and Coleridge's theory of imagination. For Coleridge, imagination, including perception, has to be understood along with the religious problem of how man is related to God in *and* through the world. Thomas McFarland distinguishes 'two systematic philosophies': 'that arising from our intuitive knowledge "I am" and that arising from our [empirical] knowledge "it is"' (*Pantheist* 56). McFarland's distinction is equivalent to the philosophical strands, 'intellectualism' and

'empiricism', that Merleau-Ponty constantly criticises. Moreover, McFarland also recognizes a 'third basic category of necessary philosophical involvement, arising as unbidden question from our immediate sense of limitation in our knowledge and our situation', and it 'constitutes that area of human concern termed religious' (*Pantheist* 55). This category is crucial for Coleridge because it contributes to a fundamental truth of man and the universe, without which there is no constancy of meaning for human existence. Coleridge does aspire to overcome materialism and attain a spiritual transcendence. Contrastingly, for Merleau-Ponty, it is not necessary to elucidate our existence by positing God, as he writes:

> We experience, not a genuine eternity and a participation in the One, but concrete acts of taking up and carrying forward by which, through time's accidents, we are linked in relationships with ourselves and others. In short, we experience a participation in the world, and 'being-in-truth' is indistinguishable from being-in-the-world. (*Phenomenology* 459)

In Merleau-Ponty's philosophy, 'transcendence' does not mean going beyond the material world, rather, it concerns mainly our worldly existence. Transcendence is the body's openness to the world and its coexistence with other beings, as he says, the 'active transcendence of consciousness' is 'the momentum which carries it into a thing and into a world by means of its organs and instruments' (*Phenomenology* 176).

The poem's dramatization of the dialectic of solitude and communication is an enactment of Coleridge's aspiration to realize the spiritual experience. This aspiration, is also in dialectic relationship with everyday life. The sense of joy experienced by the poet-speaker in this poem is the outcome of imagination, it is an actively perceptual synthesis of the subject's consciousness. The spiritual experience itself could be understood as an effect of the performative act. Therefore, the enactment tells even more about its significance for existence than its revelation of the Divine. The poet-speaker's realisation of the vision is 'a vision presumably shared: the individual mind, disembodied, becomes Mind, and then becomes reembodied in the very world it has imagined for others. But the presumption of sharing remains that, a presumption' (Rzepka 125). On the one hand, the poet creates his own lived space by the act of imagination; on the other hand, his embodied existence as a spatial and temporal being presupposes this creation. In order to reveal this, in the 'Lime-Tree' poem, Coleridge also works on the spectator-participant

transformation that McSweeney sees in 'The Eolian Harp'. The poet-speaker does not see the infinity of nature but is surrounded by it. His knowledge of it comes from his interpretation of his experience. The fact that his vision is after all perspectival and finite is conveyed through the last image of the Rook:

> when the last Rook
> Beat its straight path along the dusky air
> Homewards, I blest it! Deeming its black wing
> […]
> Had cross'd the mighty Orb's dilated glory,
> While thou stood'st gazing: or when all was still,
> Flew creeking o'er thy head, and had a charm
> For thee, my gentle-hearted Charles, to whom
> No Sound is dissonant which tells of Life. (*ll*. 69-77)

Rzepka explains the implication of this passage: 'The creeking rook "tells of life"; it is a word spoken by the "one Life," revealing the presence of logos. But it is also something whose audibility insures its existence outside the poet's mind and, by extension, reinforces our sense of the poet's finite embodiment' (131). The bird's eye view is contrasted with the human gaze; the former signifies an all-round vision while the later signifies a limited vision. The telling from the bird is similar to the telling from the murmuring sea in 'The Eolian Harp'—both communicate to the human subject about the infinite, which is unknowable to us otherwise.

To understand the significance of this poetic enactment we can also have a look at Lefebvre's theory of 'moments'. Lived space has an inseparable relationship with lived time. Life is an on-going process in which changes constantly take place. Like space, time as a general term is in fact collective in the sense that it consists of a plurality of different conceptions of 'time' or time scales', as Lefebvre points out: 'there exist social time or social time scales which are distinct from biological, physiological and physical time scales' (*Everyday Life II* 231). Only by considering time and space together do we come to understand lived and living experience. Everyday life, as just discussed, entails a dialectic between festival and the everyday. The process of becoming an individual life is the realisation of this dialectic over time. Subjective lived time coincides with social time. Lefebvre construes social time in terms of 'cyclic time scales and linear time scales': 'the former have their origins or their foundations in nature; they are connected to profound, cosmic, vital rhythms.

The latter are connected to knowledge, reason and techniques; they correlate not with vital rhythms and processes, but rather with processes of economic and technological growth' (*Everyday Life II* 231-232). Cycles of life are repetitive, but they repeat in order to renew and regenerate. In Lefebvre's theory of everyday life, he identifies a cyclic living rhythm of human beings, namely the repetition of 'moments'. 'Moments' are different kinds of instants of fulfilment and 'festival', which Lefebvre defines as '*the attempt to achieve the total realization of a possibility*' (*Everyday Life II* 348). 'Moments' can be understood as a way to formalize shapeless everyday life; they render an individual life its own history. History is a narrative of actions and events; hence 'moments' also imply dramatic situations and meanings. 'The theory of moments', as Lefebvre says, 'is the product of a violent protest against Bergsonism and the formless psychological continuum advocated by Bergsonian philosophy' (*Everyday Life II* 342).

Adapting Nietzsche's theory of the tragedy, Lefebvre characterizes moments of life 'tragic'—they are tragic because as long as they become absolute, they are elevated above life's ordinariness and engender a sense of fulfilment. There is a temporal limitation on moments, because they inevitably return to the routine. Moreover, since a moment rises above the banality of life, the subject is alienated in the sense that he becomes too devoted, and forgoes everything else for the pursuit of possibility. It is the temporariness and alienation that make a moment tragic:

> In so far as it is alienating and alienated, the moment has its specific negativity. It is destined to fail, it runs headlong towards failure. Everything happens as if he—the man who has changed his passion into a 'world'—wanted to fail. Negativity operates at the heart of whatever tries to structure and constitute itself into a definitive whole, and to come to a halt. Inevitably, necessity and chance are destined to come together and to be superseded, and from that supersession the tragic is born. (*Everyday Life II* 347)

This alienation is not the same as the kind of alienation that man experienced in abstract space, which is an experience of objectification and fragmentation. Lefebvre points out a problem in the concept of alienation defined by Marx, in which Marx 'reduce[s]' alienation to 'economic alienation within and by capitalism', resulting in an over-optimistic idea that 'alienation would disappear completely and in one blow, through a historical but unique act: the revolutionary action of the proletariat' (*Everyday Life II* 207). Alienation and disalienation are relative concepts; it is a

common fallacy that 'disalienation' is 'taken as an absolute, and as the end of alienation in general' (ibid.). Economic alienation disrupts the cyclic dialectic movement of alienation and disalienation in life, depriving man of life's 'tragedy'. For Lefebvre, the 'so-called "spiritual" life offers several different absolutes: several paths towards totalization, several paths towards fulfilment, in other words, towards failure' (*Everyday Life II* 348). The language of Lefebvre's theory of 'moments' may seem rather enigmatic, and this is perhaps why Lefebvre's commentators seldom elaborate on it. It basically asserts the importance of life's drama—in Lefebvre's term, 'tragedy'—for everyday life. It supplies life with festivity, in the sense that it is poetic, restorative, and disalienating, which is necessary for countering the 'prosaic in the world' (and here we see an echo with the 'City pent' passage) (ibid.).

Coleridge would certainly have understood life's 'tragedy', for he 'experienced a seemingly endless series of crises—the end of his Unitarian faith, the trauma of the French Revolution, the sense of his own poetic death, his struggles with metaphysical monism, his religious guilt, his existential isolation—each of which affected and undermined Romantic idealism' (Stokes 2). 'Dejection: an Ode', as a poem which explicitly embarks on an examination of dejection, looks into the grim, tragic side of life's moment, which is the failure of disalienation. In the introductory note for the poem in the Princeton edition of Coleridge's poetry, Mays tells us briefly about the composition background and different transcripts of the poem. Coleridge's later 'reconstruction' of the poem 'is to ascribe the loss of the shaping spirit of imagination to an infection of the soul caused by abstruse research, with no reference to the trials of C's domestic life and his love for [Sara Hutchinson]' (696). Because of this context of composition of the poem, critics hold two divergent views regarding the interpretation of the poem—some 'read the poem in primarily philosophical terms' and others 'emphasize the biographical aspects' (Roomaaker 133). However, since the verse letter to Sara Hutchinson was composed earlier, the biographical aspect certainly has great influence on the poem. In fact just like other Coleridgean poems, personal experience and philosophical inquiry are connected. Coleridge's despair at his inability to connect with nature, his unhappy marriage and frustrated love for Hutchinson are all experiences of alienation. Coleridge's afflictive mental struggle in analysing life's tragedy is proved productive

for poetic writing. Roomaaker believes that this poem 'reveals a basic tension between Coleridge's theories and his practical experience' (144). However, I tend to agree with Prickett that: 'Dejection is both a deliberately constructed "work of art", and, at the same time, an organic process of mind, recapitulating and showing us the whole mode of Coleridge's poetic development' (86). The tension that Rookmaaker sees in the poem precisely illustrates how intellectual thinking is also a part of lived experience that Coleridge embodies in his poetry.

The image of the 'Aeolian lute' in the opening of the poem contrasts significantly with that in 'The Eolian Harp':

> [T]he dull sobbing draft, that moans and rakes
> Upon the strings of this Aeolian lute,
> Which better far were mute.
> For lo! the New-moon winter-bright!
> And overspread with phantom-light,
> (With swimming phantom-light o'erspread
> But rimm'd and circled by a silver thread)
> I see the old Moon in her lap, foretelling
> The coming on of rain and squally blast. (*ll.* 6-14)

In the early poem, the harp is the instrument of Nature and the 'One Life'; it also signifies the possibility that nature is inspiring to the poet just like the wind to the harp. Contrastingly, in these few lines the wind is described as a 'dull sobbing draft', it is no longer the 'intellectual breeze' that the poet feels before. Because of his alienation from nature, he no longer see 'Life' in the wind. When the wind 'moans and rakes' the lute, the image is more like his own agony disturbing his mind; therefore, he wishes the Aeolian lute 'were mute'. This state of solipsism is also presented in the moon image. Parker notes that it 'introduces a mood of uneasy reflection' (184). He further refers to the idea of 'earth-light' raised by I. A. Richards, seeing 'the shining on the moon's surface of rays of sunlight reflected from the earth'; hence, 'in our perception of the "phantom" earth-light swimming over the moon's shadowy surface, we are in effect receiving what we give' (185). With this piece of evidence, Parker sees 'a moralized Coleridgean Neoplatonism: a pervasive, continuous flow of divine energy and solicitude' (ibid.). He then connects the moon image to the lines: 'Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth/ A light, a glory, a fair

luminous cloud/ Enveloping the Earth' (*ll*. 53-55).[3] Although in the earth-light image, what we give is the light from the sun and so what we see from the moon is sunlight mediated by us, hence what we give and what we receive is supposed to be the Divine light as our soul reflects it; yet, in this situation, the light is described as 'phantom light'—it also symbolizes the poet-speaker's own psychological state. Since he is incapable of seeing life in nature, what he projects onto the moon is the anxiety within him. The moon is also a solipsistic image just like the lute. This solipsism that the poet-speaker is trapped in is actually threatening to his theory of unity in God. The foretelling of the storm is not just superstition, rather, it reveals the fear and struggle of the poet-speaker as he painfully investigates the cause of his alienation. David Vallins suggests that: 'Perhaps the most important difference between his early and later work, indeed, is that the philosophical optimism of his early poetry has its closest parallel in his later theoretical writings, while his later poems (as well as 'Dejection' itself) focus more directly on the emotional context of his thought, and especially on the relationship between despair and hope' (73). When reading 'Dejection' together with the earlier poems, we are able to see more clearly the trajectory of sophistication in Coleridge's thought.

The poet-speaker's dejection is described in the second stanza in more detail. It is 'A grief without a pang, void, dark, and drear,/ A stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief,/ Which finds no natural outlet, no relief,/ In word, or sigh, or tear' (*l*. 21-24). The poet-speaker is dull in senses; his inability to feel also leads to the inability to express, neither verbally or emotionally. His inability to perceive life in nature is portrayed as an unavailing gazing:

> All this long eve, so balmy and serene,
> Have I been gazing on the western sky,
> And its peculiar tint of yellow green:
> And still I gaze—and with how blank an eye!
> […]
> My genial spirits fail,
> And what can these avail,
> To lift the smoth'ring weight from off my breast?

[3] The connection of these two parts is certain, as Parker points out that there is a link between the two 'in line 10 of the April 4, 1802 manuscript, where Coleridge originally wrote "All-suffus'd" before cancelling it with "overspread"; in all versions of the poem the long passage elaborating "a light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud" includes the line "All colours a suffusion from that light"' (186).

> It were a vain endeavor,
> Though I should gaze for ever
> On that green light that lingers in the west:
> I may not hope from outward forms to win
> The passion and the life, whose fountains are within. (*ll*. 27-46)

The poet-speaker is able to 'gaze' but not able to see. The inability to engage with nature's serenity is no difference from being blind. Because of his own weary sense of life ('My genial spirits fail'), he can no longer communicate with life in nature. His 'gazing' is a 'vain endeavour' because he is barren and spiritless within, as Roomaaker puts it:

> Even if he were to gaze forever, there would be no guarantee that he would ever be able to apprehend the life of nature. In other words, the poet realizes that external nature, however full of divine life it may be in itself, is powerless to cure him of his dejection, is incapable of communicating life to him. His only hope lies within himself, in activating his inner fountains of life by means of which he might eventually re-establish contact with the life of nature. (135-136)

This leads to the famous lines: 'we receive but what we give, /And in our life alone does nature live:/ Ours is her wedding-garment, ours her shroud' (*ll*. 47-49). Barth disagrees with the view that in these lines Coleridge 'is arguing, in effect, against Wordsworth's belief in the healing power of nature. Nature has no power to affect our lives; our response to nature is determined by our own feelings, by the projection of our selves' ('Dejection' 184). Since in stanza VII, Coleridge puts 'aside the almost solipsistic view of himself and nature, he finally allows himself really to listen to the wind, to allow its power to work in him' (ibid.). However, in that stanza, his encounter with nature is more like a confrontation that the harmonious re-unity that Barth conceives. We will come back to this confrontation in our later discussion. Here, the line 'we receive but what we give' has to be understood together with 'Ours is her wedding-garment, ours her shroud'. As we have seen in Merleau-Ponty's ideas of nature, that it is 'the horizon of all horizons, the style of all possible styles, which guarantees for my experiences a given, not a willed, unity'; what he means by 'unity' here is coexistence. Nature simply 'is'—hence its coexistence with us is not 'willed'. Nature can be the divine life but it can also be a brute force. Whether we are able to 'wed' with nature depends on our own 'life'; this is in accordance with the fountain passage that precedes this one.

