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Romantic Citation and the Receding Future

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in English
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Abstract

This dissertation reads citation in Romantic literature as an aporetic movement between present and past, whereby what is cited becomes the receding ground on which the present and future's erosion is inscribed. Citation exceeds quotation in that it forwards a disastrous intertextuality that retroactively determines not only past texts but events, histories, objects, and genres as accelerants that overshadow and ghost the present with its own extinction. Against generative modes of intertextuality such as those of Kristeva and Bakhtin in which texts' repetitions of other texts facilitates the open-ended overturning and transformation of prior writing, citation precipitates a no future. This no future of Romantic citation, inflected by the period's geological insights into the earth's history as layers of sedimented disasters and extinctions, registers anteriority as topographical depths whose pre-spent force attenuates futurity. Citation thus discloses the destructive feedback loop underlying the generation of "progress" or open-ended futures from the past. Chapter 1 examines how in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* Byron's re-collection of history's ruins becomes a symptom of a post- and pre-post-Waterloo history entropically recycling itself and backdating its "end of history" further into the past and expansively across the globe. In chapter 2, Mary Shelley's *The Last Man* cites literary texts as a form of déjà vu by which we discover ourselves as extinct proleptically in the literary past. Chapter 3 proposes that Percy Shelley's re-cycled tropes and circular plots in the later poems encode the later poetry's archaeological pull toward his corpus's dark ground in the form of his early novel *St. Irvyne* and his other early Gothic texts that shadow his corpus with the specter of its exhaustion. And in chapter 4, Blake's *Jerusalem* ends (Blake's) history by re-citing his earlier works as if they were engines of apocalypse conspiratorially orientated toward *Jerusalem*'s abyssally predestined redemption, a volatile redemption that accelerates the burnout of Blake's "System" rather than its survival into the future.

Keywords

Summary for Lay Audience

Writers have always quoted other writers. However, my dissertation argues that in the Romantic period the way that writers quote—or cite—other texts changes. For the Romantic authors Lord Byron, Mary Shelley, Percy Shelley, and William Blake, what I call *citation* alters and mutates the past it cites in such a way that the author's present aligns disastrously with the upended past. To cite the past is to uproot the grounds of the present. Time-travel plots in science fiction offer a good analogy for how citationality works: the time traveler's interference in past events erases the conditions of her future existence and writes her inexistence into the past as if it had always been. Citation heralds a new, uniquely Romantic relation to time, history, and the past in general. For not only other texts but events, histories, objects, literary personages, and genres can be cited and mutated into the ground on which the present's future erasure is written. Romantic citation registers the insights of the emerging earth sciences of the time, particularly the geological discoveries of extinct animals and ecosystems underlying the literal ground of the present. Citation geologizes time and pulls history and its future into a past conceived as an archeological prophecy of the future's coming fossilization and sedimentation. Chapter 1 looks at how Byron's travelogue *Childe Harold* cites the historical past as an accumulating pile of ruins. Chapter 2 examines how Mary Shelley's post-apocalyptic novel *The Last Man* treats its citations of literary texts as an unfolding prophecy of the novel's human extinction by plague. Chapters 3 and 4 read Percy Shelley and Blake as peculiarly self-citational authors who quote and recycle their own previous works to strange and sometimes disastrous effect. In Chapter 3 Shelley's late poetry compulsively recycles his early, "immature" works, thereby turning the early Shelley into a kind of avenging spirit that the mature Shelley could not move past. And chapter 4 explores how Blake's last poem *Jerusalem* compiles pieces of his earlier poetry into a self-destructive envelope that almost deliberately consigns Blake's name to obscurity.

Acknowledgments

In a project about citation, it is imperative to point out that in this thesis what appear to be my own words and thoughts in actuality recede into a *mise-en-abyme* of prior thoughts and ideas conceived and proffered to me by greater minds. On that note, I am overwhelmingly grateful to my supervisor Tilottama Rajan, and my second reader Joel Faflak. Their patience, intellectual guidance, and tireless support of my work made this project possible when at times it seemed impossible. Throughout I note places where they have contributed or spurred an insight, but if I were to tally every idea they either gave me or helped me develop, or signal every spot they helped me reign in an unwieldy and sprawling sentence, their names would be cited on every other page. I cannot thank them enough for all they have done for me over these past 7 years, and every error or undigested idea in this dissertation is mine alone. I also extend my gratitude to other faculty members at Western who over the years have provided helpful feedback on my work, written letters for me, offered me work, and/or had an important impact on my thinking and academic development: Allan Pero, Matthew Rowlinson, Monika Lee, Alison Conway, Jan Plug, Antonio Calcagno, and Pauline Wakeham.

I thank the close friends I have made at Western these past 7 years, particularly Jeff, Tim, and Christine. I am especially grateful for the daily Zoom calls and virtual film nights the four of us had during the thick of the pandemic. I also want to thank other friends and colleagues who have been there along the way, namely: Thomas, Blake, Stuart, Erin, Mikyla, Ian, Sarah, Kris, and Tony.

I thank Daniel Martin, whose undergraduate classes at Wilfrid Laurier's Brantford Campus first introduced me to Romanticism and literary theory, and without whose initial encouragement I might not have had the confidence to go to graduate school. I also thank my other instructors at Laurier, namely Michael Ackerman, Andrew Atkinson, and Ken Paradis, whose courses had a similar galvanizing effect on me.

I thank my parents, who offered the emotional support and the material conditions that made higher education an option for me. And I thank my dad for tolerating me reading theory for all those summers instead of getting a job.

Finally, I thank Christina, for "like day she came, / Making the night a dream," and her intellectual and emotional aid and consolation has made this process over these past four years less a "harsh world in which I wake to weep" and more the "Heaven which I imagine." She has read everything I have written, and her assiduous editing skills and careful attention to detail compensated for my relative impatience when it comes to the niceties of punctuation, (split) infinitives, and MLA formatting. Again, any errors are mine alone.

Contents

Introduction

Citation's Temporal Predicament

At a pivotal juncture in "The Rhetoric of Temporality" essay (1969), Paul de Man's "rediscovery" of allegory rather than symbol as Romanticism's "authentic temporal" condition hinges upon his reading of a "purely figural," hyperreality of literary allusions in Rousseau's *Julie* (203).[1] Allegory, for de Man, induces a "temporal predicament" wherein the allegorical sign can only refer to a prior sign and is thus consigned to repeat a "pure anteriority" with which "it can never coincide" (207–8). De Man traces early Romanticism's supplanting of the "dialectic between subject and object" with the "priority of an allegorical diction" to Rousseau's portrait of Julie's garden. De Man finds in the garden's topography not a poiesis that establishes the "priority of the natural object," nor the dangerously unmoored "imagination" according to whose apocalypse "the light of sense goes out" (*Rhetoric* 9, 16). Instead, Rousseau deploys the garden as an "extreme artifice" constructed out of allusions from Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and medieval poet Guillaume de Lorris's *Roman de la Rose* that dissolve sense into the "pure anteriority" of "art." This elimination of mimetic reference becomes so absolute for de Man that "Rousseau does not even pretend to be observing [the garden's empirical qualities]" and that "hardly a detail of Rousseau's description … does not find its counterpart in the medieval text" (202–3). What we might call the citationality of Rousseau's passage leads de Man to claim for Romanticism a pre-determination by the "controlled" and "inherited typology" that M. H. Abrams had

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[1] I thank Jan Plug for pointing out to me the relevance of this passage to my thinking on citation.

relegated to the period's superseded past (205).[2] Yet de Man cautions that "the typology is no longer the same," and that this "secularized" allegorical sign's displacement from its receding origin obtains on the condition that the "relationship between the allegorical sign and its meaning is not [or no longer] decreed by dogma" (206–7).

That Rousseau's citationality becomes the catalyst for de Man's analysis points to an untheorized ambiguity of Romanticism's allegorical regime. On the one hand, that allegory emerges inexplicably "secularized" in writers such as Rousseau and William Wordsworth inaugurates a fully (inter)textual relay "between signs" ungrounded from the inherited "meaning" supplied by tradition's "dogma." But on the other hand, de Man implies paradoxically that the modernity of allegory's "void of temporal difference" proceeds from the trace of a premodern determinism whose ostensible loss ought to be the enabling condition of allegory. For the assertion that the premodern "typology is no longer the same" means that the Romantics' "inherited typology" has not gone away, and neither has the imperative of "inheritance" itself. Moreover, de Manian allegory becomes visible only by way of moments when writers like Rousseau and Wordsworth "go[] out of their way" to identify their literary, and in the case of Julie's erotic garden, "theological sources" that couch what de Man sees as allegory's unusable negativity within a *decided* and "controlled set of literary allusions" (207–8). Thus, the unexamined place of citation in de Man's account signposts an uneasy admixture of "premodern" and (post)modern terms: of the "secularized" and the theological, of the uncertain temporal "void" of referent-less signs and the certainty of those signs' genetic code, and of a modern diction both alienated from its origin and replete with its coincidence with a

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[2] See Abrams, "Greater Romantic Lyric."

"medieval" past. Though the citational machinery of Romanticism's rhetoric of temporality drops out of sight in de Man's analysis, de Man's reading demonstrates not only how citation *is* allegorical repetition and vice versa. But literary citation's status as a vanishing mediator between symbol and the allegorical involution of signs referring to other signs reveals citation as an occluded trope for a broader relation to pastness itself. The now voided yet inexorable "inherited typology" stands in for the unstated compulsion by which the allegorical mark *inevitably* recedes into an overshadowing "pure anteriority"—the pullback from Julie's garden to the "medieval text," from the "regressive" symbolic paradigm of the nineteenth-century Romantics to the allegorical regime of de Man's late eighteenth century that has already rendered the Romantic symbol inoperative, and from de Man's own deconstruction of the symbol to Abrams's "traditional and inherited typology" cited by de Man.

  Substituting "citation" for de Man's "allusion," then, I define citation, citationality, and the citational in the works of Lord Byron, Mary Shelley, Percy Shelley, and William Blake as an aporetic movement between present and past, whereby what is cited becomes the wasted, vanishing ground of the receding present that cites it. I employ the term "citation" rather than quotation to designate its kinship with, yet irreducibility to, intertextuality and the act of explicitly or indirectly quoting another text. I propose that quotation and allusion traditionally understood often serves in Romantic texts as a catachresis for what the early Michel Foucault would term the text's or author's "archaeological" drift toward anterior conditions of (im)possibility that surface as waste and lacunae. Thus, citation names a disastrous mode of intertextuality. It not only cites texts as wasted pasts but also events, histories, objects, and particular genres that either

trace the effect of citation's ghosting of the past (Byron's "Grand Tour," Shelley's Gothic) or signal their own exhausted-ness to deploy citation's "pure anteriority" as an inoperable starting point (Mary Shelley's "last man" genre).

Citation's "no future" differs from generative modes of intertextuality, such as that of Julia Kristeva and Mikhail Bakhtin. Kristeva adapts Bakhtin's notion of "dialogism" to buttress her post-structuralist insight that "any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another" (37). The re-cited character of language and speech pre-encodes not only literary works but social discourses as "texts" and thereby casts all speech and writing as a "destructive genesis" that confronts and overturns a prior "corpus" (Kristeva 40, 47), to produce an ongoing revolution in poetic language. Citation, by contrast, advances not just a textuality but a disastrous temporality that does not, as dialogism does, proliferate into the future. Rather, citation's temporality pre-programs the past to be summoned as the dark ground in which the present and future's erosion and sedimentation are inscribed. Against the ambivalent agency of Kristeva's and Bakhtin's intertextual subject, the recursive trajectories of Byron's, the Shelleys', and Blake's texts consist of finding the subject's transformation, recovery, or overturning of the past and/or flight to the future as already cited and overturned by an eclipsing "pure anteriority."[3]

Here citation lends itself to Tom Cohen's gloss on de Manian allegory, in which the latter's "commentary of … sign on signs" entails the "deformation of *anteriority* as

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[3] Citation also differs from the early Jacques Derrida's notion of iterability. For Derrida, the singular eventhood of any performative utterance occurs via a "citational doubling" that ghosts the singularity of the "event-utterance" with an always prior "iterable model" ("Signature Event Context" 18). The difference between my understanding of citationality and Derrida's is that Derrida regards this "doubling" as affirming the event's conditions of (im)possibility, its capacity for dissemination rather than, as I will suggest, its extinction.

such" (*Ideology* 106). Citation thereby involves an intervention into historical or textual memory that is accelerated and consumed in turn by the past it (finds) deformed. Thus, what I call citation's allegorical structure draws not just from de Man's the "Rhetoric of Temporality" but also his later *Allegories of Reading* (1979). Although the early essay registers inchoately allegory's demystification of the symbol's nostalgia for origins as harbouring a no future, allegory retains vestiges of that nostalgia by inhabiting the "void of temporal distance" that nonetheless preserves "pure anteriority" as a remote origin. But the later de Man accelerates allegory's temporal predicament into a more self-eviscerating, "unreadable" trajectory that traces language's vorticular "relapse" into its false promise for truth and referential origin cancelled in advance. For the late de Man, the disjunction between language and its promise for a referential foundation "shown to be impossible" (*Allegories* 275) forwards a "textual allegory" that "generate[s] history" (277) and temporality as an errant peripetia back to the future of language's pre-terminated promise. Allegory transposes the earlier essay's "void of temporal difference" between futurity and the origin onto the now voided origin itself. Allegory's "pure anteriority" here marshals a shadowy prehistory that simulates while evacuating a divine foundation—the divine "realization of the promise before its utterance" that grounds the "teleological system oriented toward the convergence of figure and meaning." Allegory thereby backdates "history" itself (*Allegories* 274). Language's allegorical recoil into its de-realized promise does not inertly repeat but accumulates and progressively (de)generates history. Grafting allegory's no future onto a reading of Rousseau, de Man extrapolates from language's non-promissory mechanics a generalized "economy of *loss*"

that, in a formulation de Man leaves unelaborated, programs history and the social with a "thermodynamics governed by a debilitating entropy" (272).

I adapt de Man's "thermodynamics," then, as a resource to think citation's allegorical function and how it facilitates and accelerates history's entropic re-passing through its evacuated prehistory. Citation as opposed to "quotation" bears a genealogy that emphasizes the term's fraught interventive status. For citation refers etymologically to a "calling" or summoning to a tribunal and subsequent "judgment." Citation does not recall the past neutrally but purports to judge it, to intervene in it. Citation's judgment, its non-disinterested summoning of the past, ineluctably harbours traces of the "Judgment Day." Here time's forward movement ceases and history stands to be recapitulated in the key of redemption or damnation. Citation's memory of the Judgment Day brings into focus the former's status as an event, as an occurrence rather than an explication of a literary condition. However, citation's devastated metalanguage—its vortex of "sign on signs"—boomerangs the Last Judgment's rallying of history into the ambit of redemption and instead itemizes and actualizes history as the accumulative exposure of its "debilitating entropy." Citation forwards a suicidal and reflexively performative Judgment Day. The Judgment's roll call of history under the sign of history's retreating anteriority retro-installs history's allegorical, evacuated origin, and in doing so construes the event of Judgment itself as an acceleration and belated effect of the thermodynamics already gathering within history's recycled signs.

This empty Judgment Day escalates a more general event of citation in the texts under examination. Thus, the writers covered in this study will convey their texts' citationality as a traumatic (re)discovery that recoils into the a priori, iterative

structuration that now *retroactively* pervades history (Byron, Mary Shelley) and/or a literary corpus (Percy Shelley, Blake). Citation theorizes a (non)event—what *The Last Man* calls a "former revelation" that retro-projects the *now* and its *a-venir* as specters inhabiting their own past extinctions. Therefore Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* deploys the simulacrum of travel to deform the encounter with geographical alterity into the ruse of an already accomplished globalization that assimilates novelty and diversity into history's algorithmically reiterated ruins; Mary Shelley's *The Last Man* cites literary texts as a form of déjà vu by which we discover ourselves proleptically fossilized in the literary past; and Percy Shelley's re-cycled tropes and circular plots in the later poems do not so much convey the genetic markers of his poetic repertoire's evolution, as they encode the later poetry's archaeological pull toward *St. Irvyne* and the other early gothic texts whose dark ground (over)shadows his corpus. Finally, Blake's *Jerusalem* plots its characters' and the reader's bewilderment at how their redemptive agency becomes the effect rather than cause of a redeemed future found already accrued by the past of both *Jerusalem* and the Blake corpus as a whole.

Dark Abysses of Time: War, Geology, Extinction

The Romantic period affords various historical, intellectual, and political contexts that form the matrix in which this citational understanding of history and textuality becomes possible. That Romantic poetry and philosophy serve as de Man's testing ground for his theories of allegory and language's violent and self-effacing pyrotechnics adumbrates a blueprint for reading Romanticism as a crucial juncture at which history thinks itself as the afterlife of a terminated promissory history. The critical cliché that

Romanticism is a backward-looking paradigm, or what W. J. T. Mitchell calls a "fossil

formation in the history of culture," possesses a grain of truth that glimpses the period's

no future by casting Romanticism as a pathological attachment to the archive. What

Mitchell calls Romanticism's "obsession with lost worlds, ruins, archaism, childhood,

and idealistic notions of feeling and imagination" (186) bespeaks not reactionary

nostalgia but a more self-aware and compulsive retracing of loss occasioned by any

number of historical determinates such as the dissolution of more "organic," agrarian

communities by increasing industrialization and urbanization, or the French Revolution

as a break with historical precedent. This sense of the period's replaying of its losses

dovetails with the modern, deracinating force of an emergent commodity capitalism,

whose emptying-out of inherited values Jerome Christensen sees as the apogee of a

longer process of "seizure" and privatization dating back to the state's confiscation of

church property during the Reformation. The past as such thus shares the ongoing fate of

the religious past, insofar as both survive as "properties displayed, cited, and

dramatized," or "cleaned, [and] mounted" (Christensen 327).[4] Capital and the museum

conspire to picture a self-suffocating modernity that leaves history with no options

besides re-citing and re-circulating its past.

