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This periodical is only as substantial as the material it contains: therefore, we more than welcome any contributions that members of the academic community might wish to make. Articles we would be most interested in publishing include those addressing Romantic literary studies with an especial slant on book history, textual and bibliographical studies, the literary marketplace and the publishing world, and so forth. Papers of 5–8,000 words should be submitted by the beginning of April or October in order to make the next issue, if accepted. Any of the usual electronic formats (e.g. RTF, Microsoft Word, WordPerfect, HTML) are acceptable, either by post or e-mail. Submissions should be sent to Dr Anthony Mandal, Centre for Editorial and Intertextual Research, ENCAP, Cardiff University, Humanities Building, Colum Drive, CARDIFF CF10 3EU, Wales (UK), mandal@cardiff.ac.uk.

WORDSWORTH'S 'LIBRARY OF BABEL'

Bibliomania, the 1814 *Excursion*, and the 1815 *Poems*

Brian Robert Bates



IN 'BIBLIOMANIA: Book Collecting, Cultural Politics, and the Rise of Literary Heritage in Romantic Britain',¹ Philip Connell argues that the decade of the 1810s saw the rise of diverse strains of bibliomania involving the aristocratic gentleman, the burgeoning reading public, and the man of letters. Citing the famous sale of the great library of the fifth duke of Roxburghe, James Innes-Ker, Connell relates the aristocratic vogue for purchasing and collecting expensive literary treasures to a larger public interest in assembling the national literary heritage of the country. In the early nineteenth century, an aristocratic bibliomaniac could be understood publicly either as a self-absorbed collector, gratifying an insatiable desire for collecting rare and valuable books, or as a benefactor to society, accumulating a library of books that would add to the cultural capital of the nation. Connell suggests that this latter view developed largely during the late eighteenth century in conjunction with the reading public's broadening interest in collecting the literary past—a pursuit made economically possible with the end of perpetual copyright in 1774. Such widespread interest led to cheap and expensive scholarly editions of English literary classics and generally to a burgeoning concern for establishing and collecting the literary heritage of the nation. With this vogue for book collecting, Connell maintains that even an aristocrat's private library could be seen, 'symbolically at least, as a national resource'.²

Such antiquarian cravings for books in both the upper and middling classes was offset in the 1810s by what innumerable critics (most prominent in the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly Reviews*) described as a deluge of modern books. What was needed to contain this onslaught of books, these critics maintained again and again, was a standard for measuring the national value of literary productions—a yardstick for deciding what should be read and why. Even further, with a public intent on collecting literary treasures, what should be collected and how should collections be made? This last question relates directly to how literary works might be read.³ The emerging literary class of the nineteenth-century man of letters responded to this call for bibliographic and hermeneutic order,⁴ in part, by fashioning themselves as disinterested readers and writers collecting together the cultural life of the nation.⁵ Connell singles out Isaac D'Israeli as such a leading man of letters who developed an anecdotal method

of writing, meant to bridge the gap between the learned and unlearned, by constructing a personal history that also points to a shared national history. Such a method featured ‘a collection of discrete particulars whose diligent accumulation and tasteful arrangement gestures toward a cohesive, organic conception of collective national.’⁶

Connell’s article offers a touchstone for understanding the cultural dialogue about books, which William Wordsworth responds to through the paratexts accompanying his publication of *The Excursion* (1814) and his collected *Poems* (1815).⁷ Seeking to re-enter a book-filled market in the 1810s, Wordsworth attempted to capitalise on and direct the bibliomania sweeping England by developing his own anecdotal method, which sets his works apart by placing them within an imagined coherent whole—a mini-library that unites his poems, presents a unified story of his poetic development, and reveals a connection between the past, present, and future cultural life of the nation. This essay points out some of the larger hypertextual organising principles behind Wordsworth’s 1815 categories, which function as both a portion and a reflection of his collecting and organising tendencies for his larger hypothetical *oeuvre*, outlined in his ‘Preface’ to *The Excursion* (1814).⁸

Presenting himself in his paratexts as a disinterested man of letters, Wordsworth recasts the values behind this bibliomania by recreating for and including his readers in the process of producing and collecting his poetry—a dual process that he styles in his 1815 ‘Preface’ as inextricable. More specifically, in one of his 1815 categories, ‘Poems of the Imagination’, his prose notes reveal his works as a modern classic, fit to be collected together and then re-collected by the public. These notes suggest how readers can gain control over the sheer mass of printed materials that they encounter, and they also identify ‘Tintern Abbey’, the finishing poem in this category, as a composite form that has grown not only out of the poet’s developmental tale of imaginative growth but also out of the growth of a nation.

I

The publication of *The Excursion, being a Portion of The Recluse* (1814) marks Wordsworth’s re-entrance into the print market.⁹ His dedicatory sonnet ‘To The Right Honourable William, Earl of Lonsdale, K.G.’, ‘Preface to the Edition of 1814’, and the ensuing ‘Prospectus’ leave no doubt that Wordsworth was marketing himself and his work as the very monument that his sonnet parenthetically hopes they will become (‘may it prove a monument!’). After the derisive reception of what critics perceived as the ephemeral and childish productions of his 1807 *Poems*, Wordsworth surrounded and guarded his fragmentary epic *The Recluse* with paratexts seen and unseen.¹⁰

As Stephen Gill succinctly points out in *William Wordsworth: A Life*:

The Excursion was a beautifully printed large quarto of 447 pages, prefaced by a dedicatory sonnet ‘To The Right Honourable Wil-

liam, Earl of Lonsdale, K.G. &c. &c.' and a six-page summary of the contents of each of the poem's nine books. After the text came six pages of notes and a sixteen-page *Essay Upon Epitaphs* accompanied by notes.¹¹

The Excursion was kept from the wider reading public by its high price, but it also was announced to the public (through its size) as an enduring monument. Not since his initial 1793 publication 'An Evening Walk' had Wordsworth chosen or been given the opportunity to publish in quarto. Wordsworth re-entered the print market by announcing the presence of his poems and himself in a book size that was typically placed in a library and not toted around, like his smaller octavo editions of *Lyrical Ballads* could be.

The Excursion was designed as a portion of a literary treasure, which appealed directly to Wordsworth's aristocratic patron William, Earl of Lonsdale, but its paratexts also describe the collective but as yet unactualised potential of his works for a wider audience. In fact, these paratexts announce the monumental value of the epic in terms of its ability to activate the collecting and collective powers of its readers.

What this sonnet, the 'Preface', and 'Prospectus' establish is the centrality of *The Excursion* not only for the as yet fragmentary *Recluse* but also for all of Wordsworth's poetic productions, both past and future.¹² These paratexts function as more than introductions to *The Excursion*: they operate as advertisements for what Wordsworth has already accomplished and what he will accomplish. In fact, what Wordsworth highlights as praiseworthy on several occasions throughout the 'Preface' is the 'laborious Work' that he has undertaken even to attempt the enormous undertaking of completing *The Recluse* (*PW*, v, 1). In this 'Preface' he goes to great lengths to point out the fragmentary but connected nature of all that he has written and all that he shall ever write. Even further, though, the 'Preface' foregrounds the importance of collecting, both collecting the life of the poetic mind and the life of poetic works. Wordsworth explicitly points out that his purpose in retiring 'to his native mountains [centred on] the hope of being enabled to construct a literary Work that might live' (*PW*, v, 2–3). In order to construct such a living work as *The Recluse*, Wordsworth collected his thoughts by 'tak[ing] a review of his own mind', which led to the construction of *The Prelude*, '[a] subsidiary to this preparation'.