The wedding metaphor is further explored in stanza V, in which he pronounces the significance of joy for our spiritual life:

> Life, and Life's Effluence, Cloud at once and Shower,
> Joy, Lady! is the spirit and the power,
> Which wedding Nature to us gives in dow'r
> A new Earth and new Heaven (*ll*. 64-69)

Coleridge uses the nuptial metaphor to express the relationship between man, nature and joy. Joy is the happiness and sense of fulfilment gained ('dow'r') when man interacts with nature harmoniously. Joy 'is the spirit and the power' because our longing for it will propel us to realize the connection. However, it is also possible that we cannot accomplish the connection. The wedding metaphor also makes implicit reference to Coleridge's unhappy marriage to Sara Fricker and unrequited love for Sara Hutchinson. In the former there is no joy; it is not 'the lack of those domestic pleasures that breaks him, but the desperate feeling that nothing, not even the most trivial pleasure, can be shared with his wife' (Prickett 156). He is also unable to enjoy free communication and sharing in the latter situation as it is impossible for him to form a union with Hutchinson. His inability to be united with nature is comparable to these relationships, but the problem actually lies within the poet himself rather than nature:

> But now afflictions bow me down to earth:
> Nor care I that they rob me of my mirth,
> But oh! each visitation
> Suspends what nature gave me at my birth,
> My shaping spirit of Imagination. (*ll*. 82-86)

The reason for his 'afflictions' could be his ill-fated love, but in another aspect, it could also be his recognition of solipsism that alienates him from nature and suspends his 'shaping spirit of Imagination'. This solipsism, as we are going to be told, comes from his 'abstruse research':

> And haply by abstruse research to steal
> From my own nature all the natural Man—
> This was my sole resource, my only plan:
> Till that which suits a part infects the whole,
> And now is almost grown the habit of my Soul. (*ll*. 89-93)

Coleridge attributes his alienation to philosophical research because excess reflection has stolen 'the natural Man' from him. In other words, he is too obsessive with abstract thinking to the extent that he is unable to enjoy life's natural richness. In abstract space, the body is evaporated, as Lefebvre tells us. Moreover, in his philosophical reflection, he should also discover a self that belongs only to himself: 'This self, a witness to any actual communication, and without which the latter would be ignorant of itself, and would not, therefore, be communication at all, would seem to preclude any solution of the problem of others. There is here a solipsism rooted in living experience and quite insurmountable' (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology* 417). This recognition of our existential solipsism is actually threatening to Coleridge's belief that man is able to know God through a unity with nature. Merleau-Ponty discusses the question whether we can love others through God, but his answer to it is 'no':

> I might love others as myself in God, but even then my love of God would have to come not from me, and would have to be truly, as Spinoza said, the love which God has for himself through me. So that finally nowhere would there be love of others or indeed others, but one single self-love linked to itself beyond our own lives […]. (*Phenomenology* 418)

Although we are not sure if Coleridge has thought along the same lines, solipsism has already caused him confusion. Merleau-Ponty points out that '[c]onsciousnesses present themselves with the absurdity of a multiple solipsism, such is the situation which has to be understood' (ibid.). Perhaps it is also this existential predicament that causes Coleridge's agony. Despite Coleridge's loss of imagination, 'Dejection' the poem itself is one of his best works, as Prickett recognizes:

> Coleridge is ostensibly describing a disaster—but out of that disaster, the suspension of his creative powers, he is in the very act of creating one of the great poems of the English language. This passage is the emotional turning-point of the poem. A moment later he turns his attention to the wind outside, and the process of catharsis and purgation which is to lead him on to his hymn to joy. (110)

This 'disaster' conveys a sense of crisis. As the poet-speaker recognizes his solipsism, he struggles to confront it and aspires to restore the fertility of his life. We have seen earlier in our discussion of 'moment' that Lefebvre believes life is a dialectic of aspiration and failure, which he names 'moments'. For Lefebvre, 'spiritual life'

consists of a 'constellation of moments', and it is characterized by 'the attempt to achieve the total realization of a possibility' (*Everyday Life II* 348). Lived experience is the drama of this dialectic which is ultimately tragic.

In stanza VII we see an emphatic confrontation of the poet-speaker with the raving wind which makes the lute produce a piercing sound:

> Hence, viper thoughts, that coil around my mind,
> Reality's dark dream!
> I turn from you, and listen to the wind,
> Which long has rav'd unnotic'd. What a scream
> Of agony by torture lengthen'd out
> That lute sent forth! (*ll*. 96-98)

By referencing Parker, Roomaaker notes the Miltonic allusion in this stanza: 'the "viper thoughts" cannot but refer to the state of dejection itself, while the snake image in clearly Miltonic overtones connects this dejection with the notion of a fall from the divine life of nature and man' (142-143). Here we see that the poet-speaker ascribes his distress of solipsism to 'viper thoughts'; it is associated with evil because it is against the power of divinity. Reality becomes a nightmare ('dark dream') for him. The act of 'I turn from you, and listen to the wind' signifies the poet-speaker's resolution to break away from the 'viper thoughts' and restore his vitality. He attempts to achieve this by confronting the raving wind, which signifies nature's brutality, but is also a reflection of his inner anxiety. This confrontation is a painful act: the poet-speaker's outcry is embodied in the 'scream of agony by torture' sent from the lute. In his address to the wind: 'Thou Wind, that rav'st without' (*l*. 99), he calls it a 'Mad Lutanist' who 'Mak'st Devils' yule', and this is an extended figure of his attribution of his confusion and solipsism to this evil (*ll*. 104-106). But then since these come from himself, the wind can also be a projection of his inner battle. In the poem he dramatizes the situation, as is made clear when he exclaims: 'Thou Actor, perfect in all tragic sounds!/ Thou mighty Poet, e'en to Frenzy bold!' (*ll*. 108-109). Parker sees in this part a submission to the 'satanic despair' of the poet, and Coleridge's 'abdication of moral imagination, a yielding to the demonic sublime' (201). However, this view seems to miss the courageous and tragic sense expressed in the passage. The confrontation actually is rich in poetic quality because it effectively enacts the tragedy of life. Coleridge singles out this moment of intense

torment and turns his 'abstruse research' or 'viper thoughts' to lived experience that encompasses life's aspiration and tragedy.

The poem ends in a blessing of the Lady; it indicates the possibility of regaining life in the act of love. In fact, the poet-speaker's love for the lady is already a communication, or at least, he is able to communicate to the lady through himself. It is in this experience that he can rediscover his own life. Merleau-Ponty discerns that:

> Solitude and communication cannot be the two horns of a dilemma, but two 'moments' of one phenomenon, since in fact other people do exist for me. We must say of experience of others what we have said elsewhere about reflection: that its object cannot escape it entirely, since we have a notion of the object only through that experience. (*Phenomenology* 418)

For Merleau-Ponty, solitude, the recognition of oneself as an independent individual, presupposes our communication with others. We can only know others through our experience with others. Therefore, the poet-speaker's blessing for the Lady is a compensation for his alienation, if not a recovery of his own liveliness. He endows the one he loves with his own wishes: 'Visit her, gentle Sleep! with wings of healing,/ And may this storm be but a mountain-birth,/ May all the stars hang bright above her dwelling,/ Silent as though they watch'd the sleeping Earth!' (*ll*.128-131). The poem's enactment of the poet-speaker's blessing enables him to feel at home in his existence and recover a peaceful mind.

Continuing the argument in the discussion of 'Dejection: an Ode', 'The Garden of Boccaccio' will be investigated in terms of the poem's significance as an active creation of poetic lived space and self-reflexive exploration of the poetic space. The act of creating poetic space is also an act of disalienation. Before we go on to read the poem, I would like to have a further discussion of Lefebvre's idea of the 'lived space' first. It is related to the phenomenological lived space of Merleau-Ponty, but it also conveys a broader meaning that will illuminate alienation as a modern problem.

The emphasis on the visual, the transparent, the abstraction of lived space in the mental realm is a major characteristic of abstract space. Within abstract space, 'lived experience is crushed, vanquished by what is "conceived of". History is experienced as nostalgia, and nature as regret – as a horizon fast disappearing behind

us' (Lefebvre, *Production* 51). 'Live experience' and 'history' are recoverable in 'representational spaces': 'Representational spaces…need obey no rules of consistency or cohesiveness. Redolent with imaginary and symbolic elements, they have their source in history — in the history of a people as well as in the history of each individual belonging to that people' (Lefebvre, *Production* 41). For Lefebvre, language abstracts space but also produces space as well. We may say that what Lefebvre really criticises is discussing space merely on a textual level of analysis. In other words, we have to turn to the question of how language produces space with a certain 'texture'. How does Lefebvre understand 'texture'? There are at least two significances for 'texture', as he writes: 'A texture implies a meaning—but a meaning for whom? For some 'reader'? No: rather, for someone who lives and acts in the space under consideration, a "subject" with a body' (*Production* 132). Additionally, 'When formal elements become part of a texture, they diversify, introducing both repetition and difference. They articulate the whole, facilitating both movement from the parts to the whole' (*Production* 150).

'The Garden of Boccaccio' begins with 'a dreary mood', which, as Susan Luther observes, recalls the similar beginning in 'Dejection: an Ode', and it serves as a 'late response' and 'self-parody' of the poem (24-25). It is in a dialogical relationship with Coleridge's previous work. By constructing variations out of similarities between the poems, Coleridge enriches the meaning of both poems and enacts a communication of the self at different times. In the first stanza of the poem, the poet-speaker is caught in a stagnant state of mood:

> Of late, in one of those most weary Hours,
> When Life seems emptied of all genial Powers,
> A dreary Mood, which he who ne'er has known
> May bless his happy lot, I sat alone;
> And, from the numbing Spell to win relief,
> Call'd on the PAST for thought of Glee or Grief.
> In vain! (*ll*. 1-7)

It is quite peculiar that the poem switches between present tense and past tense at some specific points. The poet-speaker is situated in a present of 'here and now' from the very beginning of the poem. The present tense of the first few lines also suggests the repetitiveness of the 'weary hours', whose significance I shall return to by the end of this discussion.

The poem recounts Coleridge's experience of appreciation of an engraving by Thomas Stothard, which depicts the garden described in the Third Day of Boccaccio's *The Decameron*. The poet-speaker is delighted upon looking at the picture of Boccaccio's garden and is thus drawn out of his indolence:

> O Friend! long wont to notice yet conceal,
> And soothe by silence what words cannot heal,
> I but half saw that quiet hand of thine
> Place on my desk this exquisite Design,
> Boccaccio's Garden and its Faery,
> The Love, the Joyaunce and the Gallantry!
> An IDYLL, with Boccaccio's Spirit warm,
> Fram'd in the silent Poesy of Form. (*ll*. 11-18)

Boccaccio's garden was originally a textual space in *The Decameron*, but it was already a lived space of Boccaccio—his imagination of medieval Italy, which epitomises the social and historical conditions at that time. Boccaccio's representational space is transformed into images through the engraving, and the poem further re-creates the images in ways that incorporate the poet-speaker's own imagination. Poesy's framing of 'Boccaccio's spirit' is not an abstraction; rather, it is an embodiment. Imagination functions on multiple levels: firstly, the action of imagination is a bodily perception of the 'exquisite design' that the 'friend', who is known to be Mrs. Anne Gillman, places on the poet-speaker's desk. It also provokes the poet-speaker to strive into his own memory and refreshes his self-consciousness. And thirdly, imagination overlays and appropriates the representational spaces of both Stothard and Boccaccio descended from the past, and recreates them for Coleridge's own poetic space. In all these levels, there is a creator-perceiver or author-reader relationship, that meaning of a piece of art resides in both the artist and his audience. It is through a sharing of the artwork that its life is brought-into-being:

> The painter can do no more than construct an image; he must wait for this image to come to life for other people. When it does, the work of art will have united these separate lives; it will no longer exist in only one of them like a stubborn dream or a persistent delirium, nor will it exist only in space as a colored piece of canvas. It will dwell undivided in several minds, with a claim on every possible mind like a perennial acquisition. (Merleau-Ponty, *Sense and Non-Sense* 20)

Coleridge's poetic re-creation is a realisation of this 'perennial acquisition' by synchronizing his consciousness with his own past self as well as the engraving.

In this way, he is united with the artist and able to communicate with the past. The poet-speaker's synchronization of his consciousness of the past with the present is indicated in the second stanza:

> Like Flocks adown a newly-bathed Steep
> Emerging from a mist: or like a Stream
> Of Music soft that not dispels the Sleep,
> But casts in happier moulds the Slumberer's Dream,
> Gaz'd by an idle Eye with silent might
> The Picture stole upon my inward Sight.
> A tremulous Warmth crept gradual o'er my Chest,
> As though an Infant's Finger touch'd my Breast.
> And one by one (I knew not whence) were brought
> All Spirits of Power that most had stirr'd my Thought
> In selfless Boyhood, on a new world tost
> Of wonder, and in its own fancies lost; (*ll*. 19-30)

Coleridge's 'inward sight' reminds us of Wordsworth's 'inward eye'. Recollection of memory attains a present significance which results in a thrust of spontaneous feeling, which is the 'tremulous warmth crept' over the poet-speaker's chest. The discovery of a new world is not only an infantile experience recalled from memory; it is taking place at the very present moment of seeing the picture. The poem dramatizes the interaction of the body-subject and its environment. The poet-speaker is embraced by the holistic senses which are like 'flocks emerging from a mist'. The metaphors are essentially spatial; and the 'stream' also connotes the passing of time. The active but idle gazing eye is not the sole agent, as 'the picture' simultaneously corresponds with the eye as it 'stole upon the inward sight'. These poetic lines resemble closely Merleau-Ponty's analogy of sleeping:

> The relations of sentient to sensible are comparable with those of the sleeper to his slumber: sleep comes when a certain voluntary attitude suddenly receives from outside the confirmation for which it was waiting. I am breathing deeply and slowly in order to summon sleep, … A certain rhythm of respiration, which a moment ago I voluntarily maintained, now becomes my very being, and sleep, until now aimed at as a significance, suddenly becomes a situation. (245-246)

The relations between the 'inward Sight' of the poet-speaker and the picture is precisely the relations of 'sentient to sensible'. The poet-speaker is in need of new inspiration to get him out of the desolated life, and when he sees the engraving, this 'voluntary attitude' gets a 'confirmation' from the picture. It is interesting that

Coleridge also uses 'the Slumberer's Dream' to symbolize this experience. Poetic inspiration is certainly crucial for him because of its healing power:

> And many a Verse which to myself I sang,
> That woke the Tear yet stole away the Pang,
> Of Hopes which in lamenting I renew'd.
> And last, a Matron now, of sober mien
> Yet radiant still and with no Earthly sheen,
> Whom as a faery child my Childhood woo'd
> Even in my Dawn of Thought—PHILOSOPHY.
> Though then unconscious of herself, pardie,
> She bore no other name than POESY; (*ll*. 44-51)

Poetry is Coleridge's source of life. This passage can almost be understood as a sequel to the 'Dejection' poem. 'Philosophy' here is referred to as 'my Dawn of Thought'—different from 'viper thoughts'. Coleridge affirms its significance in enlightening one's thought, as it brings about the first light of knowledge, even though it might only be an indistinct beginning of that understanding. The working of poesy is different from philosophy in the sense that it nurtures life, and therefore it is not restricted to thoughts.