As a "fossil formation" Romanticism does not just passively regress into the self-

extinction pressed by modernity's uprooting forces, but also pursues and even critically

accelerates this self-extinction's effects. The view opposing the period's ostensible

nostalgia that Romanticism names a revolutionary, futural paradigm in fact indexes the

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[4] Notably, the Romantic period saw the rise of the first national and public museums with the Louvre's
founding in 1793 and the National Portrait Gallery's establishment in 1824.

period's preoccupation with a darker futurity, in which the future and foreclosed past become entangled and mutually unsettled in the chaos of a cyclical history. For example, the Gothic genre is the creature of the French Revolution insofar as the genre abyssally turns upon revolution's unraveling as (the) Terror.[5] Further, the Gothic signals not an archaic reaction formation against the uprooting forces of modernity, nor a progressive capitalization on the premodern past that modernity has ravaged, but an acceleration of these two trajectories' troubled imbrication. For the modernity signaled by the Gothic's frantic re-citing and re-circulation of the past's hollowed-out signifiers, especially in Percy Shelley's hastening of the genre's self-citational structure, might be said to ghost a radically demythologized and in-humanized experience of time and history. This Gothic, inhuman temporality becomes tangible within the occluded interval between capital's melting down of inherited structures to their bare life, and capital's readorning of history's metaphysically destitute material with modernity's own myths of progress and economic growth.[6]

The reflexivity of "sign on signs" thereby stipulates a uniquely Romantic process by which history and time relate to themselves. Thomas Moynihan proposes that human extinction first becomes thinkable in the Romantic period via the epistemic shift of Immanuel Kant's transcendental philosophy, in which Kant's re-location of "epistemic and propositional contents" from the realm of the transcendent to the finite, organic human naturalizes our "cognitive frame" and exposes it to finitude (14, 9). David Collings tracks a similar disastrous immanentization of the transcendent through his

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[5] I thank Tilottama Rajan for this phrasing of the Gothic's political unconscious.
[6] See, for example, Fredric Jameson's account of the "deep bottomless vegetative time of Being itself" momentarily disclosed once modernization and industrial capitalism remove the "traditional representations with which human temporality was disguised and domesticated" (*Seeds of Time* 84).

notion of the "Real of modernity." As Collings observes, the late Enlightenment and late eighteenth century witness the secular premise that "millennial promises" might be realized in actual history. This displacement from divine action to human temporality installs history with an impossible telos that perpetually undoes history itself (*Disastrous Subjectivities* 3, 5). The exclusion of a violent "final judgment" from history produces an "obliterated transcendence" within history, a "non-redemptive infinity" manifested in "endless natural disasters" that threaten human life and shape earth's catastrophic history (Collings 9–10).

Revising catastrophe as a mode of immanent catastrophe, Romantic citation unfolds a history consumed by a hollowed-out metalanguage with nowhere to go except through its own former "signs,"[7] an "end of history," or a generalized "textual allegory" that escalates history's foreclosure. A text like Shelley's *The Triumph of Life* re-gathers history as the serialized extinguishing of its "major" personages. The poem casts history's accelerating ruin as a predestining force that has already overtaken the "shadows" we "have but thrown" (*Triumph* 250–1) on history's canvas and which we have inscribed as the triumphal chariot's wasteful accelerants. Similarly, Byron's *Harold* depicts the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-centuries' tendency to collect culture as a replaying of a drive to self-extinction endemic to history. Culture thus becomes a pile-up of classified natural and historical specimens re-cited as mummified museum pieces, or as liquidated objects re-circulated and used-up as capital.

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[7] "History" in this sense becomes akin to what Stanley Fish calls a "self-consuming artifact." Fish's term refers to an "anti-aesthetic" text that is "the vehicle of its own abandonment." The text "disallows to its productions the claims usually made for verbal art—that [art] reflect, or contain or express Truth," and is instead "consumed" in its "effects" (3–4). I adapt Fish's paradigm loosely to think history itself as an anti-mimetic kind of text that becomes the "vehicle of its own abandonment" and self-dissolution in its inability to signify beyond its representational, tropological status.

This suicidal drive is instantiated by the mobilization of "total war" that first took shape during the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, in which war becomes an archaism outside the normal progression of history but which could be pulled back into history as an apocalyptic course correction to bring civilization to extinction or perpetual peace.[8] That England was at war from the 1790s to 1815 marks Romanticism as a time of war.[9] The increased power and scale of modern warfare during these decades compacts time's progressive orientation into a hemorrhaged universal history. Kant in 1784 could follow the lead of earlier Enlightenment universal histories and suggest that history's vicissitudes deposit "seed[s] of enlightenment" that cumulatively justify reading history heuristically according to an *a priori* "guiding thread" that charts history's progress toward a global federation of nation states. But by 1795 the onset of the Terror and the revolutionary wars compels Kant to wonder if such a "guiding thread" might not be the sign of perpetual peace but of "the vast graveyard of humanity as a whole" (110). In similar fashion, Byron's *Harold* stages the intersection of contemporary travel, the deracinating forces of the market and mass culture, and war itself as the *récit* of a fatal globalization gathering all of history into "Destruction's mass" (*CH* IV.1476). Accelerationist "total war" absorbs the "final judgment" topos and calls history not to its redemption but extinction. Thus, Blake's apocalypse in his darkly encyclopedic *Jerusalem* amounts to what Kant calls a "war of extermination" (110). For *Jerusalem* ironically actualizes the Enlightenment fantasy of a fully "revealed" and classified earth

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[8] See David Bell (1–13). Bell's "total war" looks back to Carl von Clausewitz's term "absolute war" from his posthumously published tract *On War* (1816–1830). For more on this concept, see chapters 1 and 4.
[9] See Mary Favret's *War at a Distance* on this point.

as a terminal legibility that converts "all that has existed" into fuel for war's globalizing vacuum.

Furthermore, the period's emergent sense of inhabiting what Paolo Rossi calls the geological "dark abyss of time" draws the prolepses of Romanticism's self-extinction into a receding anteriority of "semi-infinite past[s]" (Rossi 112) wiped out and fossilized. This citational regress of the present and future into the shadowy anteriority of what the paleontologist Georges Cuvier would call "former world[s]" had been registered in cultural terms by comparative mythography in the late eighteenth century. C. F. Volney's popular 1791 text *The Ruins* deconstructs Western Europe's Judeo-Christian inheritance by tracking its fraught emergence from the anterior traces of its cultural and geographical others: the Zoroastrianism of middle eastern Asia, the Hinduism and Buddhism of India, and the astrology and linguistic errors of the "first tribes of Egypt" seventeen thousand years ago (117). Elizabeth Fay discerns a similar recursive movement toward the future anterior of former worlds in the period's romanticizing of an "occulted" Egypt conceived as western metaphysics' "unground." Egypt's occulted anteriority holds out a literally "interred" origin beneath its decaying structures and sutures western philosophy's "new possibilit[ies] for going forward" to Egypt's retreating and "illegible ruin" that must be repeatedly "disinterred, unveiled, uncovered" (Fay 267–8). The cosmopolitanism we observe in something like Volney's comparative survey of world religions—not to mention the dark side of cosmopolitanism instantiated in Napoleon's expedition in Egypt and Syria in 1798, which retraces Alexander's campaign in Egypt—advances not just outward but downward into the geological strata of the present's already globalized "unground." Thus, a text like Byron's *Cain* geologizes Volney's ruins and the

accumulative globalization of deracinated cultures and histories we will observe in *Harold*. *Cain* re-inscribes the abyssal expansion and re-collection of culture's ruins in *Harold* as the abyssal recession of history's "Genesis" into layers of pre-Adamite fossils and their extinct ecosystems.

Throughout this study geology's idiom of fossils, strata, sedimentation, and extinction figures how citation imbues temporality with space, specifically space conceived as accumulation, deposits, and entombment. Thus, in chapter 2 *The Last Man*'s status as a citation of actual fossils carries forward into how the novel's extinction event deposits the present into the citations of former extinction texts. However, the earth sciences and their excavations of the earth's former iterations also open onto a temporality of accelerated resource extraction, continuing into our own time, that capitalizes on history's pre-fossilization. English naturalists such as John Whitehurst and James Parkinson read in the earth's accumulated disasters a hoard of deposited raw material or fossil fuels, as it were, that would power the back-looping of history's forward momentum. But against this trajectory of hyper-extraction that sublimates geohistory's traumas within a discourse of progress and improvement, geology's revelations of fossilized worlds physically underlying the present also grants a materiality to the temporality of the "always already" that arrests time within its "unground." For geology makes available a thinking of anteriority as erasure, as extinct in advance. Geology and its fossils, before the advent of thermodynamics, introduce entropy and irreversibility into time and history, especially Cuvier's theory of species extinction and Comte de Buffon's speculations of a progressively freezing and uninhabitable future. For

the present is "always already" a fossil since the fossil encrypts the trajectory of the future as if it knows where the present will have terminated.

German Romanticism offers further formulations that adumbrate what I am calling a citational temporality that darkens the past's incursions into the future. Friedrich Schelling's paradigm of a pre-originary, erased ground that overdetermines the future's unsettling incalculability betrays, as Tilottama Rajan reminds us, "the effects of geology on transcendental philosophy," namely the earth sciences' revelation that "there is no absolute beginning, but rather an infinite regress of earlier worlds" ("Spirit's Psychoanalysis" 193). Schelling's notion of a "general past," an always already negated past that could never have been present, advances a citational temporality in its re-thinking of "ground" and "origin" as abyssal and infinitely recessive. That which is primordially anterior proves supplemented by an other, dark ground whose pre-originary negation becomes the "immediate ground, the potency that begets the actual being," thereby carrying forward negation as "the precedent of every movement" (Schelling 16–17). This ancestrally negated, dark ground co-eternal with every posited present resurfaces as shadows of futurity, or as Jason M. Wirth puts it, an "intimation" of the "future as the 'awful' and 'terrible,'" and whose coming "does not preserve the present but rather overturns it" (xix, xvii). Schelling therefore sketches something of a non-promissory, geological futurity that menaces the present with its proleptic entombment.

Citation's "No Future"

This study's theorization of Romantic citation as a textual and/or historical paradigm brings to mind Walter Benjamin's theorization of citation. What the Benjamin

in the "Theses on the Philosophy of History" terms the "secret agreement between past generations and the present one" entails a constellation of past and present through which the past's total legibility—its "temporal index by which [the past] is referred to redemption" (*Illuminations* 254)—becomes available. As Christopher Fynsk puts it, the past's revealed "temporal index" affixes itself to an as if unsurpassable context before whose arrival that past "will not be readable" (220–1). This late Benjamin offers a mode of citation that arrests the past's incalculable generation into futurity. Benjamin's messianic cessation of time forwards what Werner Hamacher calls a "hunchbacked theology" that cites the past as a utopian archive oriented toward the unanswered claims of the "unfinished, the failed, and the thwarted" (40). However, my study's lingua franca of non-redemptive terms such as "erasure," "extinction," and "acceleration" resonates primarily with the early, post-idealist Benjamin of the *Trauerspiel* and that text's limning of more disastrous temporalities that he would recuperate in the "Theses." This Benjamin's evacuated allegory brings about "the non-existence of what it presents" (*Origin* 233) and inspired the early de Man's thinking of allegory as a recession toward a destitute or, we might say, extinct origin. Furthermore, Benjamin's study on Baroque drama glimpses an eviscerating eschatology that dovetails with Romanticism's non-apocalyptic "total war" paradigm and its double movement of exhaustive cataloguing and universal destruction. For the Baroque's non-eschatology gathers from the "hereafter" a "profusion of things which customarily escaped the grasp of artistic formulation" and "brings them violently into the light of day" to evacuate "heaven" and enable it, like a "vacuum," to "destroy the world with catastrophic violence" (*Origin* 66). If Benjamin's

"Theses" sketches a "hunchbacked" theology, then the *Trauerspiel* yields what we might call an extinction theology.

What I am calling the early Benjamin's extinction theology faintly presages the late Benjamin's weak messianism and yet sucks this messianism into the *Trauerspiel*'s black hole. The early and later de Man's allegory traverses the early Benjamin's short-circuited messianism and arguably carries it forward into his thinking on language as an obliterated foundation productive of a "debilitating entropy." It is this non-redemptive constellation between de Man and the early Benjamin that is occluded by some Romanticists' anxious turn to the late, messianic Benjamin after de Man's reputation came under fire in the late 1980s and 1990s.[10] Therefore, this study claims this de Man-Benjamin constellation as a primary theoretical touchstone. Furthermore, this study invokes de Man as he has been reevaluated by Lee Edelman, Cohen, and Claire Colebrook. For these theorists "de Man" names a stimulus for a thinking of a "future without promise" (Colebrook, *Disappearing Future* 18). Such a future inflects our twenty-first century horizons of anthropogenic climate change and mass extinctions, horizons of which the "anomal[ous]" de Man offers an "alternative genealogy" (Cohen, "Toxic Assets" 128) precluded by the late Derrida's weak messianisms. In addition to the "debilitating entropy" that de Man's machinal "grammar" transposes onto history, critical

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[10] Deborah Elise White's 1995 essay on Percy Shelley's "Allegorical Imperative" proves emblematic of this shift. White invokes de Man briefly to elucidate the positional power of performative language in Shelley's poetry, only to swiftly dispense with de Man by brusquely summarizing his perspective on Shelley's figural language as "notoriously brutal" (58). White then oddly sides with the Benjamin of the *Trauerspiel*, namely that text's notion of "origin" as "ongoing emergence" of "becoming and disappearing" in White's gloss, to marshal a more affirmative paradigm for Shelley's non-mimetic poiesis (73). That White, in an essay on "allegory" and "reference" in Shelley, returns to the early Benjamin to harness a weak messianism while sidestepping this Benjamin's notion of allegory as a similarly "brutal" erasure of reference, proves symptomatic of this occlusion of the de Man-Benjamin constellation I am describing.

terms that radiate or irradiate outside of de Man's concerns with language's aporias include "irreversibility," "materiality," and "inscription." Cohen mines the latter in particular as a cipher for the inhuman "memory programs" and "trace mechanisms" that precede and outsource consciousness and whose prostheses, in our era of simulacra and endless screens, have turned "suicidal and auto-accelerative" (129). Cohen thus mobilizes de Man's "legacy" otherwise as "toxic assets." De Man's toxic assets name his status as a "troubled *cipher*" (Cohen, *Ideology* 32) for certain logics that his thought could not foresee but will have come to catalyze. But "toxic assets" further indexes what Cohen calls a broader "regime of *reference*" and legacy itself that the following chapters will limn. For "toxic assets" herald a "double logic" by which, in Cohen's idiom of eco-catastrophe, "terrestrial preserves, in being capitalized, convert into poisons, down to ground water" ("Toxic Assets" 97). These preserves contaminate irreversibly the future foundations their use and domestication would sustain. We might think of these poisoned preserves in terms of the future-spoiling viscosity of the nuclear waste irradiating "at the bottom of the sea" to which Derrida consigns de Man in "Biodegradables" (861), Derrida's anti-hagiographical reflections on de Man's toxic legacy.

Edelman also extends de Man's thinking otherwise to a de-ontology of how the political and its logic of "reproductive futurism," like de Man's textual allegories, are caught in a feedback loop with the symbolic order's originary, de-realized promise to merge signification and meaning. I therefore invoke Edelman's term "no future" to queer further the messianic tinge that, especially since the late Benjamin, would seem to stick to citation. Edelman's term demystifies our investment in "the promise of something that is *always* 'to come'" as a lure that masks the "repetitions of the drive" as desire's

promissory orientation ("Pathology" 35). "No future" names the dissolution of the

"interminable movement toward the closure of meaning" that structures the symbolic

order and underlies our "reproduction" of futurity. The term also exposes this dissolution

as already operative in language's "cadaverous materiality" of "white noise"

misrecognized as the signifier's meaningful pursuit of its constitutive lack (*No Future*

152–3). In citation's no future the present re-produces and defers its future through a past

now grasped as "toxic assets." In other words, anteriority's ontological lack does not

necessarily render the present and past's relationship endlessly reconfigurable. Nor does

that unfinishedness persist for the present to mine and convert into the specter of

fulfillment that is then chased into, and productive of, futurity. What Edelman's no future

excavates from de Man is a sense of anteriority's permanent disjunction as a kind of

finished-ness, an un-capitalizable lack that renders the future an irreversible deficit.

Edelman invokes de Man's reading of Benjamin's "history" to harness the

signifier's "cadaverous materiality," from the outset denuded of progress or promise, as

not a linguistic predicament but the boomeranging arc of the social, history, and "life"

itself. For de Man, as Edelman quotes him, what Benjamin calls "history" names "the

illusion of a life that is only an afterlife" (de Man, "'Conclusions'" 33; Edelman 152). In

Edelman's Lacanian idiom, this state of damaged survival persists on the other side of a

semantic extinction, a sterilizing of history's and life's dialectic of desire that has always

already come. As Cohen puts it, de Man's interest in language as a machine-like structure

iterative of Edelman's "static white noise" (*No Future* 153) can be mobilized differently

to think history as swayed by "what pre-emptively disfigures, perforates, deflates,

compels evasion" ("Trolling" 56). Within the horizon that de Man's no future ciphers,

life is "afterlife" and history a "post-" without any genuine substance or promise behind

or ahead of it. De Man's thought thus survives as a temporal index for a "history" or

"humanity" not forever to come but already extinct.[11] Edelman's de Manian no future as

an afterlife in the absence of any "life" from which we might have been severed glosses

the post-apocalyptic posture of citation. For citation also occurs in the aftermath of itself

and the triumph of its "suicidal" movement. The titular figure of Mary Shelley's *Last

Man* tropes this condition of living on after finding one's citation and intervention into

history accelerated into an event always already past and beyond the control of any

subject.

Late Romanticism and Anthropocene Reading

Earlier studies that foreshadow Romanticism's citational character define

Romanticism according to how it reckons with and transforms its anteriority, and

sometimes designates Romantic authors' literal citation of texts as the vehicle of such a

transformation.[12] My understanding of Romantic citation as a ghosting of the period's

extinction finds its closest analogue in the critical topos of Romanticism's *belatedness*.