Curiously, Wordsworth employs the word 'review' to describe the activity that led to his writing *The Prelude*. He styles himself as a poet-critic, engaged in a type of pre-reviewing activity (even before the act of writing) that leads to a preparatory poem which acts as both a critique of his powers and as a guiding force, enabling him to construct *The Excursion* that he now presents to the public.¹³ Wordsworth, ostensibly, has already studied his subject before he has written this poem; he has already considered the past in order to write the present: he has already been his own best critic. Consequently, he foregrounds his decision to publish 'the second division of the Work' because it

‘was designed to refer more to passing events, and to an existing state of things’ much more than the other two as yet unpublished parts of *The Recluse* (*PW*, v, 1). Wordsworth implies that his choice to begin publishing in the middle is owing to his sense of public responsibility.

By contrast, Francis Jeffrey, in his November 1814 review of *The Excursion*, relates Wordsworth’s publishing propensity to a distinct lack of public responsibility. In fact, Jeffrey diagnoses Wordsworth with a sickness—the type of bibliomania that was often associated with the idiosyncratic and self-serving collecting habits of aristocrats. The book size and material style of *The Excursion* might have prompted Jeffrey toward such an evaluation, but Jeffrey also provides a more detailed rationale, confiding to his readers that ‘had [Wordsworth] condescended to mingle a little more with the people that were to read and judge of [his poems], we cannot help thinking, that its texture would have been considerably improved.’¹⁴ While throughout the review Jeffrey clearly and strongly denigrates Wordsworth’s choice of rustic characters, bathetic failings in language, and passion for overwrought simplicity in *The Excursion*, his choice of the word ‘texture’—suggesting the structure given to an object by the size, shape, and arrangement of its parts—also harkens back to Jeffrey’s major criticism both early and late, focused on Wordsworth’s ‘peculiar system’. For Jeffrey, Wordsworth’s value to the public or lack thereof is to be found in this system: ‘His former poems were intended to recommend that system, and to bespeak favour for it by their individual merit;—but this, we suspect, must be recommended by the system—and can only expect to succeed where it has been previously established’ (*WCH*, 382). Here, Jeffrey inverts the familiar part/whole Wordsworthian proposition to whole/part, weighing the new production (*The Excursion*) in the balance of the past whole of Wordsworth’s productions. Because this poem is a part of that past system, Jeffrey argues that it must necessarily fail to succeed in the public eye. The poem has no place in the public because it offers no viable cultural space for the public to occupy.

Jeffrey saves some of his most caustic and exasperated remarks for the ‘Preface’ that Wordsworth affixes to *The Excursion*:

it is stated in the title—with something of an impudent candour—to be but ‘a portion’ of a larger work; and in the preface, where an attempt is rather unsuccessfully made to explain the whole design, it is still more rashly disclosed, that it is but ‘a part of the second part of a *long* and laborious work’—which is to consist of three parts.

After then lamenting what ‘Mr. Wordsworth’s ideas of length’ might be, Jeffrey asserts that this ‘small specimen [...] and the statements with which it is prefaced, have been sufficient to set our minds at rest in one particular. The case of Mr. Wordsworth, we perceive, is now manifestly hopeless; and we give him up as altogether incurable, and beyond the power of criticism.’ (*WCH*, 383)

Jeffrey makes public his decision to desert his patient (Wordsworth); he acknowledges the case as hopeless because Wordsworth has so continually 'been for twenty years at work on such matter as is now before us', and further because of the quantity that he 'is at this moment working up for publication upon the old pattern [...] it [is] almost hopeless to look for any change'. Nevertheless, although Jeffrey concedes that Wordsworth is beyond clinical (critical) help, he does maintain, '[w]e cannot altogether omit taking precautions now and then against the spreading of the malady'. While Jeffrey associates the malady with the longstanding perversion of taste that has marred Wordsworth's genius, he is most upset with the fact that Wordsworth keeps writing and plans to collect his works together all under the same system. He recognises Wordsworth's newest production for the public, accompanied by a 'Preface' that announces a type of collective system, as an idiosyncratic method of collating and organising his poems into tomes that might occupy a library, or even represent a type of microcosmic library themselves. Jeffrey understands Wordsworth's poems to be too self-involved, too attached to his '[l]ong habits of seclusion, and an excessive ambition of originality' (*WCH*, 384). Wordsworth appears bent on collecting his own poems into a library so that he can obsessively look at them all together. For Jeffrey, such a collection can have no value for the public for whom he, as a critic, presides as a doctor to his patients, and the health of the reading public and the nation can only be debilitated by the spread of Wordsworth's malady. In Jeffrey's view, '[t]his will never do' (*WCH*, 382).

Like Jeffrey, ironically, Wordsworth is intent on limiting the public's cravings for unhealthy stimulation met by the deluge of printed works in the 1810s. While Jeffrey describes Wordsworth's bibliomania as an idiosyncratic taste for hoarding together his own books in a private library, however, Wordsworth describes his collecting tendencies as a system for evaluating and combating the overwhelming production and circulation of books. Wordsworth's 1814 paratexts seek to transform readers from passive buyers plagued by a surfeit of books into active agents empowered by their capacity to recognise and take part in creating the organising principles behind the collections that they purchase.

In his 'Prospectus' to *The Excursion*, Wordsworth demonstrates how these cravings for ephemeral productions might be reshaped into a lasting appreciation for and desire to collect not only English literary classics but also contemporary classics of the English nation.¹⁵ A large portion of that responsibility rests on Wordsworth's ability to recreate for his readers the process of producing and collecting his poetry—a dual process that he styles in this 'Preface' as inextricable. The 'Prospectus' advertises itself and the hypothetical whole that it represents by intermingling the poet, the powers of his mind, his task, and his subject matter all in a prefatory epic proemium that foregrounds the poet grappling with the difficulties of what appears as an extended moment of pre-writing, pre-reading, and pre-editing. It functions as an index and overview of what is, what was, and what will come—all of which hinge on the rhetorical power of the 'Prospectus' to intermingle the creative powers of the poet and his readers.

The 'Prospectus' prompts readers to follow what Coleridge would describe as the 'revelations of [the poet's] own mind, producing itself and evolving its own greatness'.¹⁶ They are asked to evaluate his poetic labour, to see him as a labourer travelling like Milton's epic narrator who follows Satan's descent and ascent through Hell, Chaos, and towards Heaven. Wordsworth, though, describes the place and space that he travels in as both more awful and more fertile than that path because he 'must tread on shadowy ground, must sink/ Deep—and, aloft ascending, breathe in worlds/ To which the heaven of heavens is but a veil' (ll. 28–30). After passing through that veil, he reveals that the 'haunt, and the main region of [his] song' is 'look[ing]/ Into our Minds, into the Mind of Man' (ll. 40–41).

Such looking into the mind of man necessitates a similar but different kind of poetic travel and inquiry than the journey through *Paradise Lost*, which also begins in the middle and works both forwards and backwards as the epic narrative progresses from book to book. Consequently, Wordsworth will need the muse of *Paradise Lost*, 'Urania, I shall need/ Thy guidance, or a greater Muse' (ll. 25–26). Like the narrator from *Paradise Lost*, who on several occasions calls for Urania's guidance so that he will not lose the thread and theme of his epic, becoming lost in the midst of the design that he constructs, Wordsworth too foregrounds his need to find an organising framework for the epic that will speak of so much more than *Paradise Lost* could ever encompass, even with Milton's temporal design that reaches backward to the Creation and forward to Revelation. The 'Prospectus' privileges Wordsworth's organising framework over Milton's because Wordsworth's operates rhetorically to bridge the psychological gap between the poet and his readers.