The poet-speaker's interaction with the picture does not merely operate on a concretely perceptual and personal level; it also works on the level of representational spaces. Hence in the fourth stanza, we encounter a change of situation again:

> Thanks, gentle artist! now I can descry
> Thy fair Creation with a waking Eye,
> And *all* awake! And now in fix'd Gaze stand,
> Now wander through the Eden of thy Hand;
> Praise the green Arches, in the Fountain clear
> See fragment Shadows of the crossing deer;
> And with that serviceable Nymph I stoop
> The Crystal, from its restless Pool, to scoop.
> I see no longer! I myself am there,
> Sit on the Ground-sward, and the banquet share.
> 'Tis I, that sweep that Lute's love-echoing Strings,
> And gaze upon the Maid who gazing Sings:
> Or pause and listen to the tinkling Bells
> From the nigh Tower, and think that there she dwells. (*ll*. 57-70)

The 'waking Eye' signifies a moment of epiphany. He is opened to a new realm of experience. He enters a paradise like a traveller explores an unknown land. The

emphasis on the verb 'be' in the line: 'I see no longer! I myself am there' is crucial. It conditions the nature of the 'gaze' and 'gazing' in those lines that come after it. 'Seeing' is more an act of inhabitation than objectification. Like 'Lime-Tree', the poet-speaker also turns from a spectator into a participant, or rather, an inhabitant of this wonderful world. Coleridge enacts the power of synchronization of his consciousness: 'The subject of sensation is neither a thinker who takes note of a quality, nor an inert setting which is affected or changed by it, it is a power which is born into, and simultaneously with, a certain existential environment, or is synchronized with it' (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology* 245). It is noticeable that the poem changes to the present tense again in this stanza, which coincides with the transition of the poet-speaker's recollection of his personal history to the history of a wider scale that is embodied by the representational spaces of Boccaccio. Moreover, the poet-speaker's constant address to someone in these quoted passages signifies his endeavour and awareness of his existence through communication. The poet-speaker's sense of communion even extends to the places that he imaginatively and retrospectively situates himself in:

> With old Boccaccio's Soul I stand possest,
> And breathe an Air like life, that swells my Chest.
>
> The Brightness of the World, O thou once free,
> And always fair, rare Land of Courtesy!
> O FLORENCE! with the Tuscan Fields and Hills
> And famous Arno, fed with all their Rills;
> Thou brightest Star of Star-bright Italy! (*ll*. 71-77)

The Florence of Coleridge and Boccaccio overlaps and becomes indistinguishable. These passages precisely demonstrate how seeing enacted in poetry is not simply a subjective, constitutive and mastering gaze. It coordinates with other senses, enabling the poet-speaker to literally dwell in the poetic space. Imagination is not an abstract, isolated experience; it solidifies itself and enters into the body-subject's experience which is spatially and temporally grounded. The history of representational spaces is traced far back to Boccaccio's appropriation of Ovid and Homer. Representational spaces penetrate and superimpose upon one another. They are the 'mazy page'—textual and spatial at the same time.

Coleridge's poem is a lived space, in which he experiences a communication with himself, the artists, as well as the reader. Coleridge's exploration of the experience of engaging with poetry and art coincides with Merleau-Ponty's sympathetic understanding of Cezanne's endeavour of capturing the primordial experience of perception in his painting. A poem, just like a painting, realizes the artist's experience of coexistence with the world through expression. This passage on Cezanne is quite long but worth quoting:

> There is nothing but a vague fever before the act of artistic expression, and only the work itself, completed and understood, is proof that there was something rather than nothing to be said. Because he returns to the source of silent and solitary experience on which culture and the exchange of ideas have been built in order to know it, the artist launches his work just as a man once launched the first word, not knowing whether it will be anything more than a shout, whether it can detach itself from the flow of individual life in which it originates and give the independent existence of an identifiable meaning either to the future of that same individual life or to the monads coexisting with it or to the open community of future monads. The meaning of what the artist is going to say does not exist anywhere—not in things, which as yet have no meaning, nor in the artist himself, in his unformulated life. It summons one away from the already constituted reason in which 'cultured men' are content to shut themselves, toward a reason which contains its own origins. (*Sense and Non-Sense* 19)

We may return to the sense of weariness that opens the poem. The sense of boredom in daily life is alienation, but isn't it also more fundamentally this sense of existential solitude? Isn't it also this vague artistic fever of struggling with ambiguity? The moment of 'love, joyaunce, and gallantry' that Coleridge celebrates is the moment of breaking through the individualistic inwardness in order to reach out to the 'open community'. To engage with a poem is to live and experience the poet's representational spaces, to be 'summoned' by the meaning of the poet, to communicate with him and constitute a 'reason' that is particular to us. This is also what Coleridge does in this poem. The poetic space is a lived space which is at the same time real and imaginary, historical and contemporary, individual and communal, and hence, a social space.

CHAPTER FOUR

Differential Lived Spaces and Baillie's Critique of Everyday Life

Joanna Baillie published her first collection of poems in 1790, though it was praised by William Enfield in the *Monthly Review* that her poems 'express, in easy though peculiar language, the feelings of undisguised and uncorrupted nature', the volume did not attract enough public attention for Baillie to persist in lyrical poetry (quoted in Breen; 3). After converting her literary effort to drama, Baillie published anonymously her first series of dramas, *Plays on the Passions*, in 1798. Baillie's authorship was only revealed in 1800 upon the issuing of the third edition of the plays. Baillie became an acclaimed female playwright in the Romantic period. By the end of Baillie's literary career, critical comments generally acknowledged the importance of her literary contribution. Sir Walter Scott praised her as 'the best dramatic writer…since the days of Shakespeare and Massinger' (ibid.). In her 'General Introduction' to *Joanna Baillie: a Selection of Plays and Poems*, Amanda Gilroy quotes from the *Quarterly Review* of 1841, in which Baillie was ranked 'just after Wordsworth and Coleridge in effecting a "wonderful revolution of public taste in works of imagination"' (xxxii). The *Quarterly Review* was referring to the now canonical volume, *Lyrical Ballads*, which was published in 1798. Jennifer Breen reminds us that 'by 1798, Baillie had formulated her theoretical ideas about the necessity of portraying human feeling in poetry', which influenced Wordsworth's 'Preface' to *Lyrical Ballads* (7). Baillie's ideas were indicated in the 'Introductory Discourse' of her collection, *A Series of Plays*, where Baillie asserts that for poetry, it is necessary to 'let one simple trait of the human heart, one expression of passion genuine and true to nature, be introduced, and it will stand forth alone in the boldness of reality'. In her 'Preface' to the 1840 poetry collection, *Fugitive Verses*, Baillie writes: 'Modern poetry, […] has become so imaginative, impassioned, and sentimental, that more homely subjects, in simple diction, are held in comparatively small estimation' (251). However, Slagle points out that 'unlike Wordsworth, […] Baillie's plays avoided a "masculinist focus on the introspective process of an individual poet"' (95). Baillie attempted to challenge this trend by adapting aspects of common and domestic lives as her poetic subjects. In his *British Women Poets and the Romantic Writing Community*, Stephen C. Behrendt sums up a few major

characteristics of Baillie's poems: 'The poems in her 1790 Poems mediate between the distinctive Scottishness of their materials and a broader, universalized human experience, while later poems like her extraordinary "Lines to a Teapot" reveal a sophisticated poet capable of successfully engaging issues of economy, commerce, and empire on a global scale within the context of an ostensibly domestic subject' (233). Baillie's interest in 'homely subjects' is not necessarily confined to the domestic; it encompasses familiar daily matters ranging from humble rural life in 'A Winter's Day' to the popularisation of new transport in 'Address to a Steamvessel'. The 'homely subjects' that are so frequently taken on in Baillie's poetry can be broadly understood as subjects of everyday life. Everyday life is a field highly pertinent for her less adorned poetic language to work on, not only because 'simple diction' can represent true human feelings in everyday situations; it also discovers the inventiveness of everyday life. The language revolution in literature is in line with the geminating modern revolution of culture in eighteenth century Britain, in which the permeation of modernity was increasingly materialized and perceptible in everyday life.

In this chapter, four poems by Joanna Baillie will be analysed in relation to everyday life and space. 'Lines to a Teapot' and 'Address to a Steamvessel' overtly take up cultural and social issues in Baillie's time. They both explore problems of leisure that arise alongside the formation of abstract space and the rise of bourgeois society. Moreover, while 'Lines to a Teapot' shows an exquisite global vision through seeing the relationship between imperialism and abstract space, 'Address to a Steamvessel' touches upon the question of national identity and expresses a different perspective on the Romantic project of shaping the cultural imagination of sea travel. 'A Winter's Day' portrays a peasant society that remains agricultural during the advent of the modern age, which, at least temporarily, preserves an organic community. 'A November Night's Traveller' explores the dialectic relationship of lived and living experience in an observant and imaginative account of night travel. Joanna Baillie's poetry can be read as a critique of everyday life, as she brings the common and ordinary to our attention through the drama of poetic language.

Before going on to an examination of Baillie's poems, I would like to take a detour to elucidate a few ideas in Lefebvre's theory in order to develop the theoretical framework that has been unfolding in the previous chapters. In recent years, the issues of space and everyday life have been frequently discussed in relation to each other in the studies of humanities. In Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life*, spatial practices are explored as 'tactics' that articulate and invent the everyday space of a city. Henri Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* in many ways revisits and advances his arguments in the first two volumes of *Critique of Everyday Life* which were published prior to *The Production of Space*. Lefebvre's theory of space sets out to be a philosophical employment of space to account for social formation in the course of Western modernity. More importantly, it is a critique of reductive conceptions of space constructed in the realm of knowledge, which presupposes and confines our understandings of space. Space has been either reduced to a geometrical 'empty area', or a Kantian transcendental structure that 'belonged to the *a priori* realm of consciousness' (*Production* 1-2). As we have seen in chapter one, Lefebvre contends that space should not be understood in pure physical or mental terms because it is social. Intellectual conceptions of space relegate space to abstract and specialized forms, while in the material reality, space is also subjected to abstract manipulation by dominant political and economic powers. The formation of abstract space is accompanied by the alienation of everyday life. For both space and everyday life, Lefebvre aims to rediscover their dialectical and dynamic characteristics. He argues that theory has to attend to space, since it is where social changes can be engendered.

Lived spaces are to be experienced in everyday life. For most of the time, everyday life is opaque and formless since it always passes without being reflected upon. It is comprised of various daily routines which appear so natural that it is easy for them to escape our attention. Moreover, recent cultural theory has discovered the critical potential of everyday life, and challenged its 'natural' and ordinary appearance. As Ben Highmore points out in his 'Introduction' to *The Everyday Life Reader*, 'everyday life' has to be addressed 'as a problematic, a contested and opaque terrain, where meanings are not to be found ready-made' (1). Lefebvre played a pioneering role in recognizing the critical importance of everyday life. His *Critique*

of Everyday Life is comprised of three volumes, the composition of which spanned more than half of Lefebvre's long intellectual career. The series was a grand project asserting and demonstrating the significance of everyday life as an arena for critical analysis of capitalism and modernity. The word 'critique' is to be understood in two senses: firstly, it demands a criticism of everyday life; but more importantly, it argues for the possibility that everyday life can criticise itself so as to bring about transformation. In the foreword to volume one of *Critique of Everyday Life* reissued in 1958, Lefebvre illustrates the complexity of everyday life and spots its contradictions in modern society. Along with the change of the mode of production, capitalism changed the general everyday life in agricultural society, for which work and everyday life tended to be inseparable; work and everyday life have been consciously separated in industrial and bourgeois society during the course of Western modernization. Modern everyday life is characterised by the distinct division of different aspects of life. Lefebvre concisely summarizes the intertwining development of social conditions and human subjectivity:

> [A]t the historical moment when the relation between labour and the concrete development of individuality was emerging, labour took on an increasingly fragmented character. At the same time the individual, more and more involved in complex social relations, became isolated and inward-looking. Individual consciousness split into two (into the private consciousness and the social or public consciousness); it also became atomized (individualism, specialization, separation between differing spheres of activity, etc.). Thus at the same time a distinction was made between man 'as man' on the one hand and the working man on the other (more clearly among the bourgeoisie, of course, than among the proletariat). Family life became separate from productive activity. And so did leisure. (*Everyday Life I* 31)

The separation of various aspects of life arose alongside the dissolution of old social relations and the complication of new social relations. The problem of alienation can be contextualised within different levels of modern everyday life. On the personal level, while everyday life is separated into work and leisure, each of these aspects is further fragmented by the division of labour and specialisation. On the social level, the rise of individualism and professionalism obstructs communication and weakens the human sense of sympathy. Consequently, the development of inter-subjective understanding is impaired and individuals are locked in their own private consciousness. However, for Lefebvre, the possibility of disalienation is also latent in

everyday life, since apart from contradictions, everyday life also contains differentiations that will potentially make a difference to life: 'The discreteness of the elements of the everyday (work—family and 'private' life—leisure activities) implies an alienation; and perhaps at the same time a differentiation—certain fruitful contradictions' (*Everyday Life I* 32). Lefebvre's critique of everyday life is 'to situate the poverty and wealth of this everyday life which we know to be both infinitely rich (potentially at least) and infinitely poor, bare, alienated; which we know we must reveal to itself and transform so that its richness can become actualized and developed in a renewed culture' (*Everyday Life I* 31).