The period itself offers resources for thinking its own belatedness, namely Friedrich

Schiller's dialectic between naïve and sentimental poetry. The naïve poet, which Schiller

aligns with ancient Greek poetry, exhibits an unreflective immediacy with "nature" as a

sensuous, plenitudinous presence, whereas the modern, sentimental poet can only image

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[11] Interestingly, de Man early on places Romanticism in the zone of such an "afterlife." For de Man's "Rhetoric of Temporality" casts Romanticism's tendency toward a symbolic diction as a "regress[ion]" from the allegorical "truths" that "come to light in the last quarter of the eighteenth century" (208). For de Man, these irradiating "truths" pre-emptively render Romanticism a kind of "illusion."

[12] For instance, Abrams's 1971 *Natural Supernatural* famously casts Wordsworth's appropriation of biblical themes and narrative patterns as a synecdoche for how the period's "most distinctive and recurrent elements" are "translated" from "theological concepts, images, and plot patterns" from which the Romantics extract cultural capital (65).

the naïve poet's unity between "sense and reason" as a "*moral* unity," and hence as a

"striving after unity" (110–111). Schiller defines sentimental, *Romantic* poetry as a

temporal predicament in which the Romantic poet chases after and draws an aesthetic

desideratum from an idealized, displaced origin. In Romantic criticism, Walter Jackson

Bate first articulates the critical trope of belatedness in *The Burden of the Past*, which

portrays the Romantics as suffering acutely from an "accumulating anxiety" in the wake

of an amassing literary past that has long "exhausted" literature's possibilities (3, 5).

Harold Bloom's *Anxiety of Influence* and *Map of Misreading* take Bate's pessimism in an

affirmative direction by depicting in Romanticism a transformative "sublimation" of

"strong" poets like John Milton, a mis-citing of forbears that allows Wordsworth, Blake,

or John Keats to become "strong" poets in turn (*Anxiety* 125). Marjorie Levinson's new

historicist *Keats's Life of Allegory* redrafts Keats's anxiety of influence as a sociological

as well as psychological condition. She finds in Keats's "overwrought inscriptions of

canonical models" a middle-class opportunism, a misappropriation of canonical voices

that degrades them into reified "*signatures*" and "material *signs*" and betrays an originary

dispossession in all "writerly origins" (4, 15, 16).[13] Levinson thus frames "allegory"—

Keats's ironic self-characterization of his belated relation to a calcifying "pure

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[13] In addition to these studies, there have been other forays into Romanticism and citation over the past several decades. Ian Balfour in *Rhetoric of Romantic Prophecy* occasionally links citation and prophecy by taking up Benjamin's notion of citation as "the model for the revolutionary moment of history." Balfour invokes Benjamin to propose that every cited text "attains, if only retroactively, a prophetic aura" (17–18). And Alexander Regier's *Fracture and Fragmentation in British Romantic Literature* contains a chapter on what he calls the "doubling force of citation" in Thomas de Quincey's archiving of Romanticism via his Wordsworth (mis)citations. For Regier, de Quincey's mis-citation of Wordsworth's "Arab Dream" episode not only "presents citation *as part of* what is archived and canonized" in de Quincey's reminiscences of Wordsworth, but also yokes the citational fracture itself to "the survival of poetry" and thus heralds a Romanticism that "feeds off broken structures" (162, 164, 142).

anteriority"—through the optics of class and thereby limits to particular historical

circumstances what this study reads as existing on a more profound, endemic level.

The critical discourse more germane to citation's death driven process is what

Brecht de Groote and others term "late Romanticism." The discourse of late Romanticism

picks up the trope of belatedness mobilized by the foregoing critical accounts and

expands it into a more trenchant and widespread historical and ontological paradigm.

Unfolding roughly between the 1810s and 1840, late Romanticism indexes an exhausted

"sub-period" and gathers myriad cultural and historical twilights that "perpetuate but

complicate and modulate Romantic ideas and ideals" (de Groote, "Change Time" 2). As

Angela Esterhammer puts it, Romanticism post-1820 denotes for many literary historians

then and now "a weak and watered-down variety of Romanticism" (5). Such narratives of

twilights and "post-"s that mark Romanticism's lateness include: the death knell of

revolutionary hope following Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo and the restoration of the

Bourbon monarchy[14]; the deaths of high Romanticism's cultural touchstones such as

Percy Shelley and Byron, which leave Romanticism's biographers like Mary Shelley and

William Hazlitt to fashion themselves as surviving in the shadows of more extraordinary

figures; the ongoing extinction of poetry at the hands of the (Victorian) novel and the

increasing displacement of high literature; and the attenuated survival of early Romantics

such as Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Blake who outlive the later of the

"big six" and live on in the aftermath of their own works, which these late figures can

only re-cite, re-collect and, in the case of Blake, exhaust and extinguish. Such events on

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[14] See, for example, Jerome Christensen's formulation in *Romanticism at the End of History* that the sterile peacetime following Waterloo yields the "foreclosure of a future" and renders the present a "time of extended convalescence, which anticipates no return of robust, belligerent health" (7).

which Romanticism's lateness pivots signal the sub-period's attempt to consolidate "an accelerating series of social and political changes to a watershed moment" (de Groote, "Change Time" 5) to determine retroactively the paper trail of Romanticism's extinction. Late Romantic biographers such as Hazlitt and Edward John Trelawny perceive that "the temporality into which authors once self-evidently … projected their texts is now no more" and that the only trajectory remaining for Romanticism's survivors is a fatalistic "prophecy in reverse." Everything that Romantics such as Shelley and Byron accomplished thus becomes marked retrospectively with their and Romanticism's "predestination for eventful death" (de Groote, "Below the Line" 14).

Late Romanticism comes closer to what I am calling Romanticism's citational paradigm than Bloom's or Levinson's accounts. For the belatedness that Late Romanticism pursues proves irreducible to the psychological complexes on which Bloom fixates. And although late Romanticism's emergence is traceable to a delimited field of dates and events, it exceeds the type of socio-historical pressures that govern Keats's life of allegory. Late Romanticism, particularly de Groote's formulation, forwards a belatedness that gestures toward a more pervasive mutation of temporality. Belatedness as "prophecy in reverse" signals a citational event, a belated recognition of and recession into the author's or period's predestination, a predestination as if gathered archaeologically in the past's lithic deposits.

However, citation extends and complicates late Romanticism by emphasizing how the period is in fact *early* to its own belatedness. Notably, the quintessentially late Hazlitt does not just posit himself on the other end of the epoch's twilight, but casts his titanic contemporaries themselves into an evacuated temporality. Thus, Hazlitt deems Scott an

uninventive "amanuensis" of both all that "*has been*" and the past's "foregone

conclusion[s]." Against Scott's crushing "retentiveness of memory" the present and

future dissolve into "a dull, hateful blank" (93, 106, 85). The early Byron of *Harold*

likewise mummifies the contemporary by his obsessive recourse to "the crumbling

monuments of time" and the "mighty spirit of antiquity" (Hazlitt 110). Consequently,

chapter 1 will explore how in *Harold* I and II Byron arrives at Waterloo's "end of

history" prior to the battle's occurrence, and how in the same poem's movement Byron

will proleptically encrypt the derailment and extinction of *Don Juan*'s comic

interminability. But more importantly, the texts discussed here reveal a fatal, recursive

prolepsis as the basis of belatedness and lateness that turns this late period's supposed

"weakness" into the hieroglyph of an ongoing, historically unbounded desolation of

futurity. For as we will observe most clearly in *The Last Man*, the numerous watershed

moments invoked to map an epoch's extinction disclose "history" and historical events

themselves as the belated dotting of the i's of a radically anterior, recessive event, like

Schelling's *a priori* negation and its "deep time." This event has already overdetermined

and rendered inaccessible the period's full grasp of its lateness.

Finally, this study's sustained attention to an extinction temporality structured

according to what Christopher Bundock once called a "hyper-memory that attempts to

convert the future into something always-already 'past'" (*Composing Darkness* 7) breaks

from recent scholarship that interprets Romanticism as an unbounded thinking of the

future alive to limitless virtual possibilities.[15] My reading of citation, perhaps perversely,

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[15] Notable studies on Romanticism's multiple and open futures are Bundock's *Romantic Prophecy and the Resistance to Historicism* and Emily Rohrbach's *Modernity's Mist*. For Bundock, Romantic prophecy names the fraught terrain on which the emergent sense of history's "impossibility" and unprecedentedness

complicates this notion of the virtual and plenitudinous possibilities as the primary

outgrowth of the Romantics' dark futurity, and will sketch an alternate backward

trajectory for futurity's *certain* "impossibility." Such understandings of futurity's

traumatic incalculability as the tenuous conditions for a non-teleological and

plenitudinous present rely implicitly or explicitly on a particular conception of modernity

sketched by Reinhart Koselleck, Hannah Arendt, and others, namely modernity as a

definitive "break" with the past.[16] According to Koselleck's influential argument, the

unprecedentedness of the French Revolution temporalizes time by instigating a rupture

between what he designates the "space of experience" and the now incalculable "horizon

of expectation" (280, see also 267–88). Following this epistemic shift, history and the

future become untethered from traditional calculi of thinking and narrating history, such

as history as a *magistra vitae* beholden to precedent.

How citation heralds non-secular incarnations of supposedly premodern forms

such as typology, predestination, "revenge," apocalypse, or closed and totalized futures

seems to re-claim the temporality from which modernity had to extricate itself. For

Koselleck this means the untemporalized, soteriological time of the Middle Ages,

wherein "the always-already guaranteed futurity of the past" levels history's flux into

"static movement" constrained by the already "guaranteed" coming of the Judgment Day

(17). Indeed, citation partly entails what Fredric Jameson describes as a "more archaic,

doom- or curse-like" form of anteriority (*Valences* 145). The incalculability of this doom-

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becomes a "foundation for the virtual" and possibilities ungrounded from probability and precedent (156). In a similar vein, Rohrbach reads in Romanticism's forecasting of its "dark futurity" an anticipative retrospection—a thought of the future anterior in terms of the "what *might will have been*" that imbues the present with "multiple, often incompatible possibilities" (2).

[16] Arendt shares with Kosseleck the belief that modernity is inextricably tied to a temporality of the "unprecedented" made possible by the American and French revolutions (34).

like past lies not in the future but in the re-discoveries of just how pervasively the past

has preprogrammed the to-come. And the almost theological, albeit receding, legibility

that sways citation's ambit and closes down alternatives casts a seemingly logocentric

finality as analogous to the suicidal legibility of the Anthropocene. As with the signature

of the Anthropocene and the Anthropos it makes legible, this future anterior proleptically

and retroactively destroys what it renders readable. In line with recent challenges to

Koselleck's privileging of breaks and ruptures to account for modernity,[17] the now

anteriorly guaranteed horizon of anthropogenic climate change onto which the following

texts open gives us good reason to reckon with "the always-already guaranteed futurity of

the past." This unashamedly bleak view of Romanticism's sense of futurity follows the

spirit of Frank Ruda's recent book in making a plea for an informed fatalism.[18] It is not

so much that this theory of citation is incompatible with affirmative trajectories of

Romanticism's "impossibility" and negativity. Rather, if such negativity becomes the

"ground for the virtual" (Bundock, *Prophecy* 156), then the bodies of texts discussed here

delineate exhaustively the full force of that "impossible," which any thinking of the

future must work through, and which now cleaves to futurity more inexorably than ever.

 Citation, then, yields a Romanticism that is not just a sub-period but a

"transperiod" that less transforms than accelerates prior forces.[19] This acceleration yokes

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[17] See, for example, Kathleen Davis's critique of Koselleck in *Periodization and Sovereignty*. Davis points out that Koselleck's mischaracterization of the Medieval sense of time elides how modernity's unprecedented break with the past is ghosted and pre-empted by the "temporal rupture" effected by the Incarnation and the latter's periodization of history according to the division between the Old/New Testaments and the Jewish/Christian (92).

[18] See Ruda's *Abolishing Freedom* (2016).

[19] I take the term "transperiod" from Lee Morrissey, who deploys it differently to characterize the Renaissance's relation to "a past it could use" and the period's constellation of its eponymous rebirth with a "malleable" antiquity (305).

amplification to attenuation and names both the rapid onset of change characteristic of

modernity and a retroactive capture of anterior ruptures now impinging on the present.

This "trans-" denotes not the controlled re-shaping of the past but a more volatile and

intractable temporality whereby Romanticism's no future proliferates virally throughout

the past it haphazardly seizes. Romanticism thus inaugurates a certain relationship to

anteriority that captures proleptically our current relation to a past suffused retroactively

with the trajectory of anthropogenic climate change and thus evacuated of what made that

past and its future human(ist). The "disastrous" character of this citational Romanticism

diverges from the mode of disaster informing recent interventions such as Collings and

Jacques Khalip's collection *Romanticism and Disaster*. Khalip and Collings glean from

Romanticism's thought of disaster a minimal ethics of "impossible consolation" that

"dwell[s] with" disaster and refuses "false redemption" and "theodicy" ("Introduction").

Extending this "impossible consolation" to our current forebodings of depleting futures,

Thomas H. Ford links Romanticism to our metrics of climate change disaster in ways that

Collings and Khalip's volume does not.[20] However, Ford places Romanticism's

"indirectly allusive anticipations" of our Anthropocene horizons at an unbridgeable

distance from our mode of "Anthropocene reading" ("Punctuating History" 79).[21] For

Ford, the "material" "legibility" of Romantic texts as "Anthropocene artworks" is only

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[20] See the conclusion of chapter 3 for a look at how, for Collings, the Romantics' "impossible" dwelling with disaster could not have anticipated the types of disasters we now face.

[21] The phrase "Anthropocene reading" derives from Tobias Menely and Jesse Oak Taylor's volume *Anthropocene Reading* in which Ford's essay appears. My deployments of the term "Anthropocene" throughout this study follows the spirit of Menely and Taylor's volume by thinking the Anthropocene reflexively as not simply a periodizing designation but as a series of "methodological predicaments" caught up in questions of "what it means to read history," how to think non-linear modes of "causality" and agency, and, in the context of the proleptic-retrospective "signature" of the Anthropos that names the epoch, how to understand species-life and ecological disaster as bound up with the aporias of semiotics and reading (4, 10, 8).

"metaphorical" (84). The Romantics only become "poetic witnesses of our geohistorical moment" retroactively through our twenty-first century hindsight composed of ecological catastrophes and mutations that for the Romantics "had mostly not yet happened" (78).[22]

Yet I contend that Romanticism *does* strike a certain archaeological continuity with our Anthropocene present. In fact, reading in Romantic works a "cipher language" that we find belatedly legible as the "disastrous truths" of our present way of life (85), Ford approaches the citational temporality that I argue unfolds across Romantic texts. Romanticism thinks our Anthropocene moment insofar as what we call the Anthropocene and its destructive, retrospective legibilities names a catachresis for this temporality that Romantic citation embodies.

Chapter 1 examines Byron's literal exploration of history's citationality in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, as well as his attempt to reverse history's entropic cycles that overrun Europe (ancient and modern) and his poem with ruins. In contrast with the texts of Blake and the Shelleys, in *Harold* we observe *citationality* rather than citation in the literal sense of citing texts, although Byron will also cite classical writers as sites of a disabling "pure anteriority." The text's citationality inheres in its becoming swept along and programmed by the kind of "nonsecular," disastrous history outlined above by Collings, a history divested of transcendence but reinscribed with an immanent transcendence programming the "'undying repetition' of motiveless, amoral catastrophe

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[22] For further reading on the Anthropocene concept as a "rupture" that pre-twentieth century earth sciences could not have anticipated, see Clive Hamilton and Jacques Grinevald's "Was the Anthropocene anticipated?" (59–72), as well as Hamilton's follow-up to the latter article, "The Anthropocene as rupture" (93–106). For interrogations into when the Anthropocene as a material event rather than concept first occurs, see Colin N. Waters et al. (aad26221–10). For studies based in the humanities that read the Anthropocene concept critically as eliding the differences that make certain forms of "anthropos" and their forms of life more culpable than others, see Andreas Malm's notion of the "Capitalocene" in *Fossil Capital*, as well as Donna Haraway's notion of the "Plantationocene" in Haraway et al. "Anthropologists Are Talking—About the Anthropocene" (535–64).

within time" (10). Thus, Byron's poem, which is always already "post-Waterloo" even in the early cantos, understands history's "undying repetition" of its ruins as the aftermath of a finished history regathering and re-wasting its deadlocks. Byron differs from Blake and the Shelleys by situating citationality and its receding anteriority more concretely within historical processes of globalization, modern warfare, capital, and mass culture. Yet these worldly contexts still operate as the epiphenomenon of a more abstract and pervasive citational process in Byron's text, as they accrue a ghostly veneer and recede into the a priori condition of a germinating, nonhistorical acceleration toward what that chapter will call "natural history." And because the early *Harold* proleptically captures the "Byron" signature as already surviving in the throes of extinction, Byron's Romanticism does not simply identify a prehistory of what was to become facets of our modernity and to which Byron ironically submitted, such as the market (Christensen) and celebrity culture (Tom Mole). The afterlife of Byron's signature does not necessarily carry Romanticism forward into our contemporary world as in Christensen's and Mole's accounts, but rather encrypts a superlatively "late" Romanticism to arrive in the no future of our contemporary moment.