His burden as a poet, the 'Prospectus' makes clear, is to chart the evolving and revolving relationship between the developing mind of an individual life (Wordsworth's) and 'Man', 'Nature', and 'Human Life' (l. 1). The 'Prospectus' seeks to connect all of these focal points, to 'chant [...] the spousal verse/ Of this great consummation' between the 'Mind of Man' and 'Beauty—a living Presence of the earth', between high subjects and low, between himself and mankind (ll. 56–57, 40, 43). Wordsworth sets up the possibility for such consummation through the form of this 'Prospectus' as epic proemium. Here, his blank verse is interrupted on a number of occasions by dashes that both divide and align his thoughts as they twist and turn between his narrative argument and apostrophic invocatory addresses. In fact, nearly all of the revolutions of the poet's mind are divided by such dashes, parsing this proemium into six sections that draw the reader on toward his 'Theme this but little heard of among men' (l. 68). While in the first third of the 'Prospectus' Wordsworth identifies 'the main region of *my* Song', by the end of line 71 he asserts, 'this is *our* high argument' (ll. 41, 71, italics mine). Lines 70–71 signal the climax of this shift from the poet's song to the mutual song/argument of the poet and his audience: 'And the creation (by no lower name/ Can it be called) which they with blended might/ Accomplish—this is our high argument' (ll. 69–71).

The rhetorical construction of these lines suggests how such 'creation' is contingent. Although Wordsworth implies that the 'blended might' of mind and world can produce a type of almost divine creation, the construction of 'blended might/ Accomplish' followed by '*our* high argument' (my italics) implies the necessity of the 'fit' reader to join in and even contribute to Wordsworth's poetic project. His use of 'might', directly preceding 'Accomplish' leaves the reader to actualise the poet's claim that 'this is our high argument'. These words suggest, through an indirect address to the reader—who has already been alerted by Wordsworth's proclamation a few lines earlier that he would 'arouse the sensual from their sleep/ Of Death, and win the vacant and vain/ To noble raptures' (ll. 60–62)—a consummation with the poet through the word 'our'. This 'blended might', then, could refer to the marriage of the reader to the poem (as an extension of the poet) and reciprocally to the marriage of the poet to the poem (as an extension of the reader).

The word 'might', therefore, implies both the poet's advice and request that the reader enact the possibility of the latent strength inherent in a union through the text between poet and reader, which could produce 'creation (by no lower name/ Can it be called)' (ll. 69–70). If the reader responds to the poet's call for 'blended might', then that inspired reader can move through the multivalent threshold that Wordsworth creates in the 'Prospectus'. Because the entire 107 lines of the 'Prospectus' are set off in quotations from the end of *Home at Grasmere*, this 'Prospectus' points backwards to the ending of the absent *Home at Grasmere* and forward to *The Excursion* and the design of the future *Recluse* that follows the 'Prospectus'. Even further, the 'Prospectus' points backwards through the 'Preface to *The Excursion*' to the poem that appears to have enabled the design of his poetic programme, *The Prelude*, and even provisionally outward to all of the other 'minor Pieces' that he would collect together in 1815.¹⁷ From this perspective the 'Prospectus' is a bridge or threshold between all of Wordsworth's works. It is proleptic in the sense that it continues forward *The Prelude*; it is analeptic because it recounts events leading up to *The Excursion*; it is elleptic in that it links together *Home at Grasmere* and *The Excursion*, but it also fills in the gap for all of his works, connecting each to each; so, it allows for a contiguous paralletic movement to all of his little 1815 poems. The 'Prospectus', then, even prepares the reader for how to read the 1815 poems.

If the reader faithfully and sympathetically crosses the threshold of the 'Prospectus' into the poetic world of '*our* high argument', then instead of remaining 'a doorway to incompleteness, fragmentation and ruin',¹⁸ the 'Prospectus' turns that fragmentation into a process of continual growth where the reader takes part in the 'creation' of what is no longer just Wordsworth's Gothic church but the construction of '*our* high argument'. Through the 'Prospectus', Wordsworth prompts the reader not only to begin 'extracting the system for himself', as he asserts in the 'Preface', but to take part in the creation of that system.

The 'Prospectus', then, also folds back on and illustrates the temporal and spatial dimensions that Wordsworth suggests in the 'Preface' through his Gothic church metaphor. Fittingly, Wordsworth compares the relationship between *The Prelude* and *The Recluse* to the construction of 'the Ante-Chapel [...] to the body of a gothic Church' (*PW*, v, 2). His use of the word antechapel suggests not only an entranceway into another part of a church; it also suggests the intimacy of a private, preparatory space. Wordsworth implies that the reader should enter the body of his poetic *oeuvre* after crossing through the recess of a subordinate, private, and as yet publicly absent place of worship, the threshold of *The Prelude*. Like the poet, the reader too must pass imaginatively through a personal and meditative chamber in order to enter into this metaphorical Gothic church, where Wordsworth maintains:

His minor Pieces, which have been long before the Public, when they shall be properly arranged, will be found by the attentive Reader to have such connection with the main Work as may give them claim to be likened to the little Cells, Oratories, and sepulchral Recesses, ordinarily included in those Edifices. (*PW*, v, 2)

Here, Wordsworth intermingles presence with absence, past with future, and parts with design. He asks his reader to construct the presence of the absent *Recluse* by passing through an absent *Prelude*, to project his past works into a coherent future 'main Work', and to imagine the reordering of the smallest, seemingly disparate 'Cells' as intricately necessary for the larger design. Since the 'Public' has long been exposed to his 'minor Pieces', Wordsworth seems to hope that his 'attentive Reader' will be able to construct the absent parts of this Gothic church by imaginatively inhabiting a fragmented but shared hermeneutic structure that asks the reader to complete it.

Faced with an incomplete Gothic church missing its central piece as well as many of its subsidiary pieces and filled with areas of light offset by uncertain 'Oratories, and sepulchral Recesses' clouded in dark, Wordsworth's reader is asked to work through his dismay at this shadowy incompleteness and to attune himself to the grandeur of a structure in the process of being constructed. As Mark Schoenfield suggests, Wordsworth is not only building a Gothic church, which his readers will help him complete; he is building an entire poetic community of readers centred around the building of this structure over time.¹⁹ The question is first whether the reader wants to be a part of this fictive construction and this fictive community and second whether the reader can participate in such a construction.

II

Wordsworth devoted two essays to these questions, and they function fittingly as book-ends to Volume I of his 1815 *Poems*.²⁰ The apparatus to these two volumes provides a cataloguing and collating system for his collected poems that leaves readers in little doubt that Wordsworth has kept his eye firmly and fixedly on

his object.²¹ These volumes, including a classification system that divides his life's work into different categories and also relates dates of original composition and first publication, detail the growth of a poet's mind; moreover, they foreground the efforts of a man ordering his life, his work, and his public. They portray him as a professional poet grappling with a hostile print market and review culture while also identifying him as a man of letters, attempting both to hold to and add on to the store of human knowledge by collecting together his life's work. While in the 'Preface to *The Excursion*', Wordsworth depicts his collected works as a Gothic church—an apt metaphor given the growing British nineteenth-century interest in Gothic churches as national treasures—in the 'Essay Supplementary to the Preface' (1815), he places himself and his works squarely within a library of his creation.