Among the various aspects of everyday life, leisure becomes a significant area of critical investigation in Lefebvre because it sharply foregrounds the contradictions people experience in lived space. On the one hand, leisure is where the body reasserts itself, frees itself from repetitive or mental labour; on the other hand, leisure cannot be completely isolated from social and economic institutions, and in fact, it is increasingly bound up with governmental planning and commercial activities. The close relationship between authoritative or economic programming and leisure is apparent in space. Spaces of leisure such as parks, cultural and performance venues, museums, sports centres etc. constitute a significant part in urban planning, whilst tertiary industries flourish with the demand of leisure (shopping malls, cinemas, holiday resorts etc.). People who wish to escape alienation from work through leisure may end up experiencing another kind of alienation. In order to explain the contradictions of leisure and differentiate between the kinds of leisure that alienate and the other kinds that restore the body and mind, Lefebvre adapts an idea of festivity. The idea has its origin in 'the philosophical endorsement of excess, of superfluity—and hence of transgression' (*Production* 177). Nietzsche's distinction between the Apollonian and the Dionysian in human existence is a prime example of this 'philosophical endorsement'. Lefebvre explains that this distinction 'echoes the dual aspect of the living being and its relationship to space—its own space and the other's: violence and stability, excess and equilibrium' (*Production of Space* 178). Here Lefebvre is concerned with human beings as living and spatial beings, in other words, our existence as the flow and transformation of energy between the body and the environment. The body is considered an organic part of the

world, in which, on the one hand, it absorbs and respires for steady growth, and on the other hand, it also accumulates 'a surplus of available energy over and above what it needs for dealing with immediate demands and attacks' (*Production* 176). The surplus of energy does not only accumulate but at times is released '*productively*, even when the "production" involved is merely that of play or gratuitous violence' (Lefebvre's emphasis; *Production* 177). It is productive because it causes a change in the world:

> The fact that a surplus of energy is accumulated before being discharged is thus a defining aspect of the very concept of the 'living body' and its relationship with its space—i.e. with itself, its vicinity, its surroundings, and the world at large. A productive squandering of energy is not a contradiction in terms: an expenditure of energy may be deemed 'productive' so long as some change, no matter how small, is thereby effected in the world. (*Production* 179)

Economic activities, to a certain extent, reflect, imitate and make use of natural production and the flow of energy. The necessity of developing an economic system for human beings was not only based on survival but the purpose of living and desire. However, as abstract space develops and prevails over lived space, economic activities turn from their original role as an implement to a purpose in itself. The Apollonian and the Dionysian connote the vitality of life, which is contrasted with the narrowly defined and dehumanized economic production and consumption. Everyday life, including both work and leisure, is alienating and alienated, separated further away from the dialectic of the Apollonian and the Dionysian. For Lefebvre, leisure is the most pertinent starting place to re-assert the body as a *living* body which is empowered by its desire for transgression: 'The space of leisure tends—but it is no more than a tendency, a tension, a transgression of "users" in search of a way forward—to surmount divisions: the division between social and mental, the division between sensory and intellectual, and also the division between the everyday and the out-of-the-ordinary (festival)' (*Production* 385).

Festivity is crucial to Lefebvre's social critique and his proposal of a 'revolution' of everyday life to reclaim the agency of the human subject, as well as a revolution of space, founded not on class struggle but on living experience: 'just as everyday life has been colonized by capitalism so, too has its location: social space. […] Lefebvre also wished to put forward a programme for radical change, for a

revolution of everyday life, so as to end alienation' (Elden 117). In volume I and II of *Critique of Everyday Life*, Lefebvre has already emphasized the significance of festivity and outlined a theoretical relationship between festivals and everyday life. According to Lefebvre's belief in the dialectic, the relationship between everyday life and festivity is also dialectical—the human life is a process of becoming that proceeds dialectically. The process necessarily entails the tension and interaction between the poetic and the prosaic, the tragic and the banal, and the festive and the everyday. Festival is not an opposition to everyday life, because it is ultimately a part of it, subversive but necessarily comprising the dynamism of everyday life. In early agricultural society, the dialectic of life was in accordance with nature's order and rhythm, and festival was more closely woven into everyday life. Festival releases accumulated energies and make a change to everyday routines, as Lefebvre puts it in volume I of *Critique of Everyday Life*: 'festivals contrasted violently with everyday life, *but they were not separate from it*. They were like everyday life, but more intense; and moments of that life—the practical community, food, the relation with nature—in other words, work—were reunited, amplified, magnified in the festival' (Lefebvre's emphasis; *Everyday Life I* 207). Lefebvre's review of the rural life is not a sentimental retreat to the past; rather, it is a necessary step to discover what has been lost and what has been disrupted in the course of changes. The objective is to address the problems that human beings are facing at present, and more importantly, to elicit a revolution in everyday life which can restore its vitality: 'The aim is not to let festivals die out or disappear beneath all that is prosaic in the world. It is to unite Festival with everyday life' (*Everyday Life II* 348). This reunion is to be realised not by returning to the bygone mode of society, but by appropriating our present lived space in ways that allow true festival to emerge. The qualities of true festival, like nature, never disappear completely, and they are the key to disalienation.

The Romantic period was a time when modernization gained its momentum due to increasingly flourishing global trade and the industrial revolution thanks to unprecedented scientific advancements. Changes in everyday life as discussed by Lefebvre were already evident during the Romantic period. Like her male counterparts, Baillie as a writer of her time responded to this era of transformation by attending to the lived experience and articulating a certain feeling of that experience.

In contrast to Wordsworth and Coleridge, however, Baillie's poetic subjects are less philosophical—her interest lies in the social aspect of everyday life. In Joanna Baillie's poetry, differential lived spaces and renewed living experience are performatively brought into being. The use of performative language dramatizes the re-creation of lived spaces and 'moments' as experienced in everyday life.[1] The characteristic of seeing social issues in everyday life in Baillie's poetry is shown in 'Lines to a Teapot'. The poem makes use of the dual identity—as a piece of art and of crockery—of the teapot to present the vicissitudes of the dissociation of art and life. 'Lines to a Teapot' is addressed to a Chinese teapot by a speaker whose imagination travels to the 'distant nation' (*l.* 3) in which the teapot originates, and the poem traces the teapot's career through its production, economic exchange, household and public use, and finally its present state in a collector's display. Apart from being a symbolic object of the Orient, the teapot also epitomizes the changes in the British society concerning consumer culture and civility. Behrendt interprets the poem as 'a witty and incisive meditation on the decline of manners and breeding in an age of empire and the commoditization of culture' (239). While it is true that the speaker meditates on life's decline which is brought by 'the commoditization of culture', the poem's concern is not so much with 'the decline of manners and breeding' as the decline of life's fecundity, which results from human alienation caused by the separation of different aspects of life. Behrendt further notes that 'Lines to a Teapot' 'belongs to an extensive genre of poems, dating back through the eighteenth century, that take[s] domestic objects as their subjects. Needless to say, such poems are characteristic productions of women poets. But Baillie takes her poem far beyond the conventional celebrations of these homey objects' (239). Baillie's poem differs from conventional poems on domestic subjects precisely because it is not confined to the domestic realm. This poem situates a homely object in a social context; hence it can be read as an examination of the relationship between lived space and social space.

Amanda Gilroy and Keith Henley note that 'Lines to a Teapot' was appraised in *Athenaeum* in 1841 as 'the daintiest, most high-bred court poetry, that the

[1] The discussion of 'moments' in this chapter is a continuation of the discussion of the issue in the previous chapter. A comparison of the significance of 'moments' in Coleridge and Baillie will be made.

Temperance cause can boast' (335). Within this critical background of the poem, it is normal for Behrendt to read it in relation to the ethos of lamentation over the loss of an imperial civilisation in Baillie's time, as he defines the poem as 'a commentary on the decline of modern British imperial culture, an increasingly scathing portrait of the crass materialism that was rapidly accelerating in the new industrial age' (241). He further elaborates that 'what is lost is not just a way of life but, more importantly, the refined taste and aesthetic discrimination that mark the cultured, civilized society' (ibid.). Behrendt's interpretation carries a reactionary understanding of the poem. He sees the 'decline of modern British imperial culture' as a result of materialism and industrialization. Baillie's preference for the past life is a clinging to a 'civilized society' which characterises the British Empire. However, imperialism and the rise of capitalism were not necessarily in an antagonistic relationship; rather, they actually fostered each other in the production of modern space, which has always been a space of accumulation. According to Maxine Berg's study, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-century Britain*, imported chinaware entered the households of the British aristocracy in the seventeenth century and was gradually popularized among the elites and the middle class in the eighteenth century. The emphasis on civilized manners and refined taste in the British imperial culture propelled the demand for luxurious goods:

> There was an upscaling of expenditure over the course of the century as elites sought out symbols of distinction at the same time as access to landed and especially aristocratic status became more difficult. Politeness, civility, and taste became social markers more significant than material wealth, and as conventions of lifestyle they demanded socially acceptable consumer expenditure on country houses, furnishings, durables and clothing, servants, and leisure. Civilized conduct, taste, aesthetics, and deportment conveyed affluence. (205)

Berg's study shows that the rise of consumer culture was generated by the demand of a wealthy middle class in Britain who would like to distinguish themselves by cultivating civilized manners and refined tastes. The middle class attempted to rival, if not equal, the aristocracy. Industrialization and capitalism in fact promoted civility, as more people consciously pursued and cultivated a life of taste and cultivation, but this kind of civility was defined differently—its emphasis was more inclined towards knowledge, system and technology. In the eighteenth century, British people 'saw

themselves embarking on a national project to create quality consumer goods' that might rival those from France (Berg 92).

Therefore, it is not a civilized society that is in decline; so what exactly does the speaker lament in the poem? Life's gracefulness has certainly declined to banality—this is not due to a loss but a change of manners and taste, which is inextricably related to the formation of abstract space. In *The Secret History of Domesticity*, Michael McKeon discusses the comprehensive division of knowledge that takes place in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, and that separates modernity from tradition' (xvii). By referencing Marx's theory on labour, McKeon points out that 'the division of knowledge—e.g., into different concrete kinds of labor—is coextensive with the abstraction of knowledge: […] On the one hand, generality, totality, abstract universality, objectification; on the other hand, particularity, individuation, concrete multiplicity, mobility' (xviii). The division of knowledge also causes the modern abstractions of the public and the private: it is one of the principles 'in operation' in the modern age, 'that of explicit separation, [which] consists in the way the traditional and tacit habit of distinguishing between the public and the private gradually becomes concentrated into an explicit motive to separate them' (McKeon 323). The purpose of division is to increase productivity. McKeon sees that 'the momentum of categorical separation' causes 'the devolution or downward mobility of absolutism, which begins […] with the separation out of state from civil society and which transports "public" authority from greater to lesser spheres' (ibid.). 'Categorical separation' causes a continuous boom of productivity because as power is no longer centralised, and it is disseminated throughout the civil society, more man-power will be released. At the same time, the issue of ownership inevitably encounters radical changes because social resources are reallocated. Social relations are also mobilized, leading to a more flexible social structure and redefinition of the public:

> If modernity involves the systematic multiplication and authorization of private entities—rights, opinions, interests, desires, ethical subjectivities, genders—it also is obliged to reconceive the nature of the realm of the public, which can, precisely by virtue of its impersonality, acknowledge and comprehend this indefinite potential of private entities. I speak now not of 'the state' […] but of a category of publicness that is as unprecedented as the system of proliferating privacies it comes into being to embrace. What is required of such a public is the dynamic flexibility of a whole that will

> accommodate an unlimited and perpetually changing number of parts. (McKeon 324)

This correlation among the division of knowledge, the changing private and public categories and the mobilization of social structure is manifested spatially when we compare the residence of the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie. In *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre suggests, not without a sense of humour, that '[t]he idea of *residing* has a poetic resonance—"Man resides as a poet", says Hölderlin—yet this cannot obscure the fact that for many centuries this idea had no meaning outside the aristocracy. It was solely in the service of "the great"—nobles and priests—that architects built religious edifices, palaces or fortresses' (314). The aristocrat's identity is inherited, so there is no need for him to assert for his social status, as Lefebvre further explains: 'The aristocrat is concerned neither with seeing nor with being seen—save on ceremonial occasions. He "is" *per se*. The essence of a palace or mansion thus lies in its interior disposition. Its luxury retains something organic, something natural, whence its charm' (ibid.). The design of the interior of the aristocratic residence, to a great extent, serves only the purpose of art. Furthermore, the implication of privacy as understood nowadays is not applicable to an aristocratic household: 'Within, the household goes about its business: the lord is amidst his dependants—wife, children, relations at various removes; and these in turn are surrounded by their servants. There is no privacy here: the word has no meaning' (ibid.). In contrast, the bourgeois living place is designed differently:

> The bourgeois apartment is no doubt a parody of the aristocratic mansion, yet beyond this imitative aspect a quite different way of occupying space is to be discerned. The formal rooms—drawing-room, dining-room, smoking-room, billiard room—are lavish in their size, decoration and furnishings. Their disposition is quite different from that of the aristocratic residence, for doors, windows and balconies open these rooms to the street. The visible and the visual are already in command. (*Production* 315)

The bourgeois apartment is designed in a way that reflects the bourgeois mentality. The functional formal rooms are to be seen so as to assert the economic power of the owner; meanwhile, 'for the bodily "functions" of eating and drinking, sleeping and making love, these are thrust out of sight. […] [T]hey are relegated to the rear of the house' (ibid.). The streets of modern cities are also designed systematically and

governed by a 'perspectivist rationality' (ibid.). The bourgeois structuring of the urban space is a concrete embodiment of abstract space.

'Lines to a teapot' illustrates the above 'spatial' change by situating the teapot in different public and domestic places. Firstly, the formation of abstract space and its effect on the culture of everyday life is evident if we juxtapose the two scenes of the auctioning of the teapot. Auctioning is an economic activity of exchange; but in early days when capitalism had not become the economic system that dominated society, economic activities were not only about exchange. It had a close affinity with life itself. Exchange was just a means to achieve various purposes of life:

> And now thou'rt seen in Britain's polish'd land,
> Held up to public view in waving hand
> Of boastful auctioneer, whilst dames of pride
> In morning farthingals, scarce two yards wide,
> With collar'd lap-dogs snarling in their arms,
> Contend in rival keenness for thy charms.
> And certes well they might, for there they found thee
> With all thy train of vassal cups around thee,
> A prize which thoughts by day, and dreams by night,
> Could dwell on for a week with fresh delight. (*ll*. 49-58)

The teapot is treasured for its 'charms', an artistic 'aura' (to use Walter Benjamin's term) which transforms the thing into a fetish. It is a symbol of happiness for human desire. The bidders' longing for the teapot is more like a desire for what it symbolizes, as it is 'a prize which thoughts by day, and dreams at night' that will provide 'a week with fresh delight'. Although Baillie's description of the participants in the auction is not entirely positive, for the auctioneer and the dames who bid for the teapot both show a sense of arrogance, they also show a keen passion in the activity of the auction itself. The activity evinces a festive atmosphere; with an emphasis on human feeling, the poetic lines embody a certain uplifting energy. The last stanza of the poem also contains an auction scene, but it is markedly different from the first one:

> Again hath auctioneer thy value praised,
> Again have rival bidders on thee gazed,
> But not the gay, the young, the fair, I trow!
> No; sober connoisseurs, with wrinkled brow
> And spectacles on nose, thy parts inspect,
> And by grave rules approve thee or reject. (*ll*. 111-116)

It is obvious in these few lines that the 'value' of the teapot has undergone a significant change. Behrendt interprets these few lines from a commercial perspective, seeing the teapot 'gazed on (but not touched) by aesthetic connoisseurs, the teapot is subjected to the rapacious gaze of a very different breed of "connoisseurs" […]. These figurative anatomists are in fact collectors, not connoisseurs, and they are guided by the market value of the teapot as a commodity rather than by the aesthetic value' (240-241). Behrendt's comment is not wrong, but does this passage not as well convey a takeover of aesthetic value by exchange value? The 'connoisseurs' are real connoisseurs, and their soberness is a manifestation of their professionalism. Art is professionalised and dissociated from everyday life. The teapot which was originally a piece of art *and* a functional object is now being judged as a piece for artistic collection whose aesthetic value has a market price. Baillie makes use of the dual identity of the teapot to enact the change that art becomes a division of knowledge that serves capitalism.