In Chapter 2 Mary Shelley's *The Last Man* picks up where Byron's demise in the previous chapter left off. For just as Byron's death occurs retroactively between the abrupt termination of *Don Juan* and *Harold* II's Greek ruins, Shelley's famous journal entries that spawned *The Last Man* locate the extinction of Romanticism in her journal's retroactive anticipation of Byron's death. This notion of retroactive prolepsis—of traumatically finding oneself on the receiving end of a prophecy unread and unreadable until now—structures the novel's citationality, which operates via the text's high density

of literary citations. Shelley's novel sets the stage for chapters 3 and 4's examination of citation as a mode of textuality in Percy Shelley and Blake. Mary Shelley's citationality geologizes textuality through the novel's status as a fossilized text, which causes Romanticism and its no future to sediment into an accumulation of prior geological traces that register the period's survival as that which is already gone. In what is the period's most hyperbolic troping of Romanticism's "lateness," Shelley binds Romanticism's "end of history" to the extinction of human history. Consequently, the novel excavates Romanticism's and history's fossilization from the many citations of literary texts through which a previously encrypted arc of accumulating extinction is unfolded and borne into the present. By way of the novel's frame narrative that places humanity's extinction in a future fossilized within the past, Shelley's Romanticism decrypts our already-occurred extinction and lives on to hold it ahead of us and keep us in its midst.

Chapter 3's reading of *St. Irvyne* and its afterlife in Percy Shelley's corpus marks a turn toward self-citation that will carry through into chapter 4's examination of *Jerusalem*'s re-reading of Blake's corpus. Whereas citation in Byron and Mary Shelley branches out to incorporate history and literary history as iterative of extinction, self-citation in Shelley and Blake channels extinction inward across these authors' repetitions of their motifs, characters, lines, and plot structures. Shelley and Blake ingest the self-consuming archive that Mary discovers in literary history and churn this archive out as what Shelley might call the chaos of his and Blake's cyclic poems. Yet Shelley's and Blake's recycling of their prior texts and mythemes does not consolidate autotelic corpora self-governed by egotistical sublimes. Rather, Shelley and Blake (a)systematize and accelerate what we saw in *Harold* as Byron's simultaneous forwarding and eclipsing of

the author as a brand name, a name which from the jump was already a "toxic asset" for

Byron. Against the consolidation of Romantic authorship pursued by a figure like

Wordsworth and his attempts to re-gather his fugitive works into a self-authorized canon,

the signatures of Shelley and Blake assume the self-immolating texture that Cohen

assigns to the "auteur" Alfred Hitchcock and Foucault ascribes to Raymond Roussel—

that is, the dissolution of the authorial signature into an accelerating seriality of self-

citations without a signified.[23]

Chapter 3 thus forges a continuity between the "Shelley" that emerges in *St.*

Irvyne and the desolating name of "Byron" in *Harold*. For *St. Irvyne* and *Harold* I and II

become the citational, receding anteriority toward which their later works will gravitate.

By way of beginnings that ghost their ends, Shelley and Byron deploy their brand names'

self-erasures as the archaeological (un)ground of their corpora. Thus, Shelley's early

novel *St. Irvyne* solicits the corpus for which it will stand as the latter's dark double and

will retroactively tie the Shelley corpus together as the "afterlife" of *St. Irvyne*. Because

St. Irvyne is the apogee of the early Shelley's Gothic phase, the novel finds itself pulled

into the dark anteriority of Shelley's self-citations of his former gothic texts as inset

poems and cryptically labelled epigraphs. The novel gathers these texts as unreadable

simulacra of an extra-Shelleyan descent that only digs us deeper into the text's lacunae

and erasures. *St. Irvyne* thus forwards into the corpus's future a manuscript structure that

registers vestiges of former "Shelleys" as extinct, deposited contexts. Reading the Shelley

corpus through *St. Irvyne* and the early Gothic texts yields an *infra-textuality* constitutive

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[23] See volumes 1 and 2 of Cohen's *Hitchcock's Cryptonomies* and Foucault's study of Roussel in *Death and the Labyrinth*.

of what we might call Shelley's "geological unconscious," which prefigures each successive Shelley text as caught within the sedimentations of his former works.

Through Mary Shelley's fossilization of literary history and Percy Shelley's accumulation of a shadow corpus, the Shelleys mobilize citation in ways that put a terminal cap on history's nightmare of permanent escalation assimilated by Byron's *Harold*. Blake's *Jerusalem* signals the megalomaniacal climax of such processes that disturb futurity's reproduction of the past. Chapter 4 thereby examines Blake's attempt in *Jerusalem* to salvifically close the future by activating his past works as engines of apocalypse. This chapter confronts a "late," obscenely Christian Blake who treats *Jerusalem*'s apocalyptic totalization of both his textual history and history itself as generating a salvational no future, or the no future as salvation. The pre-set terminus of the poem's accumulated, immunizing walls is registered by the text's calculated 100 plates, whose obsessive symmetry locks the poem into the unfolding of a foregone redemption. Yet this Blake and his redemption are "late" in Theodor Adorno's sense, in which late work becomes "increasingly inorganic" (Nicholsen 8) and the retrospective calm at the end of life degenerates into a frustrated disharmony that can only be "deep[ened]" and not "transcend[ed]" (Said 13). Thus, *Jerusalem*'s claustrophobic trajectory incurs a pre-determined entropy bespeaking Blake's drive to exhaust his "System" and burn out rather than survive to find a future reception.[24] On the one hand,

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[24] The following chapters will thereby propose a similar yet starker account of Romanticism's theorizations of reception history than Andrew Bennett's reading of the period's "culture of posterity" in *Romantic Poets and the Culture of Posterity*, and his pre-emptive darkening of that book's thesis in his earlier *Keats, Narrative, and Audience*. In this earlier work Bennett locates in Keats a toxifying of the domain of reader reception that transforms "reading" into a kind of de Manian afterlife or posthumousness of writing. Thus, the later book's notion of Romantic authors' self-conscious orientation toward posterity is here figured through Keats as a proleptic grasp of the "death of the reader" (12).

Blake's mythemes are re-cited as part of an arcane, apocalyptic index that invisibly cross-references and (de)codes the poem's finishing of time. But on the other hand, this apocalypse becomes more of an acceleration and implosion. For Blake's recapitulation of his corpus betrays a certain haste as he consumes and depletes his earlier work just as he burns through his supplies of copperplates. Blake's perfectly even hundred plates then signal a quota or limit beyond which Blake, composing his "Last Work," will be (mercifully) exhausted and collapsed.

Chapter One

Byron's Hollow of History: Citing Ruins in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*

> … both seem to arise from a fold in time, at the point where antiquity, at the summit of its achievement, begins to vacillate and collapses, releasing its hidden and forgotten monsters; they also plant the seed of the modern world with its promise of endless knowledge. We have arrived at the hollow of history.
> —Michel Foucault, "Fantasia of the Library"

Lord Byron's poem *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, A Romaunt*, published piecemeal in 1812, 1816, and 1818,[25] conveys several processes that will define the texts taken up in subsequent chapters as "citational." The poem evinces a thrown-together quality in its using-up of various generic modes: the text cycles through a confused medley of travelogue, psychodrama, lyric segments typographically and metrically set off from Spenserian stanzas, war ballads, autobiography, elegy, topographical and ruin poem, Wordsworthian musings on nature, and "monumentalized" biographies of famous poets and statesmen (Rousseau, Dante, Napoleon, Tasso, etc.), as if to prolong the text's runtime on the fumes of exhausted rather than transformed genres. The poem will consolidate its re-cited figures and themes into the singularity of a recognizable signature—that of the celebrity "Byron"—whose "fame" indexes that signature's accruing of a (no) future in which "Byron" will have been cited in the key of "Forgiveness" and/or "vengeance" (*CH* IV. 1207, 1195). And most important, the poem, published both during and after the Napoleonic wars, will position itself, both proleptically and retroactively, at the "end of history"—that is, a history whose trajectory

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[25] All references to this text and other works of Byron come from *The Complete Poetical Works*, edited by Jerome McGann (7 vols.), henceforth *CPW*.

proves effectively finished, and whose foreclosed horizon is then suffused throughout the past and projected indefinitely into the future. Thus, the text's citationality, its recourse to a mode of rag-picking that gathers and is gather*ed* into civilization's ruins divested of any horizon of possibility, heralds its "late" status. For Brecht de Groote, "lateness" emerges in Romantic literature as the condition of texts finding themselves "posterior to an ending that is utterly irrecuperable." This "irrecuperable" end incites "stylistic processes" that ossify such texts into a catatonically artifactual or "objective" form, a symptom of the texts' attempt to defer extinction while realizing that "it has already occurred" ("Below the Line" 3–5).

However, *Harold*'s composition begins in 1809 and is thereby both early and late to the "end" it documents—that of the conclusion of the Napoleonic wars and the restoration of the Bourbon Monarchy spelling the total closure of the revolution's emancipatory project. The poem's delay in publication between Cantos I-II and III-IV, between pre- and post-Waterloo, opens a space for a more sustained effort than the other texts in this study to mobilize citation to reverse the entropy that attends history's, and the poem's, own citational structure. Byron thus clings intermittently to citation's "weak messianic power" in a way that the Shelleys and Blake will not. Byron's *Harold*, by virtue of its early Cantos, proves structurally bound to its memory of history as not fully settled, or at the very least settled *formally* rather than empirically.

By way of this chiasmus between *Harold*'s two halves, we can read Byron's text as caught between history as potentially splintered with messianic chips and history as a fatalistic process that cannibalizes its redemptive openings and stockpiles them as waste. This antinomy also allows the poem to be read as caught between two Benjamins. The

form of Byron's text claims affinities with two antithetical modes of citation consistent

with the late Benjamin of the "Theses" and the early Benjamin of the *Trauerspiel*. On the

one hand, the poem's desire to "seize" the historical "scenes which fleet along"

(III.1042–3) and whose histories "flash" upon the speaker's memory resonates with the

late Benjamin's charge that "[t]he true image of the past flits by" and that the historical

materialist must grasp the messianic *clinamen* that "flashes up" within the past at a

"moment of danger" (*Illuminations* 255). But on the other hand, that the poem's form

aimlessly accumulates the past as static ruins bespeaks Byron's descent into a darker

mode of citation reminiscent of the early Benjamin's portrait of the Baroque artist as an

alchemist "pil[ing] up fragments ceaselessly, without any strict idea of a goal" in the

"unremitting expectation of a miracle" (*Origin* 178). Such an image offers a non-

redemptive mode of citation that casts the alchemist's failed "experimentation[s]" as a

rough draft for the more sober historical materialist of the "Theses" (*Origin* 178). The

Baroque artist's interminable stockpiling of history's fragments haunts the dialectical

materialist by courting in advance the unending "single catastrophe … piling wreckage

upon wreckage" that pushes the angel of history further into a disastrous future and away

from this gathering disaster's redemption ("Theses" 257). Similarly, Byron's "dialectics

at a standstill" or constellations by which *Harold*'s various landscapes and histories are

brought into simultaneity becomes atrophied by these landscapes' purely spatial

accretions of what the early Benjamin calls "natural history." The poem's geographically

grounded histories then do not messianically stand still but petrify into procrustean beds

of ruins without promise or retroactive redemption. More specifically, this antinomy

plays out formally in the poem's self-characterization as both an aural, temporally fluid

"song" (II.316) or "strain" (IV.1674) and, like Blake's *Jerusalem*, a densely written "page" (IV.969, 1202). As such, the poem's orchestration of spectral voices haunting war-torn landscapes and calling out for redemption is smothered by the poem's adapting of its aimless form to history's ruin-engorged page that cites exploded fragments without end.

It is no wonder that William Hazlitt once claimed that in *Harold* Byron converts the "universe" into a "stately mausoleum" (110). Put simply, the text's form frustrates Byron's attempt to wrest a revolutionary energy from his poem's capitulation to history's fathomless entropy. The poem's citationality responds to what Byron identifies in the fourth canto as the exigency within what he calls history's already finished though amassing "*one* page" that programs and recycles the gamut of what history is capable of: from "Freedom" to "Glory," then "Wealth, vice, corruption,—barbarism at last," ad infinitum (969, 966–7). We could say that for Byron his poem takes shape "within the archive" in Foucault's sense ("Fantasia" 92). For Foucault in his "Fantasia of the Library" essay (1967), Flaubert's novel *Temptation of St. Anthony* inaugurates a space of literature in which books simply write of "other books." Following Flaubert, we inhabit a fully textualized history already written and which leaves us the infernal task of re-citing past texts and intellectual histories that are then "fragmented, displaced, combined, lost," and disintegrated in an endless cycle (Foucault 92). Yet *Harold* does not assimilate itself to the archive and books in the way that Percy Shelley's *St. Irvyne* will, as we will see in chapter 3. Rather, *Harold* unfolds within *history*.

Notably, the poem's preface advertises that it "was written, for the most part, amidst the scenes which it attempts to describe" (*CPW* II, 3). The poem occurs "amidst"

history conceived not mimetically but as the self-consuming archive within which Foucault finds *St. Anthony*'s mad recapitulation of European culture turning endlessly upon its inception and exhaustion in the dead Orient. The "hollow of history" from which this chapter takes its title names for Foucault a kind of zero-point and/or "geodesic" line by which Christianity and its evolution into a secular modernity emerges from "the dying reflections of an older world, formed by the feeble light it projected upon the still grey shadows of a nascent world" (103). This "hollow" indexes not only the shortcut or cheat through which history's "night" conjures the "novelty of a new day" almost *ex nihilo* (102); it also encrypts the short-circuit through which this ostensibly ceaseless transformation of ends into new beginnings springs from history's consumption and deferral of its entropy, its "feeble light," into the simulacra of emergent futures and their "promise[s]" (Foucault 103). The "arrival" at such a hollow heralds the pseudo-revelation of this inexhaustible drive—what in *St. Anthony* is figured by, in the vein of Shelley's *Triumph of Life*, the process of "Lust and death lead[ing] the dance of life" and the mindless exchange of "the disintegration of forms and the origin of all things" (102). By way of this drive, history's recessive progression through its own decline proves homologous with the very form of the "vision" that discloses this process, a vision or "temptation" that "turn[s]" earth "back upon its axis" toward the "night" that programs history's trajectory but whose circular movement still yields the specter of "limitless acquisitions" in the future. Likewise, the retrospective yet additive form of Byron's poem discloses and repeats the structure of history's decline without end, as Byron demonstrates that he can keep writing more and more and extend the poem indefinitely, even though there is nothing left to say.

This chapter's argument follows studies such as those by David Collings, who finds in *Harold*'s fourth canto Byron's incorporation of history's "movement of endless oblivion" into a "poetic persona" and "mode of address" (*Disastrous* 136). This chapter is also indebted to Jerome Christensen's seminal *Lord Byron's Strength*, which locates "Byronism" in the aftermath of an ascendent market economy in which all sources of innate privilege and value have been hollowed out by capital. For Christensen, Byron projects his work into the temporality of a capitalist modernity that churns out the future as defined by the market rhythms of the production and disposal of commodities.[26] This chapter's reading of Byron's citationality, however, finds the turning point in which Byron becomes a (disastrous) household name—a turning point usually identified as occurring in the later *Harold* cantos, *Manfred*, or at the very least the post-Waterloo texts—as a receding origin unfolding across *Harold*'s gathering of more and more worlds into its ruinous orbit. For the "mature" Byron of the later *Harold* cantos, *Cain*, and even *Don Juan*, emerges and disintegrates preemptively in *Harold* I and II on account of Cantos III and IV retracing the former's steps as a primitive accumulation of those later Cantos' mounting ruins.

Thus, *Harold* also becomes Byron's "hollow of history" with respect to his authorial development. The later Cantos' chiastic repetition of the pre-Waterloo Cantos *as* pre-post-Waterloo yields a back-loop where *Harold* from its outset feeds on, and is fed on by, the later Cantos' vision of history's foreclosure and its digressive piling of wreckage. Moreover, *Harold* I and II's (retroactively) proleptic assimilation of history's

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[26] This chapter also follows from Philip W. Martin's insight that the early Cantos of *Harold* less foreground the psychology of the quintessentially Romantic ego than solicit "a new audience sympathetic to [the poem's] coherent and anti-teleological explorations of history, politics, and contemporary affairs" (77).

decline foreshadows the "geodesic line" across which *Harold*'s interminable collapse or "dying light" projects itself into the exuberantly limitless no future of *Don Juan*, thereby bypassing the "breakthrough" that so many readers have found in *Manfred* and identify as the springboard for Byron's later texts.[27] It is not only the case that *Don Juan* perversely enjoys the endless ruin that *Harold* vainly tries to ward off through non-entropic forms of citation.[28] This "fold in time" where *Harold*'s prolonged ruin, which anticipates the later epic by being written with "*no plan* at all" (qtd. in *CPW* I, 271),[29] collapses into *Don Juan* means that Byron had already reached his end at the inception of the "Byron" brand, an endless end from which *Don Juan* would harness its unlimited energy. But despite *Don Juan* arguably boasting a more controlled and self-conscious display of the citationality that was more inchoate and anxious in *Harold*, examination of the latter proves theoretically richer. The pathos and resistance with which Byron meets *Harold*'s own form—as opposed to the manic plenitude that this form would offer in *Don Juan*—gauges more comprehensibly citation's losses. Adapting Marx, the path from *Harold* to *Don Juan* paints citation first as tragedy, then as farce ("Eighteenth Brumaire" 594).

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[27] Collings's reading of *Manfred* as Byron's first foray into "the burdens of a disastrous subjectivity," whose historical and political ramifications Byron can fully explore in later texts which are nonetheless "set into motion" by *Manfred*'s achievement (131, 133), follows the spirit of Stuart M. Sperry's analysis of how *Manfred*'s interrogation and disintegration of the Byronic persona frees Byron to adopt the comic detachment of his late works. See also Orrin Wang's *Techno-Magism*, in which Wang draws a line from *Manfred*'s muted reflection on its own "market afterlife" to *Don Juan*'s explicit "equation of finitude, fame, and market success" (141).

[28] I thank Joel Faflak for this formulation of *Harold*'s relation to *Don Juan*.

[29] Byron's remark on *Harold*'s lack of a plan appears in a letter to William Miller in 1811. When writing *Don Juan*, Byron similarly stated in a letter to his publisher John Murray that "I *have* no plan—I *had* no plan—but I had or have materials" (*Letters* VI, 207).