A few of Wordsworth's reviewers for his 1815 *Poems* identified this collecting propensity as an example of the frenetic bibliomania pushed upon the reading public by the force of an overwhelming, book-flooded market. In an unsigned review in the June 1815 number of the *Theatrical Inquisitor*, the reviewer expresses his exasperation over the number of books continually unleashed on the public: 'If the present race of authors was to be judged of from the quantity, and not the quality of their productions, the voice of censure would be wholly silenced; quarto succeeds to quarto, and poem to poem, in such rapid succession, that the public has no time to pause or doubt.'²² This reviewer describes the reading public (and review culture) as so overwhelmed by the sheer material productions of poetry that they have neither the capacity to stop and reflect on these productions nor the ability to question the presence of these books in the world. Arguing that at 'the very instant they are adjusting their critical scales to weigh the merit of one production, their attention is called off to the perusal of another', this reviewer throws up his hands lamenting, '[t]here is, indeed, scarcely one of our modern poets, who could not, out of his own works, furnish a very decent library, although it may not be so extensive as the Bodleian' (*WCH*, 521).

Here, this reviewer very acutely (though perhaps unintentionally) captures the tone and scope of Wordsworth's 'Essay Supplementary to the Preface'. The overwhelming deluge of books, the need to properly judge these books, and the question of how and what to collect together are all central concerns of his essay. More specifically, the 'Essay Supplementary' deals explicitly with market forces in the form of unrelenting and ignorant critics, diverse segments of the reading public, and greedy booksellers, while also providing a brief (skewed) history of the circulation and popularity of English writers since Shakespeare. Throughout this manifesto, leading up to his statement of manifest destiny for how the poet must 'create the taste by which he is to be enjoyed' (*PW*, II, 426), Wordsworth turns on the offensive, moulding literary history, his contemporary reception, and his own conception of his works to fit into the library that he imagines as a future treasure for the 'People, philosophically characterized' (p. 430).

Tellingly, the only moment in the entire ‘Essay Supplementary’ when Wordsworth reveals himself as writing from a specific place occurs in the midst of his attack on how critics have both created and tampered with the popularity of poetic works. Writing from his own private library,²³ Wordsworth takes Dr Johnson to task for what he sees as flawed statements about the reception and success of *Paradise Lost*: ‘Dr. Johnson has fallen into a gross mistake when he attempts to prove, by the sale of the work, that Milton’s Countrymen were “just to it” upon its first appearance’ (*PW*, II, 417). Specifically, he criticises Johnson’s explanation that the demand for *Paradise Lost* after its first publication was low owing to a lack of poetry-readers. Wordsworth’s response is both measured and biting:

How careless must a writer be who can make this assertion in the face of so many existing title pages to belie it! Turning to my own shelves, I find the folio of Cowley, 7th Edition, 1681. A book near it is Flatman’s Poems, 4th Edition, 1686; Waller, 5th Edition, same date. (p. 417)

Wordsworth insists that the market for *Paradise Lost* was full of readers buying poetry: if Milton’s epic did not sell better, it was because the taste of the public was directed toward other poetic pursuits.

Further, the manner in which Wordsworth locates and identifies these volumes when he turns toward his shelves suggests how inconsequential and randomly organised such a grouping of books is. From the folio of Cowley, his eye trails off to ‘a book near’ Cowley’s, Flatman’s, which then gives way to Waller’s book. Beyond the general period when these writers published, these books are grouped together on Wordsworth’s shelves only because they went through enough editions to render them popular. After dismissing Johnson’s argument, with evidence from his own private library, Wordsworth then implicitly dismisses the very collection that proves his point to the reader. What such a grouping of writers lack is an organic unity built from a shared national culture validated by time; they represent only the popular taste of that time period. Wordsworth pushes aside these books in his own library as a way to clear space for an imagined library of his own making—a library to be built up and passed down from one generation to the next.

A few pages later, Wordsworth further bolsters his literary history over Johnson’s by drawing attention to Johnson’s *Lives of the Poets*. After denigrating the false language, description, and feelings in Macpherson’s *Ossian*, Wordsworth turns to Dr Johnson, who:

was solicited not long after to furnish Prefaces biographical and critical for some of the most eminent English Poets. The Booksellers took upon themselves to make the collection; they referred probably to the most popular miscellanies, and, unquestionably, to their Books of accounts; and decided upon the claim of Authors to be admitted into a body of the most Eminent, from the

familiarity of their names with the readers of the day, and by the profits, which, from the sale of his works, each had brought and was bringing to the Trade. (*PW*, II, 425)

Controlled by the booksellers, who 'allowed [him] a limited exercise of discretion' in choosing who would be in the *Lives of the Poets*, Johnson (Wordsworth maintains) has produced a collection that is 'scarcely to be mentioned without a smile' (p. 425)—a collection that begins with Cowley and does not include Chaucer, Spenser, Sydney, or Shakespeare.

Johnson's collection lacks integrity and consequently the ability to embody any sense of English literary heritage because it was constructed under the direction of fashionable taste and market forces—a place where 'the Booksellers stalls in London swarmed with the folios of Cowley' (p. 417). The implication is that Wordsworth's self-collection possesses integrity because it was governed by the seemingly disinterested direction of the poet and not by the money-grubbing directions of booksellers. Even further, Wordsworth implicitly aligns his own collection with the power of Shakespeare's constructive genius. Praising Shakespeare as more than a 'wild irregular genius', Wordsworth maintains

that the judgment of Shakespeare in the selection of his material, and in the manner in which he has made them, heterogeneous as they often are, constitute a unity of their own, and contribute all to one great end [and] is no less admirable than his imagination, his invention, and his intuitive knowledge of human Nature!

(p. 416)

Curiously, instead of referring directly to Shakespeare's collected dramatic works (which Shakespeare did not collect himself), Wordsworth turns to Shakespeare's sonnet collection precisely because it was ignored and/or denigrated by critics for such a long period of time. His description of Shakespeare's work, though, also has a material referent as well as a philosophical-literary one. Throughout the eighteenth century, the industry for publishing Shakespeare's collected dramatic works soared. Wordsworth's mention of Pope's edition just previous to this passage is just one instance of poets and critics turning out collected and edited editions of the Bard's plays. By the end of the eighteenth century, Shakespeare's collected works had become an institution, a national heritage to be passed on from generation to generation—a self-contained library of beauties that inhabited the library of every man of taste.²⁴

Even more explicitly, Wordsworth singles out Percy's *Reliques* for particular praise as a collection that links past, present, and future all within the scope of a shared national literary history. Wordsworth describes the *Reliques* as 'collected, new-modelled, and in many instances (if such a contradiction in terms may be used) composed, by the editor Dr. Percy' (*PW*, II, 421). As a seemingly overlooked and too often slighted 'Compilation [that] was however ill-suited to the then existing taste of City society', the *Reliques* draw Wordsworth's praise because Percy has done more than simply edit and collect them. Although

Wordsworth does criticise Percy for the few unfortunate occasions that he decided to appear ‘in his own person and character as a poetical writer’ because that writing picked up the characteristics of the ‘unfeeling language of the day’ (p. 422), he warmly praises Percy’s editorial endeavours for making and providing a standard or example (new-modelled), for placing and forming these poems in the proper order (composing), and for drawing together materials from different sources (compilation).