The china teapot itself is an exquisite piece of art with delicate oriental painting on it. The painting portrays the life of a Chinese 'small-eyed beauty and her Mandarin', and their living place reflects a kind of luxurious and organic charm that is comparable to the disposition of the aristocratic residence that we have seen in Lefebvre's description: 'The ample loose-leaved rose appears to grace/ The skilful culture of the wondrous place' (*ll*. 9-10). The place is sensual and paradisiac: 'The little verdant plot, where with his mate/ The golden pheasant holds his gorgeous state,/ With gaily crested pate and twisted neck,/ Turn'd jauntily his glossy wings to peck' (*ll*. 11-14). The teapot is a perfect subject for poetry, but it is also a historical object whose golden days have passed, as the speaker exclaims as he addresses the teapot: 'Thou standst complete, fair subject of my rhymes,/ A goodly vessel of the olden times!' (*ll*. 25-26). This exclamation foreshadows its decline, as well as art's decline in the modern age.

In the third stanza of 'Lines to a Teapot', the speaker imagines the production of the teapot and portrays the artistic craft as a festive activity. For the speaker, the production of the teapot is a pleasurable process; the making of the teapot is even more enjoyable that the paradise scene depicted on the teapot itself: 'far less pleasure yields this fair display/ Than that enjoy'd upon thy natal day' (*ll*.

27-28). For the speaker, the 'distant nation' that the teapot embodies is an imagined utopia. The significance of the imagined scene of the production of the teapot is not the mode of production, but the realisation of life's fecundity in the inseparable making and enjoyment of art. The crafting of the teapot attracts the curiosity of a group of children. For the youngsters the creation of the object has something magical to it:

> When round the potter's wheel their chins upraising,
> An urchin group in silent wonder gazing,
> Stood and beheld, as, touch'd with magic skill,
> The whirling clay was fashion'd to his will, —
> Saw mazy motion stopp'd, and then the toy
> Complete before their eyes, and grinn'd for joy;
> Clapping their naked sides with blythe halloo,
> And curtail'd words of praise, like *ting, tung, too*! (*ll*. 29-36)

This is a lively scene; it is energetic not only because of the depiction of the children and the 'mazy motion' of the 'whirling clay', but also because the making of art is like a kind of play that connects the artist to his community. He is like a magician playing for the children. In *Critique of Everyday Life II*, Lefebvre describes a use of play in social life:

> Play recalls forgotten depths and summons them up to the light of day. By making them stay within the everyday, it encompasses art and many other things as well. It uses appearances and illusions which—for one marvellous moment—become more real than the real. And with play another reality is born, not a separate one, but one which is 'lived' in the everyday, alongside the functional. It may seem that we are regurgitating the old apology for the *acte gratuit*, but no. We are protesting against the loss of grace and gracefulness. (203)

Although Lefebvre is speaking from a twentieth century perspective, the significance of play for everyday life is worth noticing. Play is not only relaxation and entertainment; it unites art and the depths of life with everyday life, and this unity is necessary for the 'grace and gracefulness' of life.

This sense of 'grace and gracefulness' is made more explicit in the salon scene. The teapot serves in an aristocratic household where it attains a sense of majesty and earns the appreciation of people. Young aristocrats gather together to talk about 'philosophy and wit' (*l*. 64). The teapot's magnificence is expressed most fully when it is used by the lady: 'But O! when beauty's hand thy weight sustain'd,/ The climax

of thy glory was attain'd!' (*ll*. 74-75). The teapot participates in the social gathering and becomes a symbol of graceful everyday life, which encompasses art and social life. The social activity is described in terms of play and pastime:

> Then did bright wit and cheerful fancy play
> With all the passing topics of the day.
> So delicate, so varied, and so free
> Was the heart's pastime, then inspired by thee (*ll*. 85-88)

Life's grace and gracefulness is achieved when art is united with everyday life. The teapot's artistic value goes along with its functional value. The salon scene is a parallel to the making-of scene as they illustrate how art is intimately related to life, and it also connects individuals socially. The lady is not simply a consumer of the teapot and the artist is neither a mere producer of the teapot—the making and use of the teapot are figured as play that is cheerful and inspiring. The depictions of body in both scenes are detailed and concrete:

> The brown-skinn'd artist, with his unclothed waist
> And girded loins, who, slow and patient, traced,
> Beneath his humble shed, this fair array
> Of pictured forms upon thy surface gay (*ll*. 37-40)
> […]
> Back from her elevated elbow fell
> Its three-tired ruffle, and display'd the swell
> And gentle rounding of her lily arm,
> The eyes of wistful sage or beau to charm (*ll*. 75-78)

The bodily action and the intellect are harmoniously combined. The distinction of work and play has not yet been defined, and the acts of making and using the teapot are themselves activities of art which embody life's drama—they are 'moments' in Lefebvre's sense, because they dramatize the passion of achieving life's possibility with their sense of fulfilment.

The teapot as an embodiment of lived space records the transition from historical space to abstract space. In the episode of the 'modern drawing-room', we enter the modern age of capitalism, and through the commercial use of the teapot, we are able to distinguish service and the consumption of the service:

> Although in modern drawing-room, a board
> May fragrant tea from menial hands afford,
> Which, pour'd in dull obscurity hath been,
> From pot of vulgar ware, in nook unseen,
> And pass'd in hasty rounds our eyes before,

> Thou in thy graceful state art seen no more. (*ll*. 95-100)

The teapot is no longer surrounded by other delicate tableware, and it is reduced to a mere utensil for tea service. The modern drawing-room signifies a change in the meaning of 'leisure'. Everyday life is divided by work and a break—leisure—from it. It is compartmentalized and regulated. Leisure is also subjected to the system of capitalism and manipulated by it. Commercial leisure is dependent on a consumerist culture, in which leisure is constructed as a liberation and pleasure but what is actually masked over is the provider-consumer relationship. Lefebvre writes that:

> There is no doubt that today—in capitalist, bourgeois society, which has its own way of manipulating the needs arising from a specific level of civilization—the most striking imperative as far as the needs of leisure among the masses are concerned is that it must produce a *break*. Leisure must break with the everyday (or at least appear to do so) […]. It is thus not the work of art, in so far as it has a role to play in everyday life […], that is liable to constitute an element of leisure. (*Everyday Life I* 33)

Commercial leisure tends to homogenize; people who seeks disalienation in leisure will find themselves in another kind of alienation. When Baillie's speaker laments for the teapot that 'Thou in thy graceful state art seen no more', she actually laments the loss of art in everyday life. 'Moments' of life are diminished and reduced to commercial activities. Leisure fails to fulfil its function of disalienation and restoration. The lack of 'moments' leads to 'the desolation of everyday life, emptiness and ennui' (*Everyday Life II* 348). This desolation is portrayed vividly in the poem:

> And what the changeful fleeting crowd, who sip,
> The unhonour'd beverage with contemptuous lip,
> Enjoy amidst the tangled, giddy maze,
> Their languid eye—their listless air betrays.
> What though at times we see a youthful fair
> By white clothed board her watery drug prepare,
> At further corner of a noisy room,
> Where only casual stragglers deign to come,
> Like tavern's busy bar-maid (*ll*. 105-109)

These few lines tells the numb, lethargic and confusing state of the people in the drawing-room with the images of 'giddy maze' and 'languid eye'. People are portrayed as a homogeneous mass; they are indistinguishable from each other and reduced to a mere 'contemptuous lip'. Tea drinking, and the social activity embodied

in the leisure, is no longer as festive as in the past. The customers, 'casual stragglers', have no communication with the waiter, and she just works like 'tavern's busy bar-maid'. A sense of separation is conveyed in the images of spatial compartmentalisation: 'modern drawing-room', 'further corner of a noisy room', and the ultimate symbol of separation—the shelf in the last stanza.

> And now on shelf
> Of china closet placed, a cheerless elf,
> Like moody statesman in his rural den,
> From power dismiss'd—like prosperous citizen,
> From shop or change set free (*ll*. 123-127)

The image of an idle teapot on a shelf is a symbol of suspension—the suspension of life's dialectic that unites its festivity and everyday-ness, which leads to a stagnation of life.

Joanna Baillie's poem shows a particular awareness of the absence of 'moment' in the modern age. This awareness is itself a critique of everyday life, because when everyday life is taken to be natural, one simply lives and one would not know the problems of everyday life as one is situated within it. Individuals' lived time within social time is opaque, undefined and fleeting, but through an articulation of lived time by focusing on the teapot, which embodies the social change of the modern age, Baillie is able to put everyday life into examination. The drama of the 'moment' is juxtaposed with the drama of 'the desolation of everyday life'. It is important to notice that Baillie persistently reminds us of the imaginary status of the speaker's narration of the history of the teapot. Whether the 'history' is one that the teapot experiences in actuality or not is not the issue I am concerned with here. The speaker's imagination puts together a series of social phenomena so as to express the meaning that Baillie works out from her experience and witness of the changes that took place during her time. Elden comments that 'the critique of everyday life that [Lefebvre] undertakes has a contribution to make to *the art of living*, and he believes that the art of living implies the end of alienation' (118). Although Lefebvre's philosophy sets out to investigate the social situation and the challenge of modernity to human life in the twentieth century, its applicability to interpret Baillie's poems is striking. In *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, Lefebvre expresses the same lamentation as Baillie: 'style has degenerated into culture—subdivided into everyday

culture for the masses and higher culture, a split that led to specialization and decay' (36). This comment seems to me the most important theme elucidated in 'Lines to a Teapot'.

The problem of modern leisure is also explored in the poem, 'Address to a Steamvessel'. The contradictory characteristic of modern leisure activities is manifested and reflected more explicitly in the poem. Baillie takes up the themes of travel and tourism and draws a comparison of the two as she witnesses the rise of mass tourism brought by the popularisation of the steamvessels. In 'Britain and the Making of Modern Tourism', Berghoff and Korte point out that 'tourism in our modern understanding is, in a way, a British invention' (2). During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, 'Britain's economic lead translated swiftly into the evolution of a tourist infrastructure which, for the first time in history, served a mass market' (ibid.). Moreover, a popular form of tourism nowadays, 'the package tour', also 'had its origin in Britain thanks to Thomas Cook' (Berghoff and Korte 2-3). Tourism is a significant economic industry, but as a popular leisure activity, it is also 'a social and cultural phenomenon, centred—not exclusively but essentially—around dreams of alternatives to everyday life' (Berghoff and Korte 3). Therefore, in the following discussion, I would like to see how Baillie explores the comparison of sea tourism and sea travel, and the implication of modern tourism on everyday life.

The rise of modern tourism makes travelling more available to the less privileged. In the past, when resources and knowledge were only in the hands of the upper class and social elites, travelling or tourism are only possible for a small group of people. They belong to 'the realm of Adam Smith's "decencies and desires"' (Berghoff 164). When mass tourism was introduced, people with less purchasing power were able to enjoy the pleasure of going elsewhere. Therefore in Baillie's poem, in the opening we see the steamvessel 'Freighted with passengers of every sort,/ A motley throng' (*ll*. 1-2). On the steamvessel people move around as if it is a carnival:

> Where dogs and children through the crowd are straying,
> And on his bench apart the fiddler playing,
> While matron dames to tressel'd seats repair, —
> Seems, on the glassy waves, a floating fair. (*ll*. 5-8)

A sense of festivity is easily detected, with the dogs and children wandering, fiddler playing and the dames relaxing on the seats. However, the speaker's attitude to the steamvessel is not completely positive. The image of the steamvessel's 'dark form on the sky's pale azure cast,/ Towers from this clustering group thy pillar'd vent' (*ll*. 9-10) conveys a sense of human arrogance that attempts to rival nature. The 'dense smoke' emitted by the steamvessel is compared to 'a writhing serpent' (*ll*. 11-14), a conventional symbol of satanic temptation.

The sense of arrogance is further developed in the second stanza: 'Thou holdst thy course in independent pride;/ No leave ask'st thou of either wind or tide./ To whate'er point the breeze inconstant veer,/ Still doth thy careless helmsman onward steer' (*ll*. 21-24). Perhaps the steamvessel has good reason to be arrogant, because it moves without the force of nature; it is steered by human beings, and its movement looks like as if willed by itself. It symbolizes the power of human creativity in science that can go beyond the force and limitation of nature. Steam is originally a natural and common phenomenon that can be seen in our everyday life: it is present when the dames have their tea, when infants breathe, and when housewives prepare meals for their family. The invention of steamvessel is a marvel itself because the seemingly light steam that 'silver'd by the moon's pale beam' (*l*. 39) can, thanks to the innovation of science, become 'the mighty Geyser's up-cast stream' (*l*. 40) to propel the giant steamvessel. It is because of this human marvel that more people can enjoy marvellous scenery in travelling, 'to gaze upon the sight with wondering eyes' (*l*. 44).