"all equally bad": Harold's Empty Homogenous Geography

On the surface, *Harold* adopts the conventions of the travelogue and topographical poem as the first two cantos narrate Byron's "grand tour" through Spain and Portugal during the ongoing Peninsular war. Byron then moves on through Gibraltar, Malta, and Albania, before arriving in the Ottoman-ruled Athens. Cantos III and IV move comparatively slower in space and time, with Canto III covering Byron's travels from England to Geneva, and Canto IV charting his trip from Venice to Rome. That the later cantos increase in length—from 93 and 98 stanzas in Cantos I and II to 118 and 186 stanzas in Cantos III and IV—while growing more claustrophobic due to their curtailment of geographical variety speaks to the poem's intensifying inertia at the same time as its locales congeal into a totalized horizon of ruined objects that obstructs mobility. Such inertia reaches a critical mass in Canto IV's myopic focus on Rome and its weighty tautologies, such as "Chaos of ruins" and "ruin amidst ruins" (IV.718, 219), that syntactically drag the poem back into its detritus. Byron and the reader find little room to breathe as we become inundated with the monotonous ruins of empires and, by Canto IV, their mountains of notes and annotation that stymie the travelogue's facilitating of reading as physical transit.

Yet, despite the earlier Cantos' greater freedom of movement by virtue of their unfolding *in medias res* as opposed to after the closure of post-revolutionary history, *Harold*'s pre-Waterloo travels prove no less plagued by physical and historical stagnation. For Harold, the debuting "Byronic hero" and the conduit through which the text's geopolitical landscapes become (in)discernable, enters evacuated on arrival and leaves us confused as to whether he plays the actor or victim of the text's sclerotic

movement. It is a critical truism that Byron psychologizes the travelogue genre he

inherits. As Jerome McGann puts it, though Byron's text evokes stock motifs of the loco-

descriptive genre, *Harold* I and II "interiorizes the topographical poem so drastically that

the convention mutates into a drama of personal history" (*CPW* II, 270–1). To this end,

Martin also suggests a homology between the poem's psychologically "wounded" titular

subject and the broken Europe he observes, proposing that the "uncertainly sketched"

Harold embodies the "psychological consequence of this alienation from the meaningful

progress of history" (97). Yet the claim that the Byronic hero Harold, linked ambiguously

to Byron himself,[30] "interiorizes" the poem's topographies ascribes an interiority to this

figure that the text's purely formal mobilization of him precludes. Byron's introduction to

Canto I admits that Harold exists solely "for the sake of giving some connexion to the

piece" which "has no pretension to regularity" (*CPW* I, 4). Byron deploys Harold as a

contentless formality—a kind of McGuffin that initiates and attempts to impose a *faux*

direction on the text's pure seriality of disconnected vignettes. And what is more, by the

fourth Canto, the poem's protracted grind forgets about Harold altogether as he drops out

of the poem almost entirely. Byron will finally disremember Harold's name as "the

Pilgrim," after which the figure becomes absorbed by the "Destruction's mass" his

consciousness was employed to gather and interface (IV.1468, 1476).

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[30] What Bernard Beatty dubs as the "Harold problem" (111), dating back to Byron's first readers, concerns the extent to which Harold can be identified with Byron himself, a crux that Byron attempts to preempt in the preface to Canto I, in which Byron writes that Harold does not refer to "some real personage," especially not Byron himself (*CPW* I, 4). That Harold virtually disappears from the later Cantos partly owes to Byron's "wear[iness] of drawing a line [between himself and Harold] which every one seemed determined not to perceive" (122). Beatty's suggestion that Byron in the early Cantos used Harold as a means of developing his later penchant for "objectif[ying] the subjective" (112) plays out in a different way in the chapter, for the subjective's objectification via Harold literally entails the subjective becoming a liquidated "object" that deteriorates along with the text's other natural-historical objects.

But Harold signifies more than just what Byron eventually calls a "phantasy" (IV.1474) of the absent continuity of the poem's empty continuous*ness*. Harold also functions as an epiphenomenon or symptom of history's citational process, which has charted in advance the "progress" the traveler will trace. Harold of course arrives on the scene tricked out in the psychological accoutrements that would come to define the Byronic hero, such as his haunting "as if" by the "memory" of an unnamed "crime" or "deadly feud," the misanthropic distance from crowds, and a sense of ennui that compels him to "cross the brine" and wander Europe for a "change of scene" (I.27, 98, 54). Yet this emergent Byronic archetype devolves into a stereotype. To say nothing of the figure's debts to the Godwinian hero,[31] the Byronic hero's undisclosed sin and obsessive remorse were the well-trod thematics of a dramatic tradition that Byron mined— especially in *Manfred*, which is arguably the apotheosis of the Byronic hero—as Bertrand Evans pointed out decades ago. Though Byron would develop the figure beyond its primitive form in *Harold*, here the Byronic hero's derivativeness works to cast this interiority-less figure as a dead end in advance of his journey. For rather than the metaphysical lack that spurs the Poet in *Alastor*—another "vacant" subject—to wander the ruins of nature and empires, or the deficit that initiates *Don Juan*/Juan (the narrator opens with "I *want* a hero" [I.1; emphasis mine]), what (de)animates Harold is "the fulness of satiety" (I.34). This "satiety" indexes the figure's almost pre-terminated character: "fulness" as a form of evacuation or stasis that dogs Harold as his travel facilitates not growth but his gradual disintegration into the setting.

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[31] Rajan suggests that Godwin "had already invented Byron in misanthropic, brooding personalities like Falkland and Fleetwood" ("Byron's *Cain*" 84).

This denuded plenitude anticipates Byron's re-imagining of the Fall myth in *Don Juan* in terms of a terrible repletion rather than alienation. Here Byron compares "first love" to Adam's "recollection of his fall," which entails a saturation of the future and all further history in the past tense of an enervating satisfaction; for the "tree of knowledge *has been* plucked," after which "all's known, / And life yields nothing further to recall / Worthy of this ambrosial sin" (I.1011–14, emphasis mine). This "satiety," occasioned by Harold's track through "Sin's long labyrinth" (I.37), which can only "recall" personal history as Harold's hackneyed lyrics divested of personality or depth, follows from the aphasia that afflicts the silent muses in the poem's opening invocation of a wasted mythological landscape, where the Delphic shrine is "long-deserted" and "all" is reduced to a "still" life (I.7–8). That the stereotyped Harold can only recollect that "there is nothing further to recall" in advance puts in doubt the messianic tinge of the poem's historical memory. For the conditional "as if" that prefaces the figure's "memory of some deadly feud" implicates such "memory" as an empty prop that readers merely expect such a character to bear. Thus, the poem's oft-used trope of the "flash" that first appears as the "strange pangs" that "flash along Childe Harold's brow" (I.65) only signposts the mere *suggestion* of some deep memory. Harold's "flash" perhaps signifying nothing pre-contaminates the revelatory "flashes" of history's "light of ages" (III.1023) and other stores of remembrance with dead, artificial memory.

Harold's ciphering of a finished, emptily recollected history proves inseparable from his status as pure stereotype. As we will observe with Byron's penchant for commonplaces, the stereotype or cliché becomes a kind of ruin, a congealed extinction that can nonetheless bear a certain cultural capital. Harold, as a marketable stereotype

who attaches himself to the popular travelogue genre, becomes along with Byron not a

subject but an avatar of mass culture, an avatar "rake[d] from coffin'd clay" (I.25), with

the poem's other ruins to be disseminated across *Harold*'s Europe and throughout the

marketplace. Byron hits on the connection between the poem's deracinating history and

the vertigo swirl of the increasingly global circulation of commodity culture with the

figure of the "vortex" at the beginning of Canto III. Harold "once more" enters into this

vortex to be "roll'd / On with the giddy circle, chasing Time" as Byron re-starts and re-

circulates his text after a four-year hiatus (III.97–98). Harold's and Byron's "chasing"

after some meaning in history intertwines with their being passively "roll'd" on or

circulated in a self-voiding circle by an anterior, inaccessible historical force.[32] Similarly,

the Poet-traveler's suicidal "quest" in *Alastor* through uprooted civilizations spilling over

into wasted nature betrays his manipulation by the "evil genius" of an immanent

globalization intimated by the poem's collapse of any enframing that could ontologically

partition history from nature.[33] Byron himself as a kind of evil genius or "mind" also

programs the unmotivated progress and ends of Harold's "pilgrimage." In the Greece

stanzas, after a long reverie on Lord Elgin's plunder of what would become known as the

Elgin marbles, Byron slips up and shows his hand as he loses track of Harold and asks,

"But where is Harold? Shall I then forget / To urge the gloomy wanderer o'er the wave?"

(II.136–7). That the spiritual depth and desideratum of the "pilgrimage" becomes a

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[32] Back in Canto I the narrator similarly tells us that "o'er [Harold] many changing scenes must roll / Ere toil his thirst for travel can assuage" (I.330–1).

[33] I borrow here from Rajan's reading of *Alastor* as an emergent form of poetry unsettled by the specter of a globalization "intertwined with war, empire, and industrialization" (790). The poem's "spatial incoherence"—its narrative and urban sprawl in the form of a generic confusion of lyric and narrative, and nature "striated by cities, deterritorialized by the wreckage of vacated cultures" (790) —registers archaeologically globalization's uprooting of the boundaries between country and city, rural and urban, that had traditionally defined the "psychic landscape of literature" (795).

simulacrum or pretense for the "urg[ings]" of a more amorphous, non-agential agency

recalls Alan Rawes's reading of the "predestination" of the Byronic hero's freedom

devolving into unfreedom. For Rawes, citing Byron's Calvinist upbringing, the ennui that

haunts Byron's heroes indexes an "original sin" that unfolds recursively in how the

characters' "attempts to exercise or win freedom" becomes the very means by which

"damned individuals enact their own predestination" (133). Likewise, by throwing

himself into the contiguous vortices of commercial culture and imperial war and

conquest, Byron becomes ghosted and "predestined" by the logics of a globalization of

which *Harold*/Harold becomes an unconscious and disposable agent.[34]

These two vortices of globalization converge explicitly in the poem's excoriation

of Lord Elgin for capitalizing on Greece's instability by "plundering" the Elgin marbles

to eventually sell to the British museum. Moreover, one of Byron's notes relates that the

plain of Marathon, whose main burial mound was recently excavated and found to

contain "few or no relics" (*CPW* 198), was offered to him for the price of nine hundred

pounds. Marathon's literal hollowness posits an overlaying of: the history of geopolitical

conflict and history as the heroic struggle for emancipation; the failure of antiquarianism

to unearth the past's lost presence; and the liquidation of "land" that Christensen ties to

the market economy's commercialization of landed property and subsequent de-

ontologizing of the "cognitive ground" that had "authorize[d] social action" (*Byron's

Strength* 305). Thus, the poem's pathological hoarding of various locations and ruins

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[34] Not only does Harold's travel map both sections of Europe that had been closed off to tourists due to war and 'othered' locations such as Albania which the poem singles out as a terra incognita; but the scope of the poem's travels glimpses sites beyond the text's pan-Europeanism, as Byron projected the poem to move further east to Ionia and Phrygia (*CPW*, I, 3).

becomes swept up in a far-reaching geo-historical *récit* that demystifies circumnavigation as circulation and circulation as a de-terra-forming of past and future.

On the topic of the "global citizen," Tom Cohen argues that modern travel "parallels the transformation of the perceptual, topographical and political mapping of the world into a *faux* 'global' field of interstices," as the traveler "pursues a certain self-canceling quest that … partakes of the transformation of all points on the map into system outposts." By seeking travel as a vehicle for the experience of the exotic or "other," the traveler therefore becomes a "contributing viral agent" of the "zones of evisceration and transformation that mark the 'global' today" (*Ideology* 240–1). That Harold/Byron's sight-seeing "eye" extending toward new horizons expands only to perceive those horizons clustered with the refuse of interminable warfare that "no eye the distant end foresees" (I.912) suggests a subtextual complicity between Harold's wandering and modernity's "zones of evisceration." This complicitly between Harold's roaming and Europe's suicidal warfare again emerges when the text tallies the losses of the battle of Talavera, an all-enveloping conflict in which "France, Spain, Albion" "combine to offer" themselves as a darkly cosmopolitan "sacrifice" because "as if at home they could not die" (I.444, 441, 447). Additionally, the poem's cartographic rhetoric of "tracing" encodes Harold's "predestination" by history's topography. For Byron and Harold will "trace" the "forest's shady scene" in Calpe (II.218), the "deface[d]" pillars of the temple of Jupiter Olympius (II.85, 88), and the "void" of Rome's jumbled ruins (IV.718), as well as seek "traces" of vanished structures such Jove's shrine (II.472). "Tracing" connotes both the rote copying of a prior and sometimes "void[ed]" outline and the imposition of a further mapping that could leave broken traces

or further voids and defacements for others to follow. Hence the final stanza's invocation of the reader who has "traced the Pilgrim to the scene / Which is his last" (IV.1618–9), a proleptic solicitation of a future that will have followed the ruin that *Harold*'s tracking of ruin has left in its wake. Travel as a form of tracing is thus always within the ambit of "retracing," an abyssal (re)mapping orchestrated by the material scars such a process tracks, and shadowed by the scars this tracing might itself be depositing for a future pre-programmed in turn to follow and re-trace them.

Moreover, Cohen's depiction of modern travel as doubling the volatile movement of global capital proves germane to what this chapter has described as *Harold*'s citationality. For *Harold*'s wandering and seafaring not only re-pave the routes and world-(un)building of empire and global trade and conjure the specter of global capital's past and future, but also map historical sites onto a confused and de-totalized totality.[35] Harold's unmotivated movement from place to place figures citation not just as re-collection but as a transit or passage between the text's objects, as Hans Kellner suggests that even "quotation" traditionally understood can work as a "passage" that creates "new beginnings and ends within middles" (57). Yet the passages that Harold traces effect a vexed synchronicity that does not so much bridge the distance and difference between locations and cultures than collapse them into a disorienting contiguity. Byron does of

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[35] Byron's sense of an emergent globalization is adjacent to what Nahoko Miyamoto Alvey terms "Romantic geography," which names "an internalized geopolitical space of the Romantics that records the extent to which the poetic imagination stretches itself on the global scale, hand in hand with, or against, the globalizing force" (5), except in Byron's case this de-centralized "globalizing force" entails an emptying of the subject's and the globe's interiority. As Alvey also notes, drawing on the work of historians such as Immanuel Wallerstein, the process we now term globalization has a prehistory dating back to at least the sixteenth century. Further, as Saree Makdisi argues, *Harold*'s fascination with place indexes globalization's shadows of futurity. Byron's text symptomatically registers the "encroaching world" of a global "modernization" that wills to "draw everything into itself, to destroy the many synchronous worlds and histories," and subsume them under the "universal" history exemplified by a text such as James Mill's *History of British India* (Makdisi 184–5).

course depict scenes of Harold's travel by boat between destinations. But Byron, especially in the first two Cantos, tends to bypass the transitional exposition that would open up the possibility for meaningful contact between different histories and geographies. The poem transitions abruptly from a meditation on the battle of Talavera (1809) to a sudden apostrophe to the battle of Albuera (1811) (I, Stanzas 41–43), as if overlaying the two conflicts and eliding their spatial and temporal difference; and the text will perform a generic, geographical, and metrical dislocation when the narrator's outburst "Fair Greece! sad relic of departed worth!" erupts after eleven stanzas of an Albanian soldier's war ballad (II.648-693). The poem will also shift without preamble from a reflection on the Spanish story of the Maid of Saragoza to an apostrophe to Mount Parnassus in a classical register, and then after a few stanzas jump back to Spain by way of a loco-descriptive meditation on the river Cadiz (I. Sts. 58-65).[36] Transit here devolves into jump-cuts that accelerate the contraction of histories and "worlds" into a striated though levelled spatiality. The de-mediated interchange between these locations and their aesthetics become automatic relays that operate as if autonomously and redact the travel(er) that would interface them.[37]

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[36] Byron's original audience also noted the poem's abrupt and often unnarrated transitions. One review of Canto IV from the *Literary Gazette* reads: "the transitions are so quickly performed … from Venice to Rome, from Rome to Greece … from Mr. Hobhouse to politics, and back again to Lord Byron; that our head is absolutely bewildered by the want of connexion" (qtd. in Stabler 267).

[37] Bernard Beatty attributes the rushed and rushing quality of Byron's accelerated travel, his impetuous "rush[ing] forwards but not towards … vistas one after the other," to the poem's consolidation of the increased "speed of reading poetry" that had been unfolding "between the age of Dr. Johnson and that of Byron," and which "corresponded to the displacement of an aesthetics based on design … to an aesthetic based on continuity" (108–9). This chapter proposes that the spatial dynamics that proceed from this emergent aesthetic of accelerated "continuity" (or perhaps rather contiguity) proleptically captures the postmodern problematics of globalization and its "new spatial simultaneities" that overtake "traditional temporalities of transmission" (Jameson, *Valences* 66).

Harold's course becomes preemptively hijacked as if by history itself as the latter consumes its horizons and closes distances. Harold's role as a vanishing de-mediator unfolding a messy unification and extension of space anticipates how Juan in *Don Juan*, as Aaron Ottinger argues, travels at an accelerating pace that draws pathways between multiple cities and countries and whose increasingly networked "nodes" reduce the world to an "objectified whole" (168). Yet what Harold's transit effects proves more complex than Juan's exhaustive charting of the earth into a fully cited object. Unlike Juan, who retains a certain presence through Byron's massive and digressive poem, Harold gradually erodes and is, in fact, hardly there from the outset. It is as if the omniscient narrator "Byron," who increasingly usurps the poem and whose path Harold mechanically follows,[38] stands in for history's citational process itself, who/which manipulates Harold via a kind of Hegelian "cunning of reason": an intermediating force that by allowing Harold to ostensibly move of his own volition urges him to "exhaust" himself in the service of the historical process's, or Byron's, "End" as Harold wastes away under the real's "attrition" (Hegel 387). Or rather, "Byron" enacts a mad cunning whereby the empty middle-man Harold, to adapt Matthew Rowlinson's description of the viral and deracinating movement of capital in Marx, is thrown "without reserve" into objects that "wear away" under the vanishing Harold's eye and regress into "an accumulation of worn-out things" (157). For especially in the later Cantos, *Harold* makes recourse to and aligns itself with spatial figures such "piles" and "mass[es]," or acts of "piling" (IV.1206), "protracting," and "amass[ing]" (IV.970) that signify progression as

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[38] Contemporary reviewer Thomas Denman opined that "no effect is produced, no incident created, by this imaginary *Childe*; who in the whole poem does nothing but go over the same ground as Lord Byron traversed" (75).

intensification and accretion. These figures thus point to the citational logics by which

Harold spatially "protracts" its page. The poem's accelerated crossings—between

locales, genres—less consolidate the world into a single object than pile it up as an

accumulation of deadened objects mashed together on a plane of indefinite space.