What renders Percy a poet–creator and not just an editor, in Wordsworth’s conception, is that his collection drew so many imitators after making its first appearance into the world. In collecting the *Reliques* Percy has done more than draw together materials: he has brought together and united the English literary tradition of past and future. Unlike Macpherson’s *Ossian*, which showed an ‘incapability to amalgamate with the literature of the Island’, Wordsworth readily asserts (‘with a public avowal of my own’) that Percy’s *Reliques* has strongly influenced German literature ‘and for our own Country, its Poetry has been absolutely redeemed by it. I do not think that there is an able Writer in verse of the present day who would not be proud to acknowledge his obligations to the Reliques’ (*PW*, II, 424–25). Percy’s collection has succeeded because it demonstrates the ability to compile together diverse forms from the past that speak to and spur on present writers into the future.²⁵

The *Reliques* provide a continuum and continuity for English literature—the same status that he accords to the influence of his own *Lyrical Ballads* by pointing out ‘to what degree the Poetry of this Island has since that period been coloured by them’ (*PW*, II, 426). For Wordsworth, then, Literature that is valuable, that is durable, that is worthy of being collected and kept ‘is at once a history of the remote past and a prophetic annunciation of the remotest future’ (p. 429). However, such works must also wait to receive the recognition that they deserve. His consolation, though, comes with his assertion that with Literature such as his own ‘the *individual*, as well as the species, survives from age to age’ while ‘of the depraved, though the species be immortal the individual quickly *perishes*’ (p. 429). Wordsworth’s quasi-evolutionary stance of the strong individual poet of Literature, however, raises the question of how such an individual survives. How can the individual survive when without question the individual will literally die? How can the poet ignore the Public when the Public seemingly provides the only means by which a poet’s work can survive? Wordsworth answers with his avowed devotion to ‘the People, philosophically characterized, and to the embodied spirit of their knowledge, so far as it exists and moves, at the present, faithfully supported by its two wings, the past and the future’ (p. 430).

Who such philosophic People are (or will be) is unclear,²⁶ but regardless, Wordsworth’s ability to appeal to these People is contingent on his works being kept alive in the present so that they can be read at a later date. The answer to such a problem is contingent on material conditions. What Wordsworth

needs is a literal place where his works can be collected and kept—a library that would place him at the end of the great line of works that he has catalogued as preceding his own.²⁷ In Wordsworth's terms, though, such a place must operate outside of the forces of the marketplace that is overrun by masses of new publications and governed by the opinions of the review culture and the ephemeral tastes of the public. In fact, Wordsworth is at pains to point out how his poems cannot possibly succeed in the contemporary market for poetry. Instead, the appeal that he tries to make for his collected works is one that is both antiquarian and prophetic. His works have both captured the spirit of the past (the *Lyrical Ballads* are a direct descendent of Percy's *Reliques*), while also proving their future worth in the number of imitators of *Lyrical Ballads* since its first publication. Last, they have earned a place next to the other treasures of English literature that he praises in his essay because they also failed as marketable poetry.

III

Nevertheless, Wordsworth does not completely dismiss the present. He is intent on creating his works as a future (but already present) modern classic, and the 1815 'Preface' provides the space for him to style his work as mediating between the past and the future heritage of the nation. In that 'Preface' he introduces his collected works as a mass of hybrid genres, which can both be divided but not separated from the schema that he develops for his entire poetic *oeuvre*. In fact, Wordsworth asserts their value by way of arguing for the sheer number of interlocking ways that the poems have been organised. What he constructs is an anecdotal history of his own mind and of recent cultural and literary history.²⁸ The 1815 'Preface' introduces a literary life—both collected and divided into pieces—which offers a window into the stylised mind of a poetic genius. However, the collection also offers fragments of early-nineteenth-century culture, a miscellany of English life, accessible to those people who wish to reconstruct it by trailing the footsteps of the poet re-collecting in tranquillity.

Fittingly, Wordsworth begins his discussion in the 'Preface' with himself. He points out what he finds to be the six elements necessary for the 'production of poetry' (*PW*, II, 431). These six categories move chronologically in two ways. First, they describe the process whereby composition happens, moving from the first step in this composition process to the final one. Then, they also suggest that these processes grow in the poet only over the course of his/her development as a poet. Wordsworth maintains that the powers of observation and description are first, but he makes these powers subservient to an exquisite sensibility, inciting the poet 'to observe objects, both as they exist in themselves and as re-acted upon by his own mind' (p. 432). Wordsworth, then, includes the governing power of reflection as a mediator that weighs the value of the two former poetic powers and facilitates synthetic comparisons between the objects of these powers. Fourth, Wordsworth adds, 'Imagination and Fancy,—to

modify, to create, and to associate.' Fifth, he articulates the importance of invention, which operates as a power that puts to use all of the first four categories to create characters in relation to incidents worked upon by the imagination and 'most fitted to do justice to the characters, sentiments, and passions, which the Poet undertakes to illustrate.' Finally, he rounds out his catalogue, by calling attention to the need for judgment, 'to decide how and where, and in what degree, each of these faculties ought to be exerted.' (p. 432)

Wordsworth, then, describes this hierarchy of poetic faculties as 'cast, by means of various moulds, into divers forms', as the narrative, the dramatic, the lyrical, the idyllium, the didactic, and the philosophical satire. His hierarchy of poetic faculties is broken up and distributed among the forms that poetry can be written in. However, Wordsworth neither says which forms have which faculties nor does he point out how those faculties might be employed differently given the type of mode in which they are employed. Even more confusing, he proceeds to argue that

It is deducible from the above, that poems, apparently miscellaneous, may with propriety be arranged either with reference to the powers of mind *predominant* in the production of them; or to the mould in which they are cast; or lastly to the subjects to which they relate [...] (*PW*, II, 432–33)

With three seemingly separate categories for organising his poems, Wordsworth subdivides his poems into

classes; which, that the work may more obviously correspond with the course of human life, for the sake of exhibiting in it the three requisites of a legitimate whole, the beginning, a middle, and an end, have been also arranged, as far as it was possible, according to an order of time, commencing with Childhood, and terminating with Old Age, Death, and Immortality. (p. 434)

While Wordsworth has specifically divided his poems into classes that pertain either to the powers of mind, to the poetic mould, or to the subject, he also has generally organised the poems according to a time-scheme leading from childhood to death and immortality.

Wordsworth does not end his system of classification here, however:

My guiding wish was, that the small pieces of which these volumes consist, thus discriminated, might be regarded under a two-fold view; as composing an entire work within themselves, and as adjuncts to the philosophical Poem, 'The Recluse' [...] (p. 434)

Even further, he also expresses his hope that 'individually' the poems will have a 'natural effect' on the reader. Not only does Wordsworth ask the reader to consider the power of the mind behind the creation of a given poem and group of poems, the poetic form that a poem and group are poems are written in, and the subject matter focused on in a poem and given group of poems, he also

asks that the reader consider the effects of the individual poem in relation to the larger effect of the two volumes as well as the relation between these poems as a whole to the larger (and unseen) whole of *The Recluse*.