Travelling has the effect of disalienation with its significance of enabling one to realise the 'dreams of alternatives to everyday life'. It achieves this by restoring the alienated body and refreshing one's senses and feeling. Tourism depends on people's desire for differences. On one level, people want a break from work and routine life. On another level, tourists also seek novelty and excitement by encountering places different from those they are familiar with in everyday life. For the common people, the steamvessel is great in the sense that it can bring them to unfamiliar places that they cannot normally reach:

> Thou hast to those 'in populous city pent'
> Glimpses of wild and beautrous nature lent,
> A bright remembrance ne'er to be destroy'd,

> And for this scope to beings erst confined,
> I fain would hail thee with a grateful mind. (*ll*. 45-50)

People who have been 'in populous city pent' can have themselves released to enjoy 'glimpses of wild and beautrous nature'. However, in these few lines we still sense a feeling of disapproval from the speaker of this kind of tourism. What tourists can see are simply 'glimpses' that 'nature lent'—and these are 'a bright remembrance', which means they are of the past. Because of the rise of tourist industry, 'the image of place has become a valuable commodity' (Beckerson 133). What tourism provides could be a false sense of getting in contact with nature. Seeing nature on the steamvessel is seeing images which are just 'remembrance' of a nature that has been lost in the modern age. In the 'Foreword' to the first volume of *Critique of Everyday Life*, Lefebvre speaks of the prevailing eroticism of images as an example of false transgression of the everyday. He writes: 'With "modern" eroticism we step outside of the everyday, without actually leaving it: it shocks, it seems brutal, and yet this effect is superficial, pure appearance, leading us back towards the secret of the everyday—dissatisfaction' (*Everyday Life I* 35). Could the same not be said for commercial tourism? Tourism provides a sense of adventure to unfamiliar places without leaving the sense of security and comfort of the familiar. Tourism is a prime example of the consumption of space. Space is produced for maximising its exchange value; touristic places are made ready to be consumed. This is somehow conveyed in the lines on the tourists on the steamvessel:

> Now, seated at their ease, may glide along,
> Loch Lomond's fair and fairy Isles among;
> Where bushy promontories fondly peep
> At their own beauty in the nether deep,
> O'er drooping birch and rowan red that lave
> Their fragrant branches in the glassy wave (*ll*. 53-58)

In the same stanza, Baillie describes scenes of Scottish landscape in detail. Moving from Loch Lomond, to the Clyde, 'Along the lesser Cumbray's rocky shore', to the Isle of Arran. The lines paint a panoramic view of the landscape and seaside. In *Written on the Water: British Romanticism and the Culture of Maritime Empire*, Samuel Baker argues that Romantic writers 'used marine imagery and nautical narratives to represent as a maritime situation not only their society's geopolitical situation, but also its historical and cultural situation' (7). Along with the rise of

commercial modernity and British imperialism, Romantic writers' construction of seascape contributes to the formation of the culture of their time:

> Much as the maritime world, in the Romantic period, constituted the ultimate sphere of circulation in which British commercial empire could span the whole world and protect the nation's integrity, so a maritime imaginary provided Romantic writers with an ultimate sphere of imaginative *mediation*, in which they could picture the world's diverse styles of life and modes of representation for an emergent bourgeois reading public. (Baker 11)

Baker takes the example of one of Coleridge's notebook entries, in which he 'entertains a more hopeful thought, one that celebrates the emergence of technologies of the maritime world-picture: "It is a glorious Conception, in my mind, that scarce a wave rolls upward in obedience to the Moon, or to the Sun & Moon, that is not calculated upon by British Intellect & made available by British Enterprize. Is not Britain itself a sort of Moon to the Ocean?"' (93). Here Coleridge evinces an alliance with the British project of sea navigation, which actually propels the production of abstract space (in Lefebvre's words), as he sees the significance of the project for national identity. Baker notes that Coleridge 'evokes the navigational enterprise that was, in the age, the ultimate project of rationalizing modernity: ultimate because it was so profoundly abstract, and because it was so essentially total' (94). He further elucidates:

> When Coleridge wonders 'is not Britain itself a sort of moon to the ocean?' he betrays how his modern world-picture is also a Romantic national fantasy. Yet to propose in this context that Britain itself is a 'moon to the ocean' can also be to suggest that to *represent* the ocean as assiduously as British intellect does is indeed to *move* it in some substantive way, as the moon, of course, moves the tides. (Baker's emphasis; 95)

As Lefebvre points out, 'Tourism and leisure become major areas of investment and profitability, adding their weight to the construction sector, to property speculation, to generalized urbanization' (*Production* 353). The promotion of sea tourism can be considered a part of the British navigational enterprise. In the steamvessel travel described in the poem, one of its effects is to domesticize the Scottish landscape on an ideological level. In contrast to Coleridge, Baillie shows a certain scepticism towards the social change that is revealed by the tourist phenomenon. Mass tourism

actually provides its consumers ready-made images veiled with false freshness. This sceptical view is implied in the following lines:

> Eyes which admired that work of sordid skill,
> The storied structure of a cotton mill,
> May wondering now behold the unnumber'd host
> Of marshall'd pillars on fair Ireland's coast,
> Phalanx on phalanx ranged with sidelong bend,
> Or broken ranks that to the main descend,
> Like Pharaoh's army on the Red Sea shore,
> Which deep and deeper sank, to rise no more. (*ll*. 83-90)

The industry of mass production is represented by 'the storied structure of a cotton mill' and is referred as 'that work of sordid skill'. The 'marshll'd pillars on fair Ireland's coast' is described in military metaphors: 'phalanx on phalanx ranged with sidelong bend' implies a regulated violence. The mentioning of a 'cotton mill' is not an arbitrary choice. In his 'British Tourism between Industrialization and Globalization', John K. Walton writes about the popularisation of the seaside holiday:

> The English seaside was able to surf the rising tide of industrialization and respond to the preferences of each social stratum and bundle of cultural preferences in turn, as they chose to adopt their versions of the seaside holiday. In this respect the seaside was like the cotton industry: a versatile product which was eventually able to cater for all but the poorest through the sheer variety and adaptability of its product. (Walton 118)

The cotton industry is a representative of mass production and its 'versatile product'. Consciously or not, Baillie foresees, or perhaps witnesses, the boom of the tourism industry and its changes to the nature of space.

However, we should not jump to the conclusion that Baillie is against the modern development, for she recognizes the significance of the scientific innovation for human life: 'Offspring of Watt that philosophic sage,/ Who in the heraldry of science ranks/ With those to whom men owe high meed of thanks' (*ll*. 94-96). The invention of the steamvessel has indeed brought pleasure to people, as well as the chance to appreciate the seascape which was difficult to reach in the past. Nevertheless, what Baillie aspires for is something beyond tourism—the brave spirit of travelling in exploring unknown lands:

> With ample store of shrouding, sails, and mast,
> To brave with manly skill the winter blast
> Of every clime, — in vessels rigg'd like these
> Did great Columbus cross the western seas,

> And to the stinted thoughts of man reveal'd
> What yet the course of ages had conceal'd:
> In such as these, on high adventure bent,
> Round the vast world Magellan's comrades went.
> To such as these are hardy seamen found
> As with the ties of kindred feeling bound,
> Boasting, while cans of cheering grog they sip,
> The varied fortunes of 'our gallant ship'
> The offspring these of bold sagacious man,
> Ere yet the reign of letter'd lore began. (*ll*. 107-120)

Travelling described here is very different from that of the steamvessel. While the latter contains details of Scottish landscape, the voyages of Columbus and Magellan seem rather vague. However, the focus of this passage is not on where Columbus and Magellan travelled to, but the quality of spirit embodied in their sea navigation. The two kinds of travel reveal a contrast between tamed journeys and life fulfilling exploration, as the navigators show the human courage to confront the unknown world. Baillie's language is conspicuous in expressing favour to the travel of the navigators. The experience ('The varied fortunes') of the 'gallant ship' is referred to as 'the offspring these of bold sagacious man'—the word 'sage' appears again here in its adjective form, hence the invention of Watt and the navigators' travels are paralleled. Scientific exploration embodies a similar spirit to sea navigation.

After the reflection on the history of sea travel, the speaker is convinced that the steamvessel, however great its invention was, is reduced to a 'labourer' in this capitalist society: 'In very truth, compared to these, thou art/ A daily labourer, a mechanic swart,/ In working weeds array'd of homely gray' (*ll*. 121-23). It is just like a labourer with its mechanical work. The recognition of the steamvessel's weariness leads to a paradoxical feeling in the speaker:

> Beholding thee, the great of other days
> And modern man with all their alter'd ways,
> Across my mind with hasty transit gleam,
> Like fleeting shadows of a feverish dream:
> Fitful I gaze, with adverse humours teased,
> Half sad, half proud, half angry, and half pleased. (*ll*. 127-132)

The speaker is sceptical toward the development of modern life because it has altered ways of life in the sense that old values are diminishing. The modern pursuit of fast development is transient 'like fleeting shadows of a feverish dream'. Nevertheless,

this is not to say it is impossible to transgress the boundary of the everyday and achieve disalienation in modern life. The key to realise the richness of exploration in modern life is 'appropriation'. In the case of tourism, we can appropriate what tourism offers for our own use. We may discern the qualities that contribute to the sense of fulfilment in the voyages of Columbus and Magellan from Baillie's words: 'hardy seamen', 'kindred feeling', 'cheering grog' and 'gallant ship'—all these point to an aspiration towards holistic experience, and ultimately the possibility of encountering difference. In the present day, there are various modes of travelling one can adopt, as Berghoff points out: 'cultural pessimism about tourism as a levelling force producing homogenous, inactive masses is ill-founded. Tourism has never been Fordist in the sense of delivering identical products to an "undifferentiated clientele"' (176). It is upon one's effort and creativity to explore the possibilities of travelling.

'A Winter's Day' is set in a very different everyday context compared to the two poems discussed. With its description of the manual work of an ordinary farmer, the poem is a georgic that portrays an everyday life of a typical peasant society. Tim Burke points out that 'georgic poems tended to endorse the exploitation of [natural] resources. The soil, and the workers of it, are often exhorted to ever increased productivity and thus such poems served to communicate and celebrate the advances of mercantile and imperial capitalism' (143). However, Baillie's 'A Winter's Day' does not follow this tendency, instead, it figures a relatively organic life of the working class that retains certain essential qualities of life that are lost in capitalist society, which are usually conveyed in pastoral. Georgic is a flexible genre for Baillie to work on, as David Fairer points out: 'Pastoral could be inverted, [and] played with, but in order for all this to work it had to remain a stereotype. Georgic, on the other hand, was at home with notions of growth, development, variety, digression and mixture, and had a natural tendency to absorb the old into the new and find fresh direction' (80). The poem hints at the disturbing history of encroaching modernity, but this is mediated and cushioned by the retained sense of organic community in the village. In *Georgic Modernity*, Kevis Goodman proposes that: 'historical presentness is often "turned up" by georgic as unpleasurable feeling: as sensory discomfort, as disturbance in affect and related phenomena that we variously term perceptive, sensorial, or affective' (6). In 'The Winter's Day', 'unpleasurable

feeling' is resolved by sympathy and a restoration of communion in everyday life. The poem is a critique of modernity precisely in this resolution of psychological anxiety in its enactment of everyday life and mutual communication in the peasant society. It prompts us to re-discover the vital qualities that are still valued in the old lifestyle. In volume two of *The Critique of Everyday Life*, Lefebvre devotes a chapter to a discussion of 'the theory of accumulative and non-accumulative process', in which he develops from Marx a criticism of a simplistic evolutionism when viewing history. He points out that even in the prevailing dominance of capitalism, 'the law of uneven development points to the possibility of an almost limitless range of human (social) situations at the very heart of economic and technological development' (*Everyday Life II* 316). In everyday life there exists differential lived experience that could not be completely eliminated by modern development. They are alternative possibilities that are not inferior to the capitalist model. In other words, the supposed 'backwardness' of non-accumulative societies is constructed by the discourse of accumulative progress, but in fact the 'style' of living in these societies preserves some vital qualities that are destroyed in accumulative society. Lefebvre suggests that 'in retrospect', those other spaces 'offer us a diptych: on one panel, a realm of brutality and despotism, on the other, extraordinary creations in art, lifestyle, wisdom, culture and even philosophy' (*Everyday Life II* 320). Although Lefebvre in fact refers to a global uneven development of the twentieth century, it is not difficult to realise that uneven development has taken place ever since modernization began. Furthermore, it happens in a global scale as well as a national scale. The peasant society in 'The Winter's Day' represents those remote spaces still not yet touched by modernization. Therefore, it is an appropriate place to explore the common, yet 'extraordinary creations' of human beings.

The society in the poem is an archaic peasant society. Lefebvre explains that in such a society 'there is the body […]; the dwelling with its "rooms"; and the vicinity or community (hamlet or village) along with its dependent lands (fields under cultivation or fallow, pasture, wood and forest, game preserves, etc.). Beyond these spheres lies the strange, the foreign, the hostile' (*Production* 294). The farmer's house and farm in the poem is a shelter for his family and the animals that he keeps. His farm and its vicinity are depicted in terms of warmth and liveliness, outside the

sheltering place and rustic cot is the ‘scowling winter’.

The poem portrays a relationship between the hind’s labour and the sense of unity of the rural space:

> With rueful face he blows the smother’d fire,
> And lights his candle at the reddening coal;
> First sees that all be right among his cattle,
> Then hies him to the barn with heavy tread,
> Printing his footsteps on the new-fall’n snow,
> From out the heap’d-up mow he draws his sheaves,
> Dislodging the poor red-breast from his shelter
> Where all the live-long night he slept secure;
> […]
> Then whirling o’er his head, the heavy flail
> Descend with force upon the jumping sheaves,
> While every rugged wall and neighbouring cot
> The noise re-echoes of his sturdy strokes. (*ll*. 26-38)

The labouring hind’s praxis establishes connections between the different spaces of production. The labour is repetitive and yet rhythmic. Within the house the wife is busy with preparation of breakfast. Work and everyday life are inseparable in the routines of the farmer couple. The gradual increase of noisiness as the village becomes awake to the morning is not at all annoying:

> The varied rousing sounds of industry
> Are heard through all the village.
> The humming wheel, the thrifty housewife’s tongue,
> Who scolds to keep her maidens to their work,
> The wool-card’s grating, most unmusical!
> Issue from every house.
> But hark! the sportsman from the neighbouring hedge
> His thunder sends! Loud bark the village curs;
> Up from her cards or wheel the maiden starts
> And hastens to the door; the housewife chides,
> Yet runs herself to look, in spite of thrift,
> And all the little town is in a stir. (*ll*. 122-133)

This whole stanza presents a melodramatic scene. Though ‘unmusical’, the ‘sounds of industry’ attain a certain concordance. The boisterous trivial conflicts do not impair the intimacy and proximity of the neighbourhood. Precisely because of the connectedness of people, a small uproar will cause ‘a stir’ in the ‘little town’.