  This history as self-consuming space indexes a decidedly un-cosmopolitan

trajectory.[39] Eighteenth century thinkers of cosmopolitanism like Oliver Goldsmith

regarded cosmopolites as benevolently "unit[ing] the world by their travels" (Goldsmith

I, 24) and facilitating productive "international relations" (Steier 1). This ideal of world

citizenship overlaps with the cultural mission of the Grand Tour, which predicated young

aristocrats' entrance into urbane society upon their benign collection and synthetization

of foreign cultures and classical history into a course of individual growth. From this

perspective, the well-traveled cosmopolite becomes an agent of what Kant heuristically

calls a universal history, which proposes world-history as guided *a priori* by a teleology

unfolding the incremental negotiations between nations and their integration into a global

cosmopolitan constitution. Therefore, the "international relations" that the world-traveler

traces become part of a utopian globalizing *récit* that draws a line from the Grand Tours

of the eighteenth century to the eventual formation of the United Nations in the twentieth.

But Byron's grand tour betrays a less optimistic *a priori* history and globalizing

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[39] It is worth pointing out that despite his travels and variety of experience, Harold remains distinctly un-cosmopolitan and does not seem to learn anything from his journey. In another testament to the character's dearth of interiority, Emily Bernhard Jackson points out that the ambiguity concerning to whom several of the text's reflections on history belong, whether it be Byron or Harold or both, means that the locus of historical knowledge and learning prove uncertain and are ungrounded in any character's maturation or expanding of horizons (see Jackson 46–49). Michael P. Steier goes further and argues that Byron's is not a cosmopolitanism we understand today, nor is it consistent with eighteenth-century cosmopolitanism as a "socially ennobling and culturally unifying ideal." Steier proposes that Byron's cosmopolitanism models itself on that of the Cynics, for whom the term signaled a restless misanthropy and rejection of civilized values and the *polis* in favour of the "*cosmos*" (3–4).

temporality. Crucially, Byron's tour proves deeply entrenched in the Napoleonic wars, which began in the revolutionary wars in the 1790s and forced Kant to think universal history as shadowed by the possibility of "the vast graveyard of humanity as a whole" (110). Byron then conceives universal history as within the ambit of Kant's "vast graveyard." His grand tour's hoarding and mapping of devastated histories does not bespeak a coming perpetual peace between nations but taps into an inevitable acceleration in cosmopolitanism's interfacing and unification of culture. For while cosmopolitan history is urbane and contained with a European center of gravity, the globalization Byron engages proves more violently uprooting and levelling, as well as self-concussing in its overreach.

The poem signals its liquidation of cosmopolitanism in its epigraph from the ironically titled *Le Cosmopolite* by Fougeret de Monbron. The epigraph reads: "The universe is a kind of book of which you have read but one page when you have seen only your own country. I have leafed through a sufficient number to have found them equally bad" (*CPW* I, 3). Following this epigraph, the poem and its simulacrum of cosmopolitanism expands and contracts into an accumulation of an anonymous mass— the temporality of travel and of prior histories gathered into a collection of emptied and homogenized surfaces or "leaves." Such a gathering of times and places ruthlessly spatialized adumbrates what Bruno Latour calls a "globalization-*minus*." In the latter the cosmopolitan dream of perspectives and values "*multiplying*" as global consciousness extends to accommodate ever new cultures and histories becomes overtaken by globalization as an atrophying de-growth that forecloses alternative horizons and possibilities afforded by history's global reach (12–13). Such a growing debilitation of

cross-cultural dialogue surfaces in *Harold* when the poem stages a missed encounter on

Calp's "steepy shore" between eastern Europe and Northern Africa—a meeting whose

possibility of meaningful interchange between Europe and its "other" proceeds no further

than "Europe and Afric on each other gaz[ing]" blankly (II.190–1). (That this encounter

stops dead in its tracks is perhaps a symptom of the fact that the possibilities of such a

dialogue have already been compromised and exhausted by a history of empire and

colonization registered mutely in the dead name "Afric," an archaism that indexes

Africa's Latin etymology.) However, Latour's globalization-minus becomes for Byron

not the domination of a myopic teleology but, like the "pilgrimage" of Harold himself,

the progress of a kind of teleology without telos, an aimless expansion and dissolution

programmed into "History" itself and irreducible to the viewpoint of any subject or

civilization. *Harold* thereby emerges as part of a constellation of texts such as Anna

Letitia Barbauld's "Eighteen Hundred and Eleven" (1812) and P. B. Shelley's *Queen*

Mab (1813) that attempt to articulate a "Spirit" (Barbauld, line 215) or an Archimedean

point (Shelley) by which the underlying logic of civilization's progress might be grasped

at the global level.[40] Byron's poem, however, traces history as the course of a destitute

"spirit" glimpsed from an evacuated and evacuating Archimedean juncture, with

"Byron," as we will observe in the final section, serving as a kind of empty Archimedean

perspective that assimilates history's crushing topography and its aftermath.

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[40] The epigraph to Shelley's text is a quotation attributed to Archimedes: "Give me somewhere to stand, and I will move the earth" (*SPP* 16).

Natural History and Total War

So far, we have followed how *Harold*'s citationality inheres in its re-tracing of history as already globalized, as exhausted of its frontiers and levelled into an empty homogenous geography. Thus, the poem's spatial itinerary of travel, land, pages, and piles heralds citationality as the spatializing and de-temporalizing of history, a process that does not so much empty history of direction but transforms direction and movement into the unfurling of space conceived as the pure laterality of protraction and accumulation. As we saw with the poem's short-circuits between locales and cultures, the potentially redemptive synchronicity which in Benjamin, as Sara Guyer puts it, facilitates "a way of holding two distant and complex moments in mind, of letting them hold one another and save each other" (101), instead entails the accelerated flow of "moments" objectified as the pure exteriority of de-territorialized spaces. Again, we might recall how Hazlitt characterizes *Harold*'s monotonously ruined universe as a spatial "mausoleum," a storehouse of dead things. Yet even though *Harold*'s "mausoleum" presupposes an eviscerated anteriority that is, like Rome's ruins, "past Redemption's skill" (IV.1304) and capable only of recapitulating its ruin, such recapitulation or retracing of this "finished" history entails the unfolding of a logic or process, by which history as a temporal movement *becomes* ossified into this mobile inertia. The poem's consolidation and decay into space generates an anti-promissory arrow, according to which historical progression takes the form of senescence and sedimentation.

History in *Harold* thereby becomes "natural history"; that is, history as de-sublimated nature beholden to organic processes of entropy and decomposition. "Natural history" is a complex term that bridges history and science, and which obtained

prominence among eighteenth-century naturalists.[41] For Foucault in *The Order of Things*, natural history operates simply as the collection, description, and classification of any and all natural phenomena, and thereby belongs to a pre-Darwinian paradigm, insofar as "nature" here possesses no sense of historicity. As Foucault puts it, natural history's "nature" and its a-temporal, static character is a consequence of pre-Darwinian natural historians grasping nature in emphatically spatial terms. Nature and its objects interface and are "juxtaposed" in natural history's frozen "non-temporal rectangle," like that of a curiosity cabinet or museum exhibit (Foucault 131), or in Julia Reinhart Lupton's enumeration, "the encyclopedia, the calendar, the herbal, … and the still-life painting" (xxx). Yet as Rajan suggests, natural history in this ahistorical register functions according to a logic of an exhaustive "inclusiveness" rather than "selection." That is, natural history becomes akin to an "expansible database" in which heterogenous phenomena "fallen outside aesthetic history" and other histories organized by way of the "memorable" might "survive" anachronistically into the present (Rajan, "Dis-figuring" 233–4; see also Lupton xxix–xxx). Thus, a temporality starts to assert itself as if autonomously from the inertia of space. This temporality emerges as natural history migrates into the human sciences and starts to signify historicity in nature, or a history of nature. This history of nature takes a progressive form in the stadial, progressive models of Scottish Enlightenment anthropologies, for which natural history's field of classified and ordered natural objects offered an analogue for the total legibility of "man" and the

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[41] This brief rundown of natural history is indebted to Rajan's survey of the concept in "Dis-Figuring Reproduction: Natural History, Community, and the 1790s Novel" (232–5) and "Spirit's Psychoanalysis." Additionally, this chapter's understanding of Benjamin's and Adorno's appropriation of the term owes much to Domenic Hutchins's *The Passing Away of Nature: Two Essays on Natural History* (Master's thesis, University of Western Ontario).

latter's progression through clearly delineated stages (Rajan, "Spirit's Psychoanalysis" 188). Yet this breakdown of the demarcation between the human and natural objects and processes re-inserted humanity into its organic arche and exposed the upward trajectory of "man" to a naturalism marked by decomposition and finitude.[42]

In the hands of Benjamin and Theodor Adorno, natural history's older sense of atemporal inertia and its capacity for indiscriminate collection returns to short-circuit the idealist dialectic between spirit and nature obtaining in Enlightenment histories of improvement. This short-circuiting halts history's progressive subsumption of natural necessity into freedom and instead causes spirit/History to disintegrate back into a nature conceived as ruin. For Adorno in particular, history as nature becomes a process of erosion by which the arrow of time accumulatively sediments into decrepitude. In an Adornian formulation relevant to *Harold*'s ruin fetish, "everything existing transforms itself into ruins and fragments" (Hullot-Kentor 265), and "everything new is weaker than the accumulated ever-same, and it is ready to regress back into it" (Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory* 238). Under this regressive paradigm, natural history's eclectic "database" programs its gathered objects' survival as the "half-life of radioactive decay, or the bacterial decomposition of dead matter" (Lupton xxxi).

Harold reproduces this trajectory of natural history by which the accumulation of natural objects engenders a temporality and counter-history in which human history proper is absorbed into organic nature's finitude and "passing away." The poem's natural-historical gathering and curating of various survivals takes shape as the recycled

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[42] Rajan traces the development of what Foucault calls a "history of nature" to the transversals of history and science obtaining in eighteenth-century naturalists like Charles Bonnet and J. B. Robinet, and then in the German *Naturphilosophie* that interested Samuel Taylor Coleridge and his medical acquaintances ("Spirit's Psychoanalysis" 188).

genres, character studies, and historical ruins that, as Byron puts it during his meditation on ruined structures that "brokenly live on"—such as the "tree" that "withers long before it fall" or the "roof-tree" that "sinks, but moulders on the hall / In massy hoariness" (III.281, 283–4)—persist in a collective state of deterioration. As we have touched upon, Byron's poem appropriates the resources of the ruin and loco-descriptive poem to unfold modern Europe as a concatenation of bloody histories congealed into sedimented tableaus. Such snapshots of violent "still-life" include: the aforementioned scene of "Morena's dusky height" and its "broken road" jammed with militaristic paraphernalia, and as if existing solely to "sustain aloft the battery's iron load" and the "magazine in rocky durance stowed" (I.531–2, 537); the banks of the "Dark Guadiana" river occupying the Spain-Portugal border, along which the "Paynim turban and the Christian crest" once "Mix'd on the bleeding stream" during the Crusades (I.379, 385–60); a landscape in Andalusia in which "Moorish turrets" rest upon crags, the "green sward's darken'd vest" is "scath'ed by fire," and "scatter'd hoof-marks dint the wounded ground" (I.514–6); in Greece, the "fanes" and "temples" "comingling slowly with heroic earth" and "Broke[n] by the share of every rustic plough" (II.805–7); and in Canto IV, the banks of the "Majestic Rhine," wherein "Ruin greenly dwells" in the form of decaying "chiefless castles" and their memories of "baronial feuds" and "deeds of prowess unrecorded," all of which mingle with the "foliage" and "crag" (III.409-14, 433-4).

Here history's deposits "greenly dwell[]" as anthropogenic scars on the environment—the "wounded ground," the "bleeding stream"—whose refuse also "portend[s] the deeds to come" (I.540) and thus proleptically weighs down the future with the "ever-same." History's catalogue of environmental damages in turn signals what

Benjamin describes in the *Trauerspiel* as the natural-historical "decay" by which "the

events of history shrivel up and become absorbed into the setting" (*Origin* 179). Byron's

fixation on literal and figurative ruins does not perform the ideological elision of nature

and culture that in eighteenth-century ruin poetry, which engineered a "spatialization of

poetic temporality," merged the cultural ruins of Britain with the "natural" countryside,

such that "the nation [would come] to be understood" as transfigured and eternal "nature"

(Janowitz 5). Instead, history's spatialization into clustered survivals of damaged natural

objects bespeaks not only history's regression into a self-archive of its permanent

ruination, but also signifies this self-archiving as a historical process, just as Benjamin

finds in the *Trauerspiel*'s "fallen nature" the "imprint of the progression of history"

(*Origin* 180).

The natural-historical logics of the museum adumbrate this process by which

history becomes citational and statically recapitulative. Quatremère de Quincy, reacting

to the Louvre's gathering of "spoils of war," opined that "[d]isplacing all these

monuments, collecting their broken fragments, classifying their religious debris … all

this to constitute one into a dead nation … it is not writing history, but an epitaph" (qtd.

in Underwood 238). *Harold* duplicates the emergent museum's spatial citationality

whereby historical temporality becomes inflected by the logics of self-interring

(re)collection. The poem's haphazard collection of history's "wound[s]" into a mortified

"book of nature" conveys history as the sifting through of frozen cultural exhibits all

interchangeable because "equally" decayed.[43] Even the poem's Spenserian stanzas,

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[43] Byron uses the phrase "nature's pages" in Canto III (117). As Underwood points out, there is in
Quatremère's reservations about museum collections an anticipation of Nietzsche's critique of historicism
as a form of "loss" (239) that puts a civilization in an Alexandrian comatose by trapping it in an over-

which convey poetic movement as accumulation of mechanically uniform,

typographically closed chunks of text, replicates how natural history proceeds through the

increasing sedimentation and overlay of calcified historical objects and epochs, a process

that Byron would develop more explicitly in a geological register in *Don Juan*'s

gathering "superstratum" that will "overlay us" by way of "some huge Earth's burial"

(IX.296, 312).[44] Although Jean Baudrillard backdates the late capitalist "hyperreality of

all culture" to the "cutting up" and levelling "interference of all cultures" carried out by

the "traditional museum," he nonetheless claims that the "museum is still a memory" and

thus at a distance from the total memory loss and implosive "stockpil[ing] of objects" that

structures the postmodern Beaubourg (*Simulacra* 68). But *Harold*'s poetic form and

Quatremère's remarks on the museum reveal that the "traditional museum" already

germinates culture's self-oblivion and memory loss via entombment by loads of dead

historical data. The museum's de-evolution from a re-collection of history and nature

within a progressive narrative of culture into a more citational structure parallels the

Grand Tour's mutation from a collaborator in the making of a cosmopolitan history to an

engine of an accelerating, negative universal history. The museum's "natural history"

thus seeds a history of nature. Space's pure immanence without transcendence unfurls

time. The museum's gathering, classification, and de-temporalizing of the surplus of

ended histories desiccates these histories and inadvertently advances a more severe

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documented past, a "loss" to be compensated by what Nietzsche sees as an active "forgetting" that re-shapes the past to affirm rather than paralyze future action. My claim is that history's museum-esque *habitus* in Byron afflicts subject *and* historical object with an amnesia akin to extinction that does not so readily affirm the future on the back of an expediently forgotten past. For an analysis of Nietzsche's and Byron's shared notions of history and its formation of self-conscious as a dialectic between erasure and remembrance, see Mark Sandy's "'The Colossal Fabric's Form.'"

[44] See chapter 2's discussion of this passage from *Don Juan*.

temporality that gathers time as mummified "half-lives" piling up into a densifying future.

What is more, *Harold*'s spatial dynamics of lateral expansion rather than forward motion becomes the engine through which teeming historical difference is crushed into the "ever-same," just as the poem's cosmopolitanism is already overtaken by the collective emptying of globalization. This process of lateral expansion of course proves capable of encompassing private histories, such as that of the Aventian Priestess Julia Alpinula (II. Stanzas 66–67), that would otherwise be forgotten by the forward marching annals of the exclusively "memorable." Yet as we have seen, the poem catalogues such geographical and cultural variety only to claim that this variety does not matter. The poem's far-reaching historical memory becomes frustrated as the urge to re-collect and document hundreds of years of Europe's history gives way to an impatient amnesia that forgets historical difference, as when the poem throws up its hands and commands us to "Go, read whate'r is writ of bloodiest strife: / Whete'er keen Vengeance urg'd on foreign foe / Can act, is acting there [in Spain] against man's life" (I.892–4).