Spatially, Wordsworth suggests that the individual poem makes up a portion of a larger hypothetical whole and that spatial progression is contingent on the temporal movement between poems and classes of poems that mimic the development of human life. While Wordsworth constructs a complex organising apparatus for these poems and alerts readers to the necessity of paying heed to this apparatus, he also leaves readers at liberty to discover the relationship between the poems that he has variously classified. What is important for Wordsworth in this preface is that readers recognise that they can approach his classification schema from a number of interlocking perspectives. In fact, he is at pains to point out that his collected works are readily available to readers with different levels of hermeneutic competence. Such a belief leads him to declare:

I should have preferred to scatter the contents of these volumes at random, if I had been persuaded that, by the plan adopted, anything material would have been taken from the natural effect of the pieces individually, on the mind of the unreflecting reader [...] for him who reads with reflection, the arrangement will serve as a commentary unostentatiously directing his attention to my purposes, both particular and general. (p. 434)

Wordsworth requires that all of his readers actively engage with his poems because, 'Poems, however humble in their kind, if they be good in that kind, cannot read themselves', but he also points out that the reader's mind must be 'left at liberty' after first being 'summoned, to act upon its thoughts and images.' (p. 435)

Wordsworth sets up interlocking signposts (his classification system) enabling his readers to wander productively through the imaginary library of his works. More importantly, he relates the coherence of this library to the activating powers of his readers. To carve out a pathway through Wordsworth's collection is to take part in recovering the future path of the nation. What he has produced is a living collection made whole only through his reader's willingness to take part in his textual design, rendering it a contemporary history of English culture. Similar to Connell's description of D'Israeli's anecdotal method, which attempts to construct the national character, Wordsworth's method also

imparts 'a certain activity to the mind,' [...] function[ing] as a kind of Arnoldian touchstone, restoring ties of 'remote or latent connexion' within the canons of literary history and thus imposing a fluid yet coherent and adaptive structure upon the ever-increasing multiplicity of books.²⁹

Wordsworth's 1815 *Poems* image forth a library of books not just to collect on shelves, but a library to enter into imaginatively where the activity of reading is

tantamount to collecting together, organising, and becoming a part of a living culture. Even further, Wordsworth's footnotes to his 1815 volumes underscore both how books can become a part of readers and how readers can become a part of books.

IV

While many critics of the 1815 volumes focused a great deal of attention on his two essays, in the *Monthly Review* for November 1815, the reviewer (probably Francis Hodgson) draws explicit attention to several of Wordsworth's poems in the section 'Poems of the Imagination' because of the network of footnotes that Wordsworth attaches to them.³⁰ After quoting a portion of Wordsworth's 'Essay Supplementary', which anticipates Wordsworth's fame in posterity, the reviewer sarcastically 'beg[s] permission to subjoin to this extraordinary passage, as we cannot help considering it, the following still more extraordinary quotation and note' (*WCH*, 558). This exasperated reviewer feels the need to beg permission of his readers to relate the following because it seems to be an anecdotal digression, moving away from the purpose of his review. In calling attention to Wordsworth's footnotes, however, the reviewer cleverly parodies Wordsworth's anecdotal movements within his 1815 volumes. Further, he highlights these textual movements from poetry to prose as proving his overarching evaluation of Wordsworth's classification system, 'that we do not remember to have ever met with so "Much Ado about Nothing" in any author'.

The reviewer provides two stanzas from 'I wandered lonely as a cloud' (untitled in the 1815 *Poems*), while also attaching at the bottom of the page Wordsworth's footnote:

The subject of these stanzas is rather an elementary feeling and simple impression (approaching to the nature of an ocular spectrum) upon the imaginative faculty, than an *exertion* of it. The one which follows is strictly a Reverie; and neither that, nor the next after it in succession, 'The Power of Music,' would have been placed here except for the reason given in the foregoing note.

As the reviewer points out, this other note refers directly to 'The Horn of Egremont Castle' and to the following ballad 'Goody Blake and Harry Gill': 'This POEM, and the ballad which follows it, as they rather *refer to the imagination than are produced by it*, would not have been placed here, but to avoid a needless multiplication of the *classes*' (*WCH*, 559). Wordsworth focuses these footnotes on the rationale behind the placement of poems, and each note supports the other in declaring the need to expand the category 'Poems of the Imagination' to include poems that refer to the imagination as well as those that are produced by it. The footnotes appear as an apologia for grouping poems together as a means to gain organising control over the sheer mass of materials available. However, the reviewer understands these notes satirically as representative examples pointing out the already compendious apparatus that the reader must confront in grappling with Wordsworth's poetry.

Such notes (exasperating for this reviewer) announce Wordsworth's poems as a modern classic. His collected poems appear not only to deserve notes that might shed light on the subject matter of a poem; they also merit notes that describe the manner in which poems have been organised together. These notes provide commentary that directs the reader's attention back to Wordsworth's overarching purpose for his collection. They supply a context within which to consider a given poem, but most prominently, they set up continuities between poems within the two volumes as well as the relationship to Wordsworth's extra-textual *The Prelude* and *The Recluse*.

In Volume II of 'Poems of the Imagination', Wordsworth attaches to 'French Revolution, as It Appeared to Enthusiasts at its Commencement Reprinted from "The Friend"' the following note: 'This, and the Extract, vol. I. page 44, and the first Piece of this Class are from the unpublished Poem of which some account is given in the Preface to *The Excursion*.' Wordsworth's note links together this poem with 'Influence of Natural Objects' (from page 44 of the section 'Poems Referring to Childhood' in Volume I) and with 'There was a boy' (the initial poem in 'Poems of the Imagination'). Not only does Wordsworth in the 'Preface' liken his classification system to the development of a human life, here he explicitly links together childhood, the first poem and the second to last poem in 'Poems of the Imagination'. The 'Influence of Natural Objects' with its headnote 'In calling forth and strengthening the Imagination in Boyhood and early Youth; from an unpublished Poem' makes clear that together all three of these poems tell the developmental tale of the poet's imagination. Wordsworth connects them together by pointing out that they are all three fragments from the publicly non-existent but supposedly complete *The Prelude*—a poem that Wordsworth describes in the 'Preface to *The Excursion*' as 'subsidiary' but necessary, as preparation for but inextricable from *The Recluse*.

Perhaps more important, with these connective notes, Wordsworth prepares his readers for the final poem in 'Poems of the Imagination': 'Lines Composed a few Miles above Tintern Abbey, on revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour'. Curiously, for the 1815 publication of this poem Wordsworth alters the title from 'Lines Written', which several critics have interpreted as a manoeuvre drawing attention to the musical and oral nature of the poem. However, given the context that Wordsworth sets up in the preceding poem 'French Revolution', which links together three poems from different places in the volume all under the rubric of the development of the imagination from childhood to early manhood, composed takes on a different meaning. Given his praise for how Percy's *Reliques* are 'composed' in the 'Essay Supplementary', here 'composed' suggests that the lines are brought together and arranged out of composite parts. 'Tintern Abbey' is both a culmination and a composite form of Wordsworth's developmental tale of the imagination—a form that has grown in and out of the poet's mind over the course of five years of change (and for the 1815 volumes over twenty years of change). The three published parts mentioned earlier from the unpublished *Prelude* provide a context and window into 'Tintern Abbey'.

Moving from 'French Revolution' sets up an analeptic movement backward to Volume 1 and a proleptic movement forward to 'Tintern Abbey' while all four of these poems provide a hypothetical paraleptic movement working within the subsidiary, but master narrative of *The Prelude*. With such a system, Wordsworth provides a rationale for how and why one collects together the works of the past with the works of the present—a system that involves the reader in the process of collecting and producing the literary treasures of a nation.