Despite the ordinary atmosphere surrounding the village, there is already a faintly felt tension present between the village and the proceeding of modernization

of the British Empire. The remoteness of the village is at odds with the vigorous social changes at the time. The encroaching of modernity is being felt, and mediated by the old soldier. In her *War at a Distance*, Mary Favret suggest that 'the epistemology of modern wartime is an epistemology of mediation' (12). She is particularly interested in the aspect of affect when distant war is being mediated in Romantic writers and poets, as she writes:

> [D]eprived even of the immediacy of empirical evidence, the inhabitants of modern wartime often rely on another and less categorizable 'sense' of what war is and does; affect is this alternate sense or sentience. Usually associated with the body and autonomous sensation, it names an awareness, not distinctly psychological or physiological but sharing aspects of each, that remains at some remove, at a distance, from rational comprehension. (16)

Later in her study, Favret sees a figurative relation between war and winter, and poets tend to see 'the War, like the snow of winter, saps real persons of feeling', and she notes that in this poem Baillie 'works extensively to counter this dynamic' (115). The villagers' interaction and sympathy with the old soldier on an emotional level, 'save' the people from the ravage of war/winter. The old soldier appears in the village in the evening, when it is time for animal and human beings alike to return to their dwellings. He is invited by the farmer's wife into their house, and participates in a conversation by the fire with the family and 'some idle neighbours'. The old soldier as an outsider, a wanderer, and perhaps homeless, signifies the instability of life brought by modernity. We may have a closer look in the few lines where the villagers listen to the old soldier's story of the wars he has fought for his country:

> They gaze upon him,
> And almost weep to see the man so poor,
> So bent and feeble, helpless and forlorn,
> Who has undaunted stood the battle's brunt
> While roaring cannons shook the quaking earth,
> And bullets hiss'd round his defenceless head. (*ll*. 270-275)

Amanda Gilroy and Keith Hanley note that the war that the old soldier refers to may be 'the American Revolution, though his military service could extend back through the eighteenth century and include the Seven Year War with France' (332). These wars that Britain engaged in during the eighteenth century had a complex relationship to the concerns of economic benefits and colonialism. In Lefebvre's

account of the formation of social space, war plays an important role in the transformation of modern space. He writes,

> between the twelfth and the nineteenth centuries wars would revolve around accumulation. […] The space of capitalist accumulation thus gradually came to life, and began to be fitted out. […] Industry would pitch its tent in a space in which the communitarian traditions of the countryside had been swept away and urban institutions brought to ruin by wars. This was the space, piled high with the rich spoils of years of rapine and pillage, which was to become the industrial space of the modern state. […] To summarize: before the advent of capitalism, the part played by violence was extra-economic; under the dominion of capitalism and of the world market, it assumed an economic role in the accumulation process; and in consequence the economic sphere became dominant. (*Production* 275-276)

In an earlier chapter on 'Spatial Architectonics', Lefebvre speaks of how a change of energy leads to a change of space: 'The release of energy always gives rise to an effect, to damage, to a change in reality. It modifies space or generates a new space' (177). On a material and physical level, human activities are conversions of energy. A change of energy can be both destructive and constructive: 'the explosive waste of energy is indistinguishable from its productive use: beginning on the plane of animal life, play, struggle, war and sex are coextensive. Production, destruction and reproduction overlap and intersect' (177). War is an exploitation of resources, but in the course of modernity, war is also a major cause of the accumulation of knowledge (technology) and wealth. War is usually considered exceptional and thus distant from everyday life, yet its influence actually operates to change space and hence promotes the change of production and social life. The image of the 'quaking earth' strongly contrasts with the image of the 'brightening earth' which appears earlier in the poem (*l.* 83). It conveys not only the violence of the social change, but also signifies the changes in the nature of human life and existence.

Meanwhile, there is another 'war' scene in the poem, yet it is not exactly a war in the common sense of the word because it features a snowball fight of the village children. Language and images of war are adapted in the poetic depiction, as it goes:

> In scatter'd groups the little idle boys,
> With purple fingers moulding in the snow
> Their icy ammunition, pant for war;
> And drawing up in opposite array,
> Send forth a mighty shower of well-aim'd balls.

> Each tiny hero tries his growing strength,
> And burns to beat the foe-men off the field. (*ll*. 161-167)

The nature of the snowball fight of the children is different from that of a real war not because it is just a harmless children's game, rather, the children symbolize the possibility of an appropriation of space by re-creating it. The snowball fight is referred to in the poem as a 'healthful sport'. It is a leisure activity, and hence an activity of recreation. The realm of leisure has a crucial role to play in Lefebvre's critique of everyday life; leisure activities set free the body and 'disalienate from the effects of fragmented labour' (*Everyday Life II* 43). Furthermore, in Lefebvre's critique of modern space for becoming increasingly abstract and homogenous, he asserts that the body is where we become aware of 'the conflicts at work […], conflicts which foster the explosion of abstract space and the production of a space that is *other*' (Lefebvre's emphasis; *Production* 391). However, it may be contested that the rural space in 'A Winter's Day' is far from the 'abstract space' that Lefebvre is concerned with. The adult's everyday life in the village is different from that of an industrial worker. As Lefebvre mentions in the 'Foreword' to volume one of his *Critique of Everyday Life*, there is a great difference between a rural life and a modern life:

> Productive labour was merged with everyday life: consider the lives of peasants and craftsmen, for example. What distinguishes peasant life so profoundly from the life of industrial workers, even today, is precisely this inherence of productive activity in their life in its entirety. The workplace is all around the house; work is not separate from the everyday life of the family. (30-31)

Yet, we have already noticed the process of modernity in the British society albeit it is taking place outside the archaic village. From a symbolic perspective the children embody a kind of temporal otherness, in that they represent a prospect of future human everyday life. At the present the children's everyday life is different from the adults': their everyday life is leisure itself. Nevertheless, this is what makes the children's activity of recreation significant. To revolt against abstract space, Lefebvre asserts the importance of the possibilities of appropriating space; he writes, 'thanks to the potential energies of a variety of groups capable of diverting homogenized space to their own purposes, a theatricalized or dramatized space is liable to arise' (391). The children's play embodies 'the potential energies' to make a difference to

abstract space.

Moreover, in a peasant life we can still differentiate work and leisure and analyse them separately. The adults are engaged in a different leisure activity that re-creates their lived spaces. This kind of re-creation is a result of the use of language as a communicative act. In the scene of story-telling among the villagers, different consciousnesses join together and share a communicative space. The family and the old soldier 'form a cheerful ring'; and the coming of some neighbours 'draw round their chairs and widen out the circle'. The circular image attains a metaphorical meaning of social communication. However, within this communal space, each participant still maintains one's own individuality, as the poem goes:

> And everyone, in his own native way,
> Does what he can to cheer the social group.
> Each tells some little story of himself,
> That constant subject upon which mankind,
> Whether in court or country, love to dwell. (*ll*. 244-248)

Spaces for living are the subject of conversation. Everyone yearns for an ideal living place. It is worth noticing here how one's 'lived space' is transformed by communication. In the chapter on 'Other Selves and the Human World', Merleau-Ponty explains the interaction of self and other people through language. 'In the experience of a dialogue', he writes, 'we are collaborators for each other in consummate reciprocity. Our perspectives merge into each other, and we co-exist through a common world. In the present dialogue, I am free from myself, for the other person's thoughts are certainly his; they are not of my making, though I do grasp them the moment they come into being' (413). Yet this is not the end of the story. Language renews one's experience and thus differentiates the collaborators' lived spaces after the conversation. As the poem continues:

> Thus passes quickly on the evening hour,
> Till sober folks must needs retire to rest;
> Then all break up, and, by their several paths,
> Hie homeward, with the evening pastime cheer'd
> Far more, belike, than those who issue forth
> From city theatre's gay scenic show,
> Or crowded ball-room's splendid moving maze.
> But where the song and story, joke and gibe,
> So lately circled, what a solemn change
> In little time takes place! (*ll*. 277-286)

These lines demonstrate how one's life is, as Merleau-Ponty asserts, an 'open life' (412). Life is open to otherness because it is changed by inter-subjective interactions. The awareness of the change comes when we reflect upon the interactions, as Merleau-Ponty explains, 'it is only retrospectively, when I have withdrawn from the dialogue and am recalling it that I am able to reintegrate it into my life and make of it an episode in my private history' (413). Communicative acts differentiate our lived spaces, and this is symbolized by the 'breaking up' of the group at the end of the conversation. Each person takes their own path back home, but the 'solemn change' has already taken place in their 'private history'. Although the realization of the renewal of experience happens 'retrospectively', the poem actually suggests that the speech act *does* its work at the moment it is articulated, and that is what makes language remarkable. The speaker expresses a greater appreciation of the story-telling than watching a show in a 'city theatre' or attending a dance party in a 'ball-room'. While sensuous pleasure is attained in the modern entertainments, the pleasure is transient and confusing like a 'splendid moving maze', which does not enter the life of the participants. It even alienates the bodily perception of the subject. I will further elaborate this point in my discussion on 'A November Night's Traveller'.

Moreover, it is interesting to notice that the communicative act is not restricted to the poem itself. The poem should also be considered as the effort of Baillie to communicate with the readers. Amanda Gilroy comments that 'contrary to the male romantic myth of solitary original genius, "Baillie sees herself", as Judith W. Page points out, "as a collaborator"' (xxxii). There is an explicit voice of narration in 'A Winter's Day'. The speaker is someone who keeps a distance from the rural context but in another sense stays within it so as to direct our perception of the time-geography of the village. The voice occasionally gives directives like the first two lines of the third stanza, 'But let us leave the warm and cheerful house/ To view the bleak and dreary scene without' (*ll.* 66-67). The poetic consciousness represented by the speaker and its attempt to communicate are analogous to the episode of story-telling among the villagers. The experience of reading the poem is meant to be a collaborative communication that re-creates the readers' lived space. This aspect of poetry actually adds a social dimension to the seemingly solitary poem, 'A

November Night's Traveller'.

'A November Night's Traveller' is more obviously set in a modern and bourgeois social background. It tells the experience of a traveller who begins his journey in a chaise at night. Things perceived at night generate a very different experience, especially when they are viewed in motion. Under such circumstance, an effect of estrangement is created for perceiving everyday life.

In the chapter on 'Sense Experience' in *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty speaks of the perception of colours. By investigating cases of sensory excitation of colours in psychology, Merlaeu-Ponty believes that the meaning of a colour is simultaneously essential and perceived. He argues that 'we must […] stop wondering how and why red signifies effort or violence, green restfulness and peace; […] The subject of sensation is neither a thinker who takes note of a quality, nor an inert setting which is affected or changed by it, it is a power which is born into and simultaneously with, a certain existential environment, or is synchronized with it' (245). The subject's 'power' in synchronizing his sensation and the environment in the poem even takes on a cultural aspect of perception, as the poem describes:

> But yet more pleased, thro' murky air
> He spies the distant bonfire's glare;
> And, nearer to the spot advancing,
> Black imps and goblins round it dancing;
> And nearer still, distinctly traces
> The featured disks of happy faces,
> Grinning and roaring in their glory,
> Like Bacchants wild of ancient story,
> And making murgeons to the flame,
> As *it* were playmate of their game. (*ll*. 73-82)

Cultural images and symbols intervene in perception. The seeing of the 'bonfire's glare' as a flame around which 'black imps and goblins' are dancing is what the traveller perceived. However, this perception is influenced by imagination. The subject is able to imagine in this way because culture has entered his perceptive nature. While night has an illusory effect on the perceiving subject, the subject synchronizes his perception of the environment with his imaginative power. Imagination is culturally constructed; this particular mode of imagination is available to the subject because he is born into this culture. Merleau-Ponty explains how culture becomes essential to one's consciousness, as he suggests, 'just as nature finds

its way to the core of my personal life and becomes inextricably linked with it, so behavior patterns settled into that nature, being deposited in the form of a cultural world' (405).

Movement and perception enable the traveller to see everyday spaces anew. When the everyday becomes extraordinary, the traveller can assume a distance in understanding his lived spaces. Although the poem takes up an imaginary perspective, it does not efface the material reality it portrays:

> Thro' village, lane, or hamlet going,
> The light from cottage window showing
> Its inmates at their evening fare,
> By rousing fire, and earthenware—
> And pewter trenchers on the shelf, —
> Harmless displays of worldly pelf! (*ll*. 89-95)

Capitalism and economy are still lurking in the background, but they are subordinated to the perception of the traveller. The 'worldly pelf/ Is transient vision to the eye/ Of hasty traveller passing by'—and this is what pleases the traveller. Travelling is also a kind of leisure which 'produces a space that is *other*' – other to the dominant concern of the accumulation of wealth. The space of traveling is also a theatricalized space which attains an artistic quality:

> Night, loneliness, and motion are
> Agents of power to distance care;
> To distance, not discard; for then,
> Withdrawn from busy haunts of men,
> Necessity to act suspended,
> The present, past, and future blended,
> Like figures of a mazy dance,
> Weave round the soul a dreamy trance,
> Till jolting stone, or turnpike gate,
> Arouse him from the soothing state. (*ll*. 171-180)

These lines peculiarly accord with Baudelaire's famous definition of modernity in 'The Painter of Modern Life': 'Modernity is the transient, the fleeting, the contingent; it is one half of art, the other being the eternal and the immovable.' This stanza encompasses most of the arguments that I am formulating so far. 'Night, loneliness and motion' as the 'agent of power' expresses the synchronization of perception and environment. Everyday life is temporarily suspended from its mundane state and a space is created between man and his ordinary life. The distance creates a pleasure

which is analogous to the pleasure that we usually attribute to art.

The theatricalized space created through bodily movement and perception is to be distinguished from the popular entertainment provided on the commercial 'modern stage':

> Full well, I think, could modern stage
> Such acting for the nonce engage,
> A crowded audience every night
> Would press to see the jovial sight;
> And this, from cost and squeezing free,
> November's nightly travellers see. (*ll*. 83-88)

Again, the renewal of experience is compared to the experience of going to a theatre. 'Modern stage' here is understood as the demand for sensual leisure. Under the mask of entertainment is economic exchange and consumerism. The pleasure it provides is actually alienating and homogenizing. The audience is described as 'a crowded audience', an unrecognizable mass, which enjoys a seemingly 'jovial sight', but the body suffers from the confinement and limitation of space. The visual sense is alienated from the body. The experience of the traveller, on the contrary, restores an intimate relationship of bodily movement and perception with the inventiveness of everyday life.