The poem's natural-historical "book of nature" here reveals its expansiveness as the motor of history's ressentiment and anticipates Canto IV's spatializing of "History, with all her volumes vast" into "*one* page" that rigidifies present and future into "the same rehearsal of the past" (IV.968–9, 965). The poem's inclusive "rectangle[s]," as Foucault might put it, collapse the past into a bloody, self-recapitulating palimpsest wherein each new layer becomes absorbed into "*one*" sedimented mass. Every objectified history becomes a type exchangeable with any other within the black hole of the text's natural history. Again, we might recall the liquidated Marathon literally emptied of its

heroic history and thrown into the market economy as just another exchangeable piece of land. Byron here anticipates high modernism's de-temporalizing of history through the static movement of "myth," a gesture which Joseph Frank once delineated as modernism's tendency to depict "past and present … spatially, locked in a timeless unity" and effectively closed (63). Yet *Harold*'s spatial "timelessness" bears no aesthetic valorization but approaches Adorno and Benjamin's understanding of "myth" as intransigent necessity, the "ever-same" that for Byron accumulates into the present and has already re-cited or "rehears[ed]" the latter within its course.[45]

"Nature" in the text, on the one hand, heralds a figure for history's ruthless spatialization and decaying stasis. Canto IV's figuring of generations "rotting from sire to son, and age to age" while "Bequeathing their hereditary rage" as the falling "leaves of the same tree" (IV.839, 841, 846) exposes succession and descent as false progression— as the "rotting" outgrowth of a de-idealized natural archetype that pre-contains history's revolutions, its "eternal transience." Nature in its unchanging though entropic cycles assimilates history into its devastating plenum. As it does for Benjamin and especially Adorno, natural history for Byron does not simply constitute an alternative method of thinking history outside the exclusionary exigencies of world history. Instead, Byron regards world history *as* natural history, a history always prepared to slide back into its biological arche. But on the other hand, the poem's encounters with "nature" as erosion and decay are not only figural, as nature maintains a physical, sometimes rejuvenating

[45] In a similar vein as Frank, Franco Moretti reproaches Eliot's *The Waste Land* in terms that prove germane to Byron's citational conception of history. Moretti writes that *The Waste Land* "on the one hand, … makes history seem an accumulation of debris, a centrifugal and unintelligible process; on the other, [*The Waste Land*] presents mythic structure as a point of suspension and reorganization of this endless fugue … This is a radical devaluation of history" (222).

presence throughout all four Cantos.[46] But often nature registers the disastrous

coincidence of history and the natural. For Byron's natural landscapes either witness the

indistinguishability between nature's and history's degradation, or enact a disturbing

erasure of human history altogether: the battlefield of Waterloo where "None" of military

heroism's remnants remain and which persist in their absence as the "harvest grow[n]"

with "red rain" (III.149, 151), and the repeatedly "discoloured Rhine" whose "tide [has]

wash'd down the blood of yesterday" and caused the "thousand battles [that] have

assailed [its] banks" to have "pass'd away" (III.455, 451–2).

Byron does not only find in nature's spatial logic the "mythic" violence that yokes

history's future to its past. The poem also finds in its physical landscapes the "imprint" of

a citational mechanism that mutedly converts cyclical, static decay into an irresistible,

unilateral movement. Specifically, the poem seizes on modern warfare as this citational,

accelerative intervention that mutates history into nature and vice versa, and which

becomes the destructive matrix within which "human and natural histories" are disclosed

as "bewilderingly intersect[ing]" (Jameson, *Late Marxism* 96). Because Byron began

Harold during the Peninsular war and in the aftermath of the conclusion of the

Napoleonic wars following Waterloo, the poem everywhere fixates on war's ecological

devastation and its destruction of human life on a scale unparalleled in European history.

For the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars of 1790s through to the 1810's mark the

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[46] Nature takes more innocuous, nonhistorical forms in passages including Harold's travels through Cintra's "glorious Eden" of "variegated maze of mount and glen" and the sublime "horrid crags, by toppling convent crowned" (I.236–7, 243), or Harold's/Byron's musings on Greece's mythology-inflected "sweet … groves, and verdant … fields, / … [and] olive ripe as when Minerva smil'd," all of which tentatively assure Byron that "Nature still is fair," although "Art, Glory, Freedom fail" (II.820–1, 827). And Canto III's Switzerland stanzas paint nature in a Wordsworthian hue, as here the "arrowy Rhone" and its "nursing lake," along with the "high mountains" (III.673–4, 682), become a "feeling" and a refuge from the "peopled desert past" (682, 690).

advent of what David Bell, riffing on military strategist Carl von Clausewitz's (1780–

1831) term "absolute war," calls "total war." "Total war" refers to how the intensified

scope and virulence of warfare in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries

fosters the new experience of war as a zero-sum game. It mobilizes the entirety of a

civilization's resources in a unidirectional movement to deal the enemy an "all-

consuming" blow that would yield either self-extinction or perpetual peace (Bell 4).

Throughout the first two Cantos, Byron proves especially attuned to the escalation of

military technology and its rupture with the capacities and aesthetics of premodern "epic"

warfare. Notably, the poem's course toward Portugal contrasts a past Lisboa whose "tide

/ … poets vainly pave with sands of gold" and its war-torn present "now whereon a

thousand keels did ride / Of mighty strength" (I.217–20). This contrast draws a line from

the tide lined with "sands of gold" to the tide strewn with modern warships and steers the

poem's course within this accelerative path from aestheticized gold to total war. The

poem also proves cognizant of modern weaponry's advancements compared to more

archaic warfare. For Spain's "ancient goddess … / … wields not, as of old, her thirsty

lance, / Nor shakes her crimson plumage in the skies: / Now on the smoke of blazing

bolts she flies, / And speaks in thunder through yon engine's roar" (I.406–410). In this

vein, and similar to the citational character of the Napoleonic wars that we will observe

depicted in Blake's *Jerusalem*, *Harold* I and II conceives of modern warfare as an

acceleration that recapitulates all prior violence, "whate'r is writ of bloodiest strife," into

an apocalyptically consolidated space that forcibly reveals history itself *as* a mounting

total war.

It is by way of this accelerating total war that history in *Harold* "merge[s] into the setting" and sediments into a historical process of "irresistible decay" (Benjamin, *Origin* 178). As I noted, the Peninsular wars' revelatory gathering of history's barbarism plays out through the poem's earlier forays into scenes of natural-historical sedimentation and thus discloses human and natural history's "comingling" as the long *récit* escalating history's ruin.[47] Here Michel Serres's notion of "objective violence" proves instructive. For Serres, "objective violence" names the ongoing destruction of the "objective world" by human wars whose oppositional sides prove "unconsciously joined together" against a natural world blithely reduced to a "cardboard backdrop" or "'theatre' of hostilities" (10–11). Serres argues that the "eternal return" of civilization's arms race as the "motor of history" inadvertently decimates nature's "backdrop" until "[a] limit is reached" and the objective world's catastrophic precarity begins "conquering us" (12). This mounting "objective violence" thereby reveals that all along history's cycle of warfare had been tending toward this "limit point" at which history is brought "to the world" (12–13) and becomes disclosed as a kind of natural history.

Though Serres has anthropogenic climate change in mind as the "limit point" of such "objective violence," his natural-historical paradigm aligns with Byron's in its thinking of how history's escalation of "means" (Serres 12) and cyclical wars secretes a singular, irreversible arc of decline objectified spatially as a scarred "backdrop."[48]

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[47] Byron backdates this comingling to at least a thousand years ago with the "Gothic gore" that "dy'd [Spain's] mountain streams" (I.390) during Count Julian's feud with Don Roderick in 711.

[48] Mary Favret also understands war in the Romantic period as diffusing into a mode of temporality, a "wartime" whose affects and rhetorical figures descend to our present from a recurring "past uncertain of its future" (11, 5). Though my understanding of Byron's wartime as directly in the midst of a negative universal history diverges from Favret's sense of war's temporality unfolding "at a distance" and operating at the scale of the "everyday" (11-12), her valuable insight into how Romanticism proves marked by its adjacency to perpetual military conflict is always in the background of my reading.

Harold hits on this natural-historical trajectory during the aforementioned meditation on Talavera. For there the "Three hosts" gather to "fertilize the field" and thus unconsciously unite to feed history's exorbitant "*one* page" that here surfaces as the unstated, singular imperative to which the combatants "offer sacrifice" (I.441, 448–9). And the poem's retracing of how the "Paynim turban" and the "Christian crest" must have "mix'd" on Guadiana's "bleeding stream" (I.385–6) likewise posits the coalescing of war's opposing sides as the counterpart of a one-way street—the stream that both absorbs the opponents' entrails and syntactically "bleeds" with them—that sweeps history along into a disintegrating nature. This "limit point," or this accumulation of violence mounting toward a tipping point that ruined nature archives, appears subtly in the stanzas detailing Byron's observation of the Ramadhan in Albania. While contemplating the violence of Ali Pacha, Byron states that "Blood follows blood, through their mortal span, / In bloodier acts conclude those who with blood began" (II.554, 566–7). As a microcosm of the citational "vengeance" spatially compressing the endless cycles of warfare, this *Macbeth* citation of the "bloodier" within the reversibility of "blood follow[ing] blood" hints at an irreversible amplification—a current of *difference* unfolding within war's indifferent exchange of blood for blood.

That such a germinating difference could exist within this intensifying backloop of "the same rehearsal of the past" recalls how Adorno finds in bourgeois "exchange" the duplicitous engine of "progress" and, subsequently, the germ of "justice" within the "stasis" of exchange's "like-for-like." Adorno identifies such exchange as the "rational form of mythical ever-sameness" for which "revenge is the mythical prototype." Because the "truth of expansion feeds on the lie" that genuinely equal things are exchanged, for

Adorno the furtive deficit or "injustice" intrinsic to every exchange both fuels the system's expansion and "ossifi[cation]" and heralds the specter of justice in the possibility of exchange living up to its name by "fulfill[ing] … the repeatedly broken contract" ("Progress" 159–60). However, Byron's stance proves more ambiguous. We cannot be certain what kind of difference the suffix "ier" might bring to the accumulative "rehearsal" of blood for blood, ruin for ruin. We cannot be sure of what history's ruin builds *towards*—if anything. It could be a reversal or abolition of this entropic process, a messianic cessation of it, or simply a dizzying extension of this process itself, an escalation *ad infinitum*, like the seemingly endless cascade of *Harold*'s stanzas.

Citation and (Neg)entropy

The question of what kind of future or no future the poem's mounting ruin yields is bound up with how Byron attempts to resist the entropy into which his poem subsides. For Byron's text will also try to cite history not as the ever-same "chaos of ruins" that threatens to overrun and overdetermine his text, but as a form of anamnesis that seeks a revelatory encounter with the past. As Philip Shaw argues, the post-Waterloo cantos perform an "archaeology of commemoration" that struggles against both: a Wordsworthian aesthetic ideology that frames "the gradation of life into death (and back again)" according to a pastoral cycle of "engendering and decomposition," and the Tory commemorative discourse that grasps the "rupture of warfare" as the re-assertion of a "historical *telos*" in which a "heroic constellation" of classical and modern struggles for glory conspires to "determine a future" (178–9). For Shaw, Byron deploys a "poetry of antithesis" to allow the "repressed past … to speak" outside of history's triumphal march

and to save the dead from becoming "exchanged as values in accordance with a law of

general equivalence" (181, 179). Along the lines of Shaw's claim that "the economy of

Byron's vision is such that nothing is allowed to go to waste" (189), Beatty compares

Harold's obsession with collecting the dead to that of T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*. As

Beatty observes, the loss of British soldiers during the Peninsular war alone relative to

the population was comparable to that of World War I (103). Byron's and Eliot's poems,

then, employ "quoted voice, fragmentation, and dramatic juxtaposition" to "deflect

attention away" from the poets' devastated "interior[s]" (Beatty 111) symptomatic of an

equally exploded history or "tradition" collected into a waste land of cadavers. Similar to

the darkly nostalgic fragments of the literary tradition that litter Eliot's post-war waste

land, *Harold*'s piles and "heaps" of "monuments" to history's piled up casualties signal

Byron's desire to shore up history's fragments against their ruin, and to "hear each voice

we fear'd to hear no more" (II.70).[49]

What Byron in Canto IV calls his mission to "track / Fall'n states and buried

greatness" (IV.219-20) evinces his struggle against the current of history's entropy by

gathering up "monuments," no matter how ruined, as reservoirs of what Bernard Stiegler

theorizes as negentropy. Stiegler employs an "organological perspective" to think

humans as intrinsically anti-entropic figures that productively outsource "psychic and

collective retensions and protensions" to "artificial retentional organs" (34). He defines

these artificial organs as any technical object or "technics," such as texts, monuments,

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[49] For example: the "rude-carv'd crosses" which are "memorials frail of murderous wrath" (I.262, 264), Greece's "mouldering tower[s]" that mark the "abode of [dead] gods" (II.17, 22), the "vanish'd Hero's lofty mound" (37), the imagined "second Caesar's trophies" (402), Marathon's "rifled urn" and "violated mound" (853), Morat's "ghastly trophies of the slain" or "bony heap" of "Burgundy's tombless host" (III.601–2, 604–5), and the French Revolution's figurative "fearful monument" "[l]eaving but ruins" (770, 775), to name a few.

cities, etc., that artificially externalize degradable, biological memory and project it out into time and install it with a horizon of possibility. From this perspective, *Harold*'s broken monuments and ossified landscapes in their "irresistible decay" nonetheless preserve historical memory as irreducibly wasted yet perhaps unbiodegradable, as ever available for excavation. Thus, the expanding ossification of history's "ever-same" inadvertently preserves historical memory in a cryogenic state that enables endless occasions to try to resuscitate memory's promissory arrow, the possibility of a differential unfolding across time, stored in the enduring mass (and of course Byron's tarrying with each historical site bespeaks an attempt to awaken such stored-up "protensions" that might carry memory through time out of the homogenous ruins). In Spain the poem entreats: "Let their bleach'd bones, and blood's unbleaching stain / Long mark the battle-field with hideous awe: / Thus only may our sons conceive the scenes we saw!" (I.906–8). Here Byron solicits history's sedimentation as akin to the dry bones of Ezekiel, as an index of redemption: a permanent mark on the field of history whose traumatic endurance holds out the erasure of the bones' violent historical referent and programs the debris' memory to arrive in a future in which their "stain" has no existing correlative, a future in which history's "natural history" has been undone.

However, the intentional structure of this weak messianic power surfaces in the subjunctive "Let," which marks the ruins' redemptive ambit as a desideratum rather than reality.[50] Indeed, the excess of the poem's "organological" monuments clogs history to the extent that their stored-up memories cannot move through time at all but can only

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[50] The concept "intentional structure" comes from an early de Man essay, "The Intentional Structure of the Romantic Image," and refers to how poetic language can only "posit" without the ability to "give a foundation to what it posits," and thus posits the "intent" of a foundation rather than a foundation in itself (6).

stagnate and atrophy, just as the landscape piled with "magazine[s]" and military "desolat[ion]" block the "eye" from glimpsing an alternative horizon (I.537, 496–7). Stiegler identifies a comparable mutation in "organological" memory's capacity to yield "protensions" and a future as such. As Stiegler argues, the discovery of thermodynamics and the coming of the "thermodynamic machine" during the industrial revolution inscribes "combustion," the irreversible "dissipation of energy," into the *habitus* of the "becoming" of the cosmos itself (39–40). Consequently, "*industrial standardization*" (41), as well as capital's generation of "negative protension[s]" that project the future as "*nihil*" (37), casts technics and their "organological" function as not only the "*accentuation of negentropy*" but as combustion, as the "*acceleration of entropy*" (41).

Byron likewise conceives of history's engorged horizon of total war as not simply the prolific generator of embodied memories in the form of monuments and ruins. Rather, (natural) history's "becoming" now proceeds by cannibalizing its capacity for "protension." Byron points to history's gradual erosion of its external hard drives at the beginning of Canto II when he addresses the Acropolis persisting brokenly "despite of war and wasting fire" (II.4). In a note Byron touches on the explosion of a magazine that disfigured the ancient structure during the Venetian siege in 1687.[51] For Byron, this local attrition of embodied memory is not just an accident of history but instead signals the accelerating decay of monumentalization as such. The poem marks subtly the inevitable overlap of entropy and the shoring up of the dead by way of the "ball-pil'd pyramid"

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[51] For how Byron's *Siege of Corinth* reimagines this historical episode as encrypting history's (and the West's) thanatological process, as well as for Mary Shelley's taking up of Byron's employment of this episode, see chapter 2. Of course, Byron locates the true source of the Acropolis's and Greece's destitution in the Ottoman rule and the geopolitical conflicts surrounding it. Yet, as we have observed, the Ottoman occupation and the commercial plundering of historical memory by Lord Elgin and his ilk becomes an outgrowth of history's longue durée of expanding and escalating ruin.

(I.539). In a further note he alludes to how the modern "battery" yields a "pyramidal form in which shot and shells are piled" (*CPW* I, 188). Similar to Stiegler's account of the Anthropocene's "*organological revolution*" (35) and the mutation of the modus operandi of technics itself, technical memory's negentropy—the pyramid that houses and sustains the memory of the dead into the future—accelerates into its opposite and becomes indistinguishable from entropy, from the batteries of "vengeance" and total war. Here cultural memory itself assumes the "form" of history's natural-historical acceleration. For Byron, pure negentropy is no longer indigenous to technical memory but is downgraded into a kind of subterfuge that gives the lie to its thermodynamic course. The apogee of history's attrition of memory unfolds in Canto IV's near-tautological "chaos of ruins," which less facilitates the survival of memory than "wrap[s]" it in the "double night" of "Ignorance" and causes us physically to "stumbl[e] o'er" aphasic "recollections" (IV.718, 722, 727). In these examples the ineluctable materiality of memory casts memory itself as an object shriveling up into the setting.