One of Wordsworth's poems in the section 'Epitaphs and Elegaic Poems' is even more extra-textually suggestive in its yoking together of poems as a means to unite a nation of readers. In the headnote, 'written, November 13, 1814 on a blank leaf in a Copy of the Author's Poem *THE EXCURSION*, upon hearing of the death of the late Vicar of Kendal', Wordsworth writes:

To public notice, with reluctance strong,
 Did I deliver this unfinished song,
 Yet for one happy issue;—and I look
 With self-congratulation on the Book
 Which pious MURFITT saw and read;—
 Upon my thoughts his saintly Spirit fed;
 He conn'd the new-born Lay with grateful heart;
 Foreboding not how soon he must depart,
 Unweeting that to him the joy was given
 Which good Men take with them from Earth to Heaven.

(*PW*, II, 336)

Here, Wordsworth calls attention to *The Excursion* as a material object. By pointing out that originally he had written this poem on a blank leaf in *The Excursion*, he foregrounds the actual existence of the book and not just a theoretical connection between this poem and his 1814 publication. This poem is now a part of *The Excursion*. What he has done is inscribed an epitaph for a public figure within the material space of an epic poem that charts the life, death, and times of early-nineteenth-century England. Even more specifically, Wordsworth inscribes an epitaph within a book that delineates the very nature of epitaphs as ties that bind together the living and the dead, the past, present, and future. In fact, Wordsworth attaches a sixteen-page-long note to Book v of *The Excursion* known as his *Essay upon Epitaphs*, which explicitly delineates the style and tone befitting such a proper epitaph. The first sentence of this *Essay* underscores the monumental status such an inscription provides for *The Excursion*: 'It need scarcely be said, that an Epitaph presupposes a Monument, upon which it is to be engraven' (*PW*, v, 444). As his essay points out, such a record 'among the modern nations of Europe, are deposited within, or contiguous to, their places of worship' (p. 448).

Wordsworth's epitaph presents the Vicar as having worshipped at *The Excursion*. The epitaph celebrates the 'saintly Spirit' of the Vicar of Kendal that has 'fed' upon Wordsworth's 'thoughts' in *The Excursion*. His fragmented epic

text appears like one of the village churchyards that Wordsworth describes in this essay, which 'is a visible center of a community of the living and the dead' (p. 450). Wordsworth even obfuscates the origin of the 'joy' that the Vicar has taken with him to Heaven. Did it come from his vocation or from his association with *The Excursion* where he has 'conn'd the new-born lay with grateful heart'? The Vicar even appears like one of Wordsworth's own characters in his poems—namely the Leech Gatherer in 'Resolution and Independence', who 'cons' the water in front of him, reading it like a book. 'Pious Murfitt' represents Wordsworth's ideal reader, studying, poring over, memorising, and even worshipping at *The Excursion*. The Vicar's active reading and emotional investment in *The Excursion* situate Wordsworth's fragmented epic as a link between the living and the dead, a work to be looked back on and revered for what it can provide in the future (in life and in death). As an appreciative (and now deceased) reader of *The Excursion*, Murfitt becomes a part of that fragmented poem—a character testifying to its seemingly monumental importance for all of mankind. Like the Leech Gatherer, Wordsworth transforms Pious Murfitt into a poetic model to be revered and imitated; he joins Wordsworth's cast of characters who give witness to the importance of Wordsworth's collected works as a modern classic central to England's literary heritage. 

NOTES

1. Philip Connell, 'Bibliomania: Book Collecting, Cultural Politics, and the Rise of Literary Heritage in Romantic Britain', *Representations* 70 (Summer 2000), 24–47.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
3. While my argument about Wordsworth's re-entry into the print market relates to the sheer number of publications (both poetry and prose) flooding the print market in the 1810s, further inquiry into this subject would have to take into account more closely the production of poetry anthologies, miscellanies, and eventually keepsakes. These anthologies typically featured a number of poets, and they were organized according to principles that would lead to their highest economic success. Consequently, popular poets, both contemporary and canonical, were often featured in ways that were immediately pleasing and easily readable. As Anne Ferry points out in *Tradition and the Individual Poem: An Inquiry into Anthologies* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001) short lyric poems and even excerpted poems became the norm, allowing readers to skip from poem to poem at their leisure and whim. Wordsworth's endeavours, then, not only counter the growing economic stagnation of publishing individual poets, which will come to a head in the 1820s: they also seem to combat the type of reading that these anthologies set up as pleasurable for a growing middle class readership.
4. John Gross's *The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters: Aspects of English Literary Life since 1800* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1969) provides a succinct history of the man of letters from the rise of the reviewing critic at the beginning of the nineteenth century to modern times.
5. During the first few decades of the nineteenth century, the eighteenth-century concept of the man of letters was undergoing redefinition, perhaps, most recog-

- nizably in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* (1817). In his article, Connell focuses his discussion of the burgeoning role of this new man of letters through an analysis of Thomas Frognall Dibdin's and Isaac D'Israeli's writings about bibliomania. In *Bibliomania; or Book Madness* (1809), Dibdin calls for the creation of well-informed bibliographers to help transform the aristocratic bibliomaniac from a self-serving collector into a public benefactor interested in collecting together the nation's literary heritage. By contrast, in his *Curiosities* (1817) and *Literary Character* (1822), D'Israeli seeks to appeal to a mass audience by establishing the man of letters as a mediator both appealing to and redirecting the wider reading public's book cravings through an anecdotal method of writing. Connell maintains that D'Israeli's anecdotal method was an appealing popular form because it enabled diverse classes of the reading public to 'aspire to a moment of cultural identification seemingly unconstrained by social class or narrowly institutionalized forms of knowledge'—Connell, 'Bibliomania', p. 42.
6. Connell, 'Bibliomania', p. 42.
 7. While I employ the term paratext as Gerard Genette describes it in *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), my particular use of the term follows Paul Magnuson's definition in *Reading Public Romanticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998). He sees the Romantic paratext as an entryway and exit from a text that offers roads into public discourses as well as hermeneutic ways into and out of texts.
 8. My argument about Wordsworth as a collector draws on a number of works about Wordsworth's classification system for his 1815 collection. An early study of Wordsworth's classification system appears in Arthur Beatty's *William Wordsworth: His Doctrine and Art in their Historical Relations* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1962). James Scoggins defends Wordsworth's category of Fancy and juxtaposes it with Imagination in *Imagination and Fancy: Complementary Modes of the Poetry of Wordsworth* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966). Francis Ferguson's book *Wordsworth: Language as Counter-Spirit* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977) offers a thoughtful and sweeping analysis of four of Wordsworth's psychological categories as developmental narrative. In *The Wordsworth Circle*, a series of articles discuss the function of Wordsworth's psychological categories, Wordsworth's role as editor, and his awareness of reader response: specifically, see Gene W. Ruoff's 'Critical Implications of Wordsworth's 1815 Categorization, with Some Animadversions on Binaristic Commentary', 9 (1978), 75–82; Judith B. Herman's 'The Poet as Editor: Wordsworth's Edition of 1815', 9 (1978), 82–87; James A. W. Hefferman's 'Mutilated Autobiography: Wordsworth's Poems of 1815', 10 (1979), 107–12; and Donald Ross, Jr's 'Poems Bound Each to Each' in the 1815 Edition of Wordsworth', 12 (1981), 133–140. Susan Meisenhelder's *Wordsworth's Informed Reader: Structures of Experience in his Poetry* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1988) is both a pointed and sweeping examination of the experience of reading the 1815 Poems. More recently, David Duff's 'Wordsworth and the Language of Forms: The Collected Poems of 1815', *Wordsworth Circle* 34 (2003), 86–90, takes up the issue of genre difficulties and paradigm shifts in the 1815 Preface.
 9. Unless otherwise noted, all passages from *The Excursion* are taken from *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, edd. Ernest de Selincourt and Helen Darbishire, 5 vols (1940–49; 2nd edn, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959). Hereafter, *PW*.
 10. After his 1807 *Poems*, Wordsworth published virtually no poetry. Although, between the publication of his 1807 *Poems* and the 1814 *Excursion*, he did publish his