Earlier on I discussed the idea of 'collaborator' when we looked at 'A Winter's Day'. Although 'A November Night's Traveller' does not take up an explicitly social topic, it also aims at inter-subjective communication since it has a distinct poetic consciousness. The speaker's consciousness is readily perceptible throughout the poem, to the extent that the poem even acquires a meta-fictional dimension when the speaker refers to the traveller as 'my traveller'. As we read the poem and see what the traveller sees, the renewed experience of the traveller is communicated to us as readers. The space of the poem is also a living space, in which new meanings germinate when the poetic consciousness encounters the consciousness of the reader. In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty accounts for the experience of art and literature from the perspective of the body and perception, as he explains:

> The procession of expression, when it is successful, does not merely leave for the reader and the writer himself a kind of reminder, it brings the meaning into existence as a thing at the very heart of the text, it brings it to life in an organism of words, establishing it in the writer or the reader as a new sense

> organ, opening a new field or a new dimension to our experience. (Merleau-Ponty 212)

Poetry reading is also a leisure activity that produces 'a space that is *other*' (to use Lefebvre's words), as it 'opens a new field or a new dimension to our experience' (as Merleau-Ponty says). Therefore, poetic language exemplified in the two poems that I've just discussed actually works performatively in two senses: on one level it is a communicative act of re-creating our living experience; on another level it brings the performance of differential lived spaces into being.

I would like to conclude this chapter by returning to the idea of 'the lived' and 'the living'. In volume II of his *Critique of Everyday Life*, Lefebvre discusses the ideas of 'Lived and Living' by using metaphors that are explicitly spatial:

> The 'living' has no precise frontiers either on the dark side (nature and spontaneity), or on its social horizon. Always vaster, always virtual, it summons the 'lived' and provokes it. At the centre of this unstable, volcanic and tempestuous landscape, the 'lived' is like a nomad's tent. It is always what has been accomplished, or what 'is' in the process of being accomplished, and thus superseded, because it is always disappointing and in decline even while it is being realized. (217)

It is interesting to notice that both poems end with the characters going to rest. 'The lived', once experienced, is superseded; it comes to an end while 'the living' goes on. Moreover, the space of poetic language is also a living space that, to quote Lefebvre again, 'has no precise frontiers either on the dark side (nature and spontaneity), or on its social horizon'. Confronting the advent of modernity, Baillie's poetic language brings the opacity of everyday life and its changes into light not by making everyday life transparent, but by foregrounding its particularities and possibilities.

CONCLUSION

In Chapter One of this project, I discussed the complexity and limitations of a few studies of Romantic ideology. When reading the relationship of Romanticism and modernity, it is inadequate to restrict the thoughts and writings of the Romantics to textuality, because language is not merely representations of ideology. As I have continuously tried to show throughout this project, language is performative on different levels of human interaction with the world. Moreover, the Romantics had their personal lived space and lived time; and they were also interactive with history's space and time. Historically situated at the advent of industrialisation, capitalism, and urbanization, Romantic intellectuals, including both the poets and philosophers, were well aware of the challenge of modernity to human subjectivity. Romanticism was not an escape and could not escape from the social. The Romantics set out to respond to the increasingly dominating modern age and explore possibilities of life in the face of modernity in their poetry. In *The Persistence of Romanticism*, Richard Eldridge proposes a few provocative questions as he posts doubts on the critique of Romanticism by New Historicists:

> Yet how are we to react to the facts of persistent social/material conflict and to Romantic envisionings of human possibility in the face of them? How do we react? Can we, and do we, just stand apart, critically, in clear consciousness that Romantic imagination and its material situation are simply, in McGann's phrase, 'from our point of view—different'? Is it even so clear that we have quite fully grasped the workings of Romantic imagination, when we have focused our attentions on its most literalized envisionings? (10)

To answer these questions, Eldridge suggests we consider 'the resistance to stable envisioning' in Romanticism, and the 'persistence' of the Romantics in envisioning 'human possibilities of the achievement of value' which 'remains with us as a form of scrutiny of our human possibilities' (ibid.). The 'persistence' of Romanticism is precisely 'because of its own resistances to authoritative closure' (ibid.). What Eldridge suggests in his argument that Romanticism transcends its own historical time is its assertion and exploration of openness, which is necessarily a non-teleological view of the human condition. Therefore, the position and perspective of the New Historicists, forceful as they are, need to be questioned. Eldridge's argument can be supported and further enhanced via an innovative understanding of space.

J. Hillis Miller is one of the foremost and most insistent literary critics who extensively puts performative language theory into critical practice. He is probably the first critic who explicitly and substantially explores the potential of a study of topography in literature from the perspective of performativity as speech acts. In the introduction to his collection of essays, *Topographies*, which explores the complexity of performativity and place, Miller refers to Marcel Proust as 'one of the great topographical poets, taking poet in its widest sense of "maker of words"' (1). Romantic poets are also great topographical poets, or, to put the claim in a more inclusive way, they are great spatial poets. However, the spatiality of Romantic poetry is not confined to the employment of space for actions to take place or the expression of a subjective emotion towards a particular place. We easily tend to simplify space because it misleads us with its appearance: neutral, empty, and immobile. Miller discerningly points out the inadequacy of our usual understanding of the function of space and place in literature and philosophy. It seems obvious and normal to think that:

> [l]andscape or cityscape gives verisimilitude to novels and poems. Topographical settings connect literary works to a specific historical and geographical time. This establishes a cultural and historical setting within which the actions can take place. In philosophy and criticism, topographical terms […] are subordinated to logical and rational thinking. (Miller, *Topographies* 6-7)

However, for most of the time, space and place serve more than 'mere setting or metaphorical adornment' (Miller, *Topographies* 7). Poets make things with words—they make space with words. Therefore, in *Topographies*, Miller pays substantial attention to a peculiar speech act—naming of places—in literature. The peculiarity of the naming of places is that this speech act refers and at the same time creates. In his study, Miller explores how a text appears to refer to 'a terrain that always seems to have been there already,' turns out to be a speech act which 'bring[s] the terrain into existence' (*Topographies* 5). Miller sees the creation of places through naming a rhetorical effect, but for Romantic poets, the making of space with words is a conscious act. We may recall Wordsworth's series of *Poems on the Naming of Places*, for which Jonathan Bate writes about Wordsworth's 'recognition of the close relationship between poetry and space' and 'his way of spiritualizing his places' in the act of naming (197). The naming of places in order to locate a visionary imagination and

effect a renewed experience in the reader's consciousness is exemplary in Romantic poetry.

It was certainly no coincidence that the philosophy of both Lefebvre and Merleau-Ponty are tinted with Romanticism. Problems postulated by Lefebvre and Merleau-Ponty are problems of modernity which concern both social and subjective aspects of human existence. Lefebvre is attracted to the Romantic revolutionary spirit, not for certain naïve ideals, but for an insistence on re-creating reality and pursuing utopian possibilities:

> Romanticism expresses the disagreement, the distortion, the internal contradiction of the individual, the contradiction between the individual and the social. It implies disharmony between ideas and practice, conscience and life, superstructures and the base. It encompasses revolt, at least virtually. For us as Frenchmen, Romanticism retains an antibourgeois allure. (Quoted in Löwy and Sayre; 222)

This spirit of 'revolt' is present in many Romantics, even in late Wordsworth: as Erskine-Hill points out, he still 'continues responsibly and feelingly political in subtle, human, and challenging ways long after his Jacobin period comes to an end' (7). Erskine-Hill argues that: 'while Wordsworth recanted his political and historical naivety, his complicity, even, in historical evil, he did not mean to repudiate all the principles behind his early revolutionary hopes' (203). In *Romantic Geography*, Michael Wiley attempts to show that 'much of Wordsworth's work reveals the spatial boundaries of the ideological and "imaginary order" instituted within the British landscape and imagines an alternative to it' (7). Wiley's argument borrows from Lefebvre's theory of space to elucidate how 'imaginative configurations of space' in literature 'also can affect reality by demonstrating "real possibilities" for alternative modes of social and political life' (3). The interaction between poetry and society is affirmed by contemporary social aesthetics, as Austin Harrington explains in *Art and Social Theory*:

> Art and culture feed back into the constitution of society in a diversity of ways. This should not be seen as occurring only by social reproduction of an all-determining economic 'base' through cultural 'superstructures'. It occurs through the mediation of symbolic systems that convert creativity in cultural life into creativity in social action. (61)

The functioning of the historical social system is insufficient to solve the problems of human existence. There is a need to envision a better society, but poetry is not entitled

to reform society in any practical sense. What the poet can do is to articulate human afflictions that arise from contradictions experienced in life and to propose the possibility of a state of happiness and freedom. We may recall Abrams' famous argument in *Natural Supernaturalism*, that the Romantic poets 'set out, in various yet recognizably parallel ways, to reconstitute the grounds of hope and to announce the certainty, or at least the possibility, of a rebirth in which a renewed mankind will inhabit a renovated earth where he will find himself thoroughly at home' (12).

There is an increasing tendency in Romantic criticism to try to establish some connections between Romanticism and our own contemporary situation. They propose re-reading Romanticism in various ways that may shed light on problems that we are facing in our postmodern age. Even Modernism, although it was sometimes considered a revolt against Romanticism, was deeply influenced by Romanticism. *In his Morning Stars: Surrealism, Marxism, Anarchism, Situationism, Utopia*, Michael Löwy observes that:

> Romanticism is a form of sensibility nourishing all fields of culture, a worldview which extends from the second half of the eighteenth century to today, a comet whose flaming 'core' is revolt directed against modern industrial civilization, in the name of some of the social and cultural values of the past. (29)

For Löwy, surrealism is a Romantic current in the twentieth century. This 'comet' still has its impact on our contemporary world, because the humanistic ideals and self-reflexive thinking of those ideals Romanticism carries along with it underlie different schools of thoughts that rethink modernity. Since Romanticism was necessarily a response to the 'disenchantment of the world' (to use Löwy's favourite term), it inevitably engaged with the modern problems that were acute at the time. Stuart Curran writes: 'The Romantic period had before it, indeed was engaged actively in living through, perhaps the most exemplary instance of the frustration of high ambitions in modern times' (224). In this project, I consider the lived space of Romantic poetry as an enactment of the contradictions in modern lived experience, as well as an exploration of possible differences to modern life. 'Contradiction' is important to Lefebvre because it brings about differential spaces which will change abstract space. It is important to the Romantics too, as noticed by Curran when he refers to Shelley and Blake: 'Shelley's entire document brilliantly defines the centrality of the poetic

voice marginalized by modern utilitarian impulses. The oxymoronic space is created out of the dialectic of contrary forces that, in Blake's terms, can contradict without thereby negating each other: "Without Contraries is no progression"' (226).

I particularly adopt two main strands of spatial theory for this project, which David Cooper identifies as the phenomenological inherited from Heidegger and the Marxist represented by Lefebvre. Although the perspectives and focuses of the two strands are different, Cooper reminds us that '[i]t would be erroneous, however, to suggest that Heidegger and Lefebvre offer two contrasting and conflicting theories of space founded upon either phenomenological or broadly Marxist principles. Instead, these two main lines of spatial enquiry continually overlap and intersect' (809). For the phenomenological strand, I use Merleau-Ponty instead of Heidegger because a comparison of Merleau-Ponty's philosophy and the thoughts of the Romantic poets discussed here could reveal how far the Romantic poets have gone into a sophisticated thinking of modern existence, attending especially to the body and perception. This method can also illuminate some confusions in criticism by regarding their ideas from a new perspective. Besides Lefebvre and Merleau-Ponty, there are still numerous possibilities for different spatial investigations of Romanticism. Eco-criticism can also borrow from spatial theories to re-examine environmental issues in Romanticism. In her *Topographies of the Sacred*, Kate Rigby maintains that:

> Romantic poetry […] is not just cosmological speculation dressed up in verse. Its continuing value, and challenge, as Lussier shows, lies precisely in literature's capacity to go beyond science in exploring the spiritual, psychological, and ethical implications of existing as an embodied, self-conscious, and speaking being within a dynamic, unfolding, and signifying universe. (5)

Romantic poetry is arguably most competent in this aspect because Romantic poets are profoundly self-conscious of the power of human imagination and creativity but at the same time retain respect and admiration for nature. Facing various global environmental crises nowadays, a return to Romanticism so as to configure a 'greener modernity' seems necessary and beneficial (Rigby 2). This is also the viewpoint of McKusick in his *Green Writing*:

> At the dawn of the third millennium, we are only too aware that the life and death of humankind is inherently linked to the life and death of our planetary ecosystem. A re-examination of the environmental concerns of the English Romantic period can provide a fresh perspective from which to view

> the historical development of American environmentalism, and it may well suggest possibilities of remedial intervention and progressive social action that are presently outside the mainstream of political and literary discourse. (12)

Romanticism has left with us valuable resources to understand and renew our relationship with nature, which can, in possible ways, entice us to develop a more sustainable and organic society.

Romanticism gained but also suffered from critical theories in the twentieth century. The theories of space and performativity evolve from major critical heritages, which include Marxist, phenomenological and linguistic criticism, thus they offer a rich ground to contemplate and reconcile critical oppositions with a sharp consciousness of their shortcomings. The most urgent issue is to deliver Romanticism back to life: a life that is not historically and politically over-contextualized or figuratively over-textualized. Romanticism informs us of the fundamental concerns of human beings in our modern existence. The Romantics' thinking about life testifies to what Merleau-Ponty says about a going back to the origin: 'Our view of man will remain superficial so long as we fail to go back to that origin, so long as we fail to find, beneath the chatter of words, the primordial silence, and as long as we do not describe the action which breaks this silence. The spoken word is a gesture, and its meaning, a world' (*Phenomenology* 214). Moreover, the significance of Romantic space for our epoch and everyday life, perhaps, could be inferred from a passage in *The Critique of Everyday Life*:

> Our own everyday life has a double character. On one hand, it has no style; in the context of a history which is moving ever farther away from the everyday, and of a globalized society which holds sway over it from the empyrean realms of the state, the utilitarian and the functional constitute not a style, but its opposite: the absence of style. On the other hand, there are some very ancient symbolisms which alone are able to restore some strength to gestures and actions which have been robbed of all meaning; although they have deteriorated and shattered, they still form effective nucleuses which, however destructive or inadequate, are still active. How could we not grasp the works of the past? They interest us, they fascinate us, and we call upon them desperately to give us a sense and a style. In the name of the vast emptiness which is everyday life, our everyday life, we look towards everything which could point to or perpetuate a plenitude. Any age, it does not matter which. It is not aesthetic sensibility or ideology which acts as mediator, but everyday life. (Lefebvre 322)

In Romantic poetry, the attention to a re-creation of the human world here and now is conspicuous because of the Romantics' acute modern awareness. We find in Romantic poetry a recognition of those qualities of life that are necessary for men to 'dwell poetically' (in Heidegger's terms). Romantic poets are interested in explorations of the fabric of lived experience. Through a spatial performative study of Romantic poetry, I have explored the acts of spatial re-creation of poetry in textual reality which interacts with actual reality. The poetic acts articulate and dramatize human beings' imagination of and search for our own habitation. My spatial performative study of Romanticism aims at exposing, distilling and re-establishing the spatial connections between Romanticism and our time, so as to enable the Romantics to talk *with* us about their conceptions of searching and renewing human habitation.

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