- first *Essay Upon Epitaphs* in Coleridge's *The Friend* (1810), and he also published *The Convention of Cintra* (1809). Notably, Wordsworth withheld publishing 'The White Doe of Rylstone,' 'The Waggoner,' and 'Peter Bell' until after he unveiled his 1815 *Poems* closely on the heels of *The Excursion*. See Peter Manning's chapter 'The White Doe of Rylstone, The Convention of Cintra, and the History of a Career' in his *Reading Romantics: Texts and Contexts* (New York: OUP, 1990), for a detailed explanation of the political climate that influenced Wordsworth's reticence to publish these poems.
11. Stephen Gill, *Wordsworth: A Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 302.
 12. Here, Wordsworth employs the sonnet form as a means to provide a coherent structure for his anxiety about publication and the integrity of his work. Like several of Shakespeare's sonnets, Wordsworth's sonnet testifies to its own monumental status as a complete whole while also pointing metonymically to a larger whole. Wordsworth inverts the rhyme scheme of the final two lines from DE to ED, demonstrating his ability to manipulate poems, which only seem 'premature' within a coherent and contained structure.
 13. As Kenneth Johnston has shown throughout his book *Wordsworth and 'The Recluse'* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), Wordsworth creates this chronology for his public. In fact, composition of portions of *The Recluse* began before *The Prelude*.
 14. *William Wordsworth: The Critical Heritage, Volume 1: 1793–1820*, ed. Robert Woof (New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 385. Subsequent references will be given in the text and are abbreviated as *WCH*.
 15. In 'Rhetorical Structure of the Prospectus to *The Recluse*' from *Monumental Writing: Aspects of Rhetoric in Wordsworth's Poetry* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), J. Douglas Kneale succinctly unpacks the rhetorical nature of the 'Prospectus' by focusing on how it vacillates between proposal and apostrophe while also drawing attention to the complex allusive nature of its design in relation to Milton and Shakespeare.
 16. 'Unassigned Lecture Notes: Milton and Paradise Lost', in R. A. Foakes (ed.) *Lectures 1808–1819 on Literature*, 2 vols (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, and Princeton University Press, 1987), II, 428. Part of *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, gen. ed. Kathleen Coburn.
 17. Gerard Genette's discussion of cyclical continuations in *Palimpsests* offers several valuable insights that aid in describing the type of reading and rewriting activities that Wordsworth's intertextual relations invite. Specifically, I draw on the four types of hypertextual continuation that he describes as proleptic (a text that finishes another text), analeptic (a text that provides the events leading up to that text), elleptic (a text that bridges two texts), and paralletptic (a text providing contiguous present moments for another text).
 18. Thomas McFarland, *William Wordsworth Intensity and Achievement* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 109.
 19. In *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism: The Anxiety of Reception* (Oxford: OUP, 2000), Lucy Newlyn provides a useful parallel for considering Wordsworth's Gothic church metaphor. Describing Coleridge's spoof-letter from a friend in Book XIII of the *Biographia Literaria*, she maintains that the reader who gazes on such a Gothic church and works through his initial frustration/dissatisfaction will move from resistance to awe, even becoming a part of the very Gothic structure that he contemplates (p. 82). In *The Professional Wordsworth: Law, Labor*

- & the Poet's Contract* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1996), Mark Schoenfield draws even wider cultural implications from Wordsworth's metaphor of the Gothic church: 'Wordsworth uses the architectural metaphor of a gothic church, the social function of which overflows its confines into the courts, the shops, the farms, the day-to-day life of the town, and which, because its construction takes centuries, is used before completion and requires its occupants to complete it imaginatively' (p. 195).
20. Even now, the most sustained and influential discussion of Wordsworth's 1815 essays appears in W. J. B. Owen's *Wordsworth as Critic* (Toronto: University Press of Toronto, and London: Oxford University Press, 1969).
 21. Initially, the 1815 *Poems* were to be published even closer in date to the 1814 *Excursion*, showing how intimately interrelated they were to his fragmentary epic. Wordsworth delayed the publication until 1815 largely in order to write the 'Essay Supplementary to the Preface' in response to the scathing reviews garnered by *The Excursion*.
 22. *Theatrical Inquisitor* 6 (June 1815), 445–50, reprinted in *WCH*, 521–22.
 23. In the 'Preface' to *Wordsworth's Reading: 1800–1815*, Duncan Wu describes the development of Wordsworth's private library beginning with his move to Grasmere in 1799, leading up to the collection of his library after his move to Rydal Mount in 1812. Wu also points out the difficulties of every knowing for sure all of the books that Wordsworth collected at given period of time.
 24. Marcus Walsh's *Shakespeare, Milton and Eighteenth-Century Literary Editing* (Cambridge: CUP, 1997) demonstrates explicitly how the edited works of Shakespeare and Milton in the eighteenth century become national treasures that invite competing editorial emendations, which highlight cultural shifts in the conception of authorship and hermeneutics.
 25. In 'Walter Scott, Antiquarianism and the Political Discourse of the *Edinburgh Review*, 1802–1811' from *British Romanticism and the 'Edinburgh Review'*, ed. Duncan Wu (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), Susan Manning underlines the incessant public discussion about the cultural importance of antiquarian collecting pursuits, both from a Whig of perspective of progress (Jeffrey) and from an elegiac Tory perspective (Scott). Taking Percy's *Reliques* as a point of reference for collecting tendencies that Jeffrey praises, Manning remarks that it 'was chronologically arranged to display the progress of poetry from primitive expression towards (relatively) reflective refinement' (p. 113).
 26. Such a statement seems to hark forward to a group of men of letters who champion Wordsworth, such as J. S. Mill, Matthew Arnold, John Ruskin, and Thomas Carlyle.
 27. My argument here counters the long-held argument of M. H. Abrams that Wordsworth's *Essay Supplementary* demonstrates how he turns his back on his audience and adopts an attitude toward poetry, perhaps best articulated by J. S. Mill in 'What is Poetry' (1833). However, my argument also differs from Newlyn's in *Anxiety of Reception*, as well as Andrew Bennett's *Romantic Poets and the Culture of Posterity* (Cambridge and New York: CUP, 1999), in that I do not understand Wordsworth here to be limiting his audience to a coterie circle, made up largely of close friends and family.
 28. Connell provides an excellent discussion of D'Israeli's anecdotal method in his essays, which 'blended biographical anecdote with history, criticism, and sociology

of literature gleaned from a bewildering variety of sources and ranging eclectically over time and place, polite and popular culture' ('Bibliomania', p. 40).

29. Ibid., p. 42.

30. See *Monthly Review* 78 (Nov 1815), 225–34, reprinted in *WCH*, 557–67.

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CONTRIBUTOR DETAILS

Brian Bates received his PhD from the University of Denver, where he is now a Lecturer. He specialises in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century print culture and poetics. This article is taken from a portion of the book that he currently is working on, entitled *Wordsworth's Poetic Contract, Paratexts, and Advertising the Poet*.