Yet against the preprogrammed entropy of history's technical supplements, the poem will turn to sonic modes of memory-storage and anamnesis as a seemingly more reliable bulwark of negentropy and literally to call and hear the voices of history inundated beneath the rubble. For Byron proposes that "When granite moulders and when records fail, / A peasant's plaint prolongs [the dead hero's] dubious date," and exclaims how "the Mighty shrink into a song!" (I.398–9). Byron then cedes the deficient preservative capacities of the spatially oriented "Volume, Pillar, Pile" to the aural backups of "Tradition's simple tongue" (402–3), with the former structures becoming symptoms of how "History does thee wrong" (404). Byron thus mobilizes sound and

voice as a more affirmative mode of citationality—since etymologically, to "cite" is "to call"—that would seem to yield a "prolong[ing]" of historical and personal memory against the inoperable weight of history's sedimentation. Indeed, Byron populates the poem with elegiac voices and echoes that haunt the landscapes with "wails," "shrieks," and "echoes."[52] Additionally, history in the poem will at times seem to escape its procrustean "page" by way of the many references to and citations of "songs" and "lays," as well as ballads tied to local cultures. These afford small pockets of Provençal-ized history and equip memory with an ontological lightness that could immunize history against its accumulating weight. Though Byron makes a dismissive reference to "transient song" (I.467), voice and sound in general seem to yield a more aesthetic and redemptive transience against the "eternal transience" of natural history's organic decay. As Jean-Luc Nancy puts it, whereas "the visual persist until its disappearance," the sonorous "appears and fades away into its permanence" (2) and thereby shores up a certain negentropy within oblivion. Voice and its "calls" take on an explicitly spectral character for Byron, as "wails" and "shrieks" unfold a more complex temporal trajectory in which they could be re-echoed and re-cited differently by unforeseeable contexts and futures, and thus bear what the Derrida of *Specters of Marx* might regard as a ghostly *a-venir*.

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[52] In a meditation on the "Gothic gore" that followed from Count Julian betraying King Roderick and allowing the Moors to enter Spain, Byron closes the account with "Afric's echoes [that] thrilled with Moorish matrons' wails" (I.395); while standing before Parnassus, Byron claims that he would "woo [Parnassus's] echoes with his string" even though "from [its] heights no more one Muse will wave her wing" (619-20); while in Switzerland Byron surveys Morat, the "spot" at which the Swiss defeated Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy in 1476, and declares that here one may "gaze on ghastly trophies [the unburied remains] of the slain" which betray the "shriek[s]" of "each wandering ghost" on the "Stygian coast" (III.600-7); and during one of many of Byron's elegiac apostrophes to Greece, Byron beseeches a future "gallant spirit" who might conjure up or cite the dead warriors at Thermopylae's "sepulchral strait" (which is depicted as a synecdoche for a lost Greek independence) and "Leap from Eurotas' banks, and call [the warriors] from the tomb" (II.693-701).

However, the "transience" of sound and voice prove marked in advance by a temporality overdetermined by the decomposition of space. For although sound's weightlessness would seem to circumvent natural history's gravity, aural phenomenon such as voices and shouts can quiver and die out, thus rendering them, and the memory they carry, precariously delicate and prone to extinction. The capacity of voice to be heard variously and differently means that it might capture and transmit to the future vanished contexts and thus cause the past to be re-cited allegorically, as an immaterial fossil. The poem registers this material transience of voice when in Canto IV Byron cites Horace's *Odes* while standing before Soracte, now monte Soratte. Byron notes "Sorcate's height, displayed / Not *now* in snow, which asks the lyric Roman's aid / For our remembrance" (IV.665–7). Byron's emphasis on the *now* yields something of a non-redemptive Benjaminian "time of the now"; the present's confrontation with the past constellates both within the irreversible attenuation of a climate change and the erasure of what poetry records for a future ear. What this noticeably "lyric" poet broadcasts through time *is* natural history. Horace's lyrical "aid" or supplement projects "our remembrance" as a memory of entropy, of something eternally "not *now*."

That Horace's re-cited lyric voice registers that which does not carry to the future squares with *Harold*'s self-characterization as a "theme" that "die[s] into an echo" (IV.1657–8) and which stores up non-generative losses. For on the one hand, Byron's verse aspires to a kind of georgics whose "plough" inscribes furrows or (poetic) lines into the ground of history to turn up decaying "fanes," "temples," and "monuments of mortal birth," so as to shore up a minimal monumentalization against the future's ruin (II.805,

807–8).[53] But on the other hand, *Harold* also collects "scenes of vanish'd war" (II.355),

wherein the occasional disappearance of history's impact on the landscape does not entail

a recuperative amnesia but witnesses a more pervasive natural-historical erosion: an

"objective violence" from whose once "bleeding stream" ensues the total bleeding out of

human traces from the topographical record. Like Horace's cited *Odes*, *Harold*'s "echo"

reverberates the loss of historical referents as extinctions. Human history's "stainless"

(III.456) removal from certain landscapes signals the deeper erosion of the "unbleaching

stain" by which history might call to the future for redemption, and thus precludes the

very technics of mourning.[54]

  That Byron cites Horace's voice to herald the material history poetry fails to

preserve from entropy is no accident. Byron invokes and entertains "quot[ing]" Horace's

"lyric flow" to "awake" Rome's "hills with Latian echoes" (IV.671, 687, 672). This

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[53] Byron's invocation here of the "rustic plough" running up against the ruins of culture lodged in the earth alludes to a passage in Virgil's *Georgics*. For an account of how Virgil's text models a critical historicism by way of how the pastoral *versus*—both the lines on the field and the lines of poetry on the page— operates as a form of historical "disclosure" that confronts the "predicament" of "recognizing the historical meanings of what does get turned up, not under, by [the poet's] lines," see Kevis Goodman's *Georgic Modernity* (4). Goodman's account of topographical forms of verse as a radical encounter with rather than burial of history reacts against early New Historicist readings of how Romanticism's, and especially Wordsworth's, georgic undercurrent works to "hide history" and usher in an uncritical and complacent natural history in which "history turns into the background, the manure, for the landscape" (Liu, *Sense of History* 18). For an alternative take on New Historicism's critical objectives that brings the latter more in line with *Harold*'s sense of history, see Alan Liu's re-evaluation of New Historicism's prerogatives in "The New Historicism and the Work of Mourning," in which Liu highlights the paradigm's "elegiac" attunement to "the perception of historical loss *in* the poetry itself" rather than solely in the critic. For Liu, poetry's mourning moves beyond the "loss of particular history" to "the fact that history considered universally *is* loss" (163).

[54] The passage alluded to here concerns the once "discoloured Rhine" absorbing the shocks and "ruin" of "banorial feuds" and "a thousand" other battles that, along with "half their fame[,] have pass'd away" (III.441, 433, 451–2). These naturally eroded histories—and we have to think that their "fame," while still "half" erased, is not yet finished eroding—even obstruct their own mourning, as Byron laments that "[t]heir very graves are gone" (454). And though Byron suggests that natural history's erasure of such histories would "vainly roll" over "blackened memory's blighting dream" (458–9), and thereby safeguard these histories within a collective, immaterial remembrance, that "memory" here is become materially "blackened." Further, "blighting" implies that natural history inflicts memory itself with a kind of material brain damage and thus subjects it to a concomitant decay.

reunion of song and its local conditions of production works according to the logic of what Jonathan Sachs identifies as an emergent "theory of literary interpretation" in the eighteenth century, one that accentuates the "geographical situatedness of literature and the shaping influence of place." This newfound awareness of literature's "situatedness"— with "literature" encrypting an atavistic orality that ties its enunciation to the "local particularity of landscapes"—fosters the notion that travel becomes indispensable to "proper textual understanding" and insists that "specific historical circumstances— topographical or otherwise— … produce works of art" (Sachs, "Poetical Geography" n.p.). Byron's melancholic "not *now*" of course highlights the irrecuperable loss that obtains when the literal re-citation of verse does not "awaken" poetry's stored-up conditions of origination but instead discovers the atrophying of those conditions that cannot now be carried forward through time and space.[55] Yet Byron evokes "Horace" as a byword for how poetry's aural negentropy becomes a nonstarter. Byron insists that "not in vain" might one "rake [their] recollections" for quotable verses and restore the Italian countryside to its former condition. But Byron confesses that because his rote learning of Horace in his "repugnant youth" (675) as a schoolboy degraded the Latin poet into a "drill'd dull lesson" and the "daily drug which turn'd / My sickening memory" (674, 676–7), "Horace" enters Byron's memory as "freshness wearing out" upon arrival whose "health" he "cannot *now* restore" (681, 683–4). Byron cites Horace's oracular verse as encrypting not an awakening but a narcolepsy and a "sickening [of] memory." By way of

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[55] And on the other side of this equation, travel and "local particularity" do not circumvent their entropy within poetry or song—Byron's address to "Parnassus, whom I now survey" not in "the fabled landscape of a lay" but there in person, cannot "woo" Parnassus's literary "Echoes," since from the mythologized mountain "no more one Muse will wave her wing" (I.612, 614, 619–20). Thus, the deictic "thereness" of the in-person mountain physically overwhelms the past "Echoes" of the "lay[s]" it inspired and "*now*" immobilizes the muses' "wing[s]" and causes them to fall silent.

the *pharmakon* Horace, poetry itself and its supposed re-historicizing voice bears the entropic "now" that, for Byron and his compromised "youth" that continues to poison his current meditations, from the jump extinguishes the contextual life it would preserve from history's decay.

Therefore, the seeming negentropy of poetry as lyric, lay, song, or "dying echo" in *Harold* becomes a red herring. For poetry as aurality also facilitates a thermodynamic decline, a "health" that one "cannot now restore" and which, having its "freshness" degraded from youth, was never really present. This understanding of poetry's natural history recalls what Paul de Man describes as poetry's "embalmed" core in his readings of Hegel in *Aesthetic Ideology* (117). De Man transfers the undead "drill'd dull lesson" that Byron associates with his education to the very internalization or "remembrance" of poetry. For "[w]e can learn by heart only when all meaning is forgotten," and "in order to have memory one has to be able to forget remembrance and reach the machine-like exteriority" (de Man 101–2) that Byron attributes to his early memorization of Horace and which perhaps marks the classical quotations Byron imagines one "rak[ing]" from her "recollections" on the Roman countryside—a raking perhaps similar to Canto I's "rak[ing] from coffin'd clay" that initially turns up the stereotyped Harold. Further, de Man locates this "machine-like exteriority" or "redundancy" in poetry's inception. For de Man "poets only know their figures by rote" and conceive poetic figures by "embalm[ing]" them "in the coffin of their memory … until the day they will compose the text that claims to discover what they themselves had buried" (117). Poetry's temporality does not then store and transmit its living conditions of production into a future that might re-"awaken" it, but instead connotes a devastated "ethics of survival."

Poetry "projects into the future what belongs to the past of its own invention," and this exchange of future for past entails that "the symmetrical equivalence of the sacrificed future is not an understood, but a trivialized, past" (de Man 117). De Man offers a provocatively citational paradigm of poetry that resonates outside of his analysis of Hegel. "Poetry" here names an already entombed life and survives not against ruin but as ruin, as a zombified continuation of a pre-set entropy.

We cannot even be certain that this notion of poetry as marked in advance with disintegration can be restricted to Byron's "Horace" alone and the accidents of Byron's biography. Byron's notes to Canto IV inform us that stanzas 42 and 43's apostrophe to "Italia" are almost entirely a translation/citation of Vincenzo da Filicaja's sonnet "Italia, Italia, O tu coi feo la sorte" (*CPW* I, 234) and thus perhaps bear the programmatic quality that pre-empted Horace's "classical raptures," as if Byron's address is automated by a landscape that less situates than hollows out quoted verse. And in the following stanza Byron states that he once "traced the path of him [Servius Sulpicius]," a course that places "Megara before me, and behind / Aegina lay, Piraeus on the right, / And Corinth on the left" (392–4). This constellation of cities that for Byron "unite / In ruin" (395–6) becomes almost a rote citation, as another one of Byron's notes document, of Servius's letter to Cicero in which the former also details his sailing in the center of the aforementioned four cities that "now lie overturned and buried in their ruin" (*CPW*, I, 234). Byron's re-citing of Servius's journey into the nucleus of civilization's ruin produces the realization that "all that *was* / Of then destruction *is*" (IV.409–10). The re-citation of the *was* of the ruined past in an *is* that extends that "destruction" finds the context of classical and Italian literature to be history's indifferent decimation of the

topography that could have fed and could still have been returned to that literature. For in this history's continuing decline Rome stands in Canto IV as the trajectory of civilization always already ruined. Byron's poem thus discovers the literary past as already the bearer of history's scorched topography. This worn-out literary past survives in Byron's re-citations as a programmatically ruined response entombing the *is* within the *was*.

The foregoing analysis of Byron's exploration of poetry and entropy does not necessarily ascribe to Byron's text a wholesale theory of poetry and the citationality of its aural cognates throughout the ages. Rather, it illustrates how poetry *becomes* citational for Byron at this historical juncture, a juncture at which the eternal transience of Rome becomes both a cause and symptom of a post-Waterloo history retroactively depriving all prior history of possibility or freedom of movement. The literary past's inability to reserve negentropy against history's thermodynamic ruin devastates not only itself but our ability to respond meaningfully to it. Thus, Byron wanders Rome's debris as himself a "ruin amidst ruin" (IV.219). This degradation of one's capacity to think ruin surfaces, with all due respect to Byron, in the often cliché nature of *Harold*'s verse and thought. Much of the four Cantos turn upon conventional themes such as the ruin of empires, the transience of "fame," nature as a refuge from human strife, the pathos of individual history and heroism lost to history taken *en* masse, etc. Byron's recycling of well-known tropes in his writing prompted Hazlitt to remark of Byron that in *Harold* "he dwells chiefly on what is familiar to the mind of every school-boy" and that his "poetry consists mostly of a tissue of superb common-places; even his paradoxes are *common-place*" (109, 115). Byron proves oddly self-aware of his verse's derivativeness. In his first note to Canto II he concedes that "We can all feel, or imagine, the regret with which the ruins

of cities, once the capitals of empires, are beheld; the reflections suggested by such objects are too trite to require recapitulation" (*CPW* I, 189). Yet all *Harold* does throughout its four Cantos is recapitulate such "reflections," and this irony compels us to consider that the entire poem is "trite" through and through. Indeed, the poem's compulsion to reflect on history as "the same rehearsal of the past" yields re-flections that are already passed away, and thus formally signal the impossibility of making it new within a history stuck on repeat that leaves us nothing meaningful left to do or say.

As suggested earlier, clichés become ruins in the sense that they are congealed entropies of semantic content, or pre-entombed "trivialized past[s]" that do not preserve but immolate the future to the ever-same. Christensen reads Byron's clichés, commonplaces, and the explicitly cited classical maxims, primarily in *Don Juan*, more affirmatively as a "*site* of invention" or institution *ex-nihilo* in the abyss of a capitalist modernity—the "maddening aporia of self-legitimating authority" whose quotation marks typographically signal a "desperate" "seizure" of an emptied and now privatized classical "law or norm in the absence of any circumstantial connection to that culture where the law might be applied" (326–8).[56] *Harold*'s commonplaces, however, herald Byron's citation *by* the "site." Such citing/site-ing less projects than ejects sense: the

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[56] Though Christensen's reading of Byron's citationality here proceeds in a more affirmative direction, his analysis of how "*Juan*'s citation compulsion" becomes symptomatic of a "bookish existence unattached to a community of ethical phrases" accords nicely with this chapter's reading of *Harold*'s re-tracing of an already written history in which all that remains is the entropic re-collection and re-disintegration of wasted objects churned up by history's irreversible and endless decline. For Christensen likewise finds in *Don Juan*'s re-cited phrases from "ancient circumstances" a "seizure" of "cosmetic legality, like that conferred on the confiscated monasteries, seized as foreign communities and reoccupied as real estate"—a modernity in which the past can only be re-collected as "properties displayed, cited, and dramatized or like that conferred on the Elgin Marbles, cleaned, mounted, and labeled for exhibit in the British Museum" (327). For a reading of Byron's commonplaces that explores in *Don Juan* the commonplace's tension between the universal and the merely common, or that which offers renewable truths and that which degrades universality into "ossified" rote-learning (12), see Stephen Cheeke (5–17).

commonplace's retention and protention of "ancient" or universalized wisdom forwards a "trivialized past" that seizes the present's knowing of history as an anticipated, destitute repetition of that history. The "sense" that the commonplace stores as "commons" is globalized rather than universalized, in that its horizons are closed and find no exit to the future from history's attrition. Thus the "sigh" of "'Alas!'" objectified by quotation marks that Byron imagines elicited from the contemplation of Greece's memorials such as the "solitary column," "Tritonia's airy shrine," or "some warrior's half-forgotten grave" (II.818, 810, 812, 814), induces pathos and mourning as stereotypes, as if lying in wait to ventriloquize the observer and hardly distinguishable from the tourist-attraction quality of the historical remainders. A similar effect obtains in Canto II when Byron extracts a Grecian soldier's skull "from out the shatter'd heaps" and ponders the skull's "broken arch, its ruin'd wall, / Its chambers desolate" (II.46–7), in what amounts to a mapping of the *momento mori* commonplace onto a broken architectural topos. Byron's contemplation of the ruin of Greece's history through this artifact—which since *Hamlet* has hardened into a hackneyed trope or prop for contemplation as such and its subjectivizing force—reproduces imagistically the materiality of that very ruin. This commonplace's physical ruin pulverizes the elegiac function of contemplation and reflection into a flat ontology. Both reflection and its elegized object become objectified as sediment that cannot work.[57]

Finally, Canto III's quasi-messianic "flash" of Rome's history reveals the commonplace or cliché as the apogee of the historical process. At the close of Canto III

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[57] We might regard the poem's degrading of the trite "ruin sentiment" into the ruin *of* sentiment as an instance of the "elegiac deviance" that Jacques Khalip reads in Wordsworth's *Ruined Cottage*, a "detotalizing [of] the scene of recovery" that "ploughs and erodes sentimentalism to the point of producing veritable kitsch or detritus" ("Ruin of Things," n.p.)

on the cusp of Italy, which Byron claims "[was] the throne and grave of empires," the poem "Full flashes" a recapitulation of the history of ancient Rome, from Hannibal's attempted conquest of the empire in the third century B.C.E. to Rome's collapse, finishing with a paraphrase of the commonplace designating Rome the "Eternal City"— "the eternal source of Roman's imperial hill" (IV.1022–30). Here Rome as the coincidence of ascendency and extinction, a "throne and grave," "still" serves as the "fount at which the panting mind assuages / Her thirst of knowledge." Yet this seemingly non-entropic "fount" assumes its "eternal" character precisely by hardening into a commonplace, a mechanized "source" that, considering the following Canto's depiction of Rome as a ruin "past Redemption's skill," takes on an undead eternality that perhaps feeds history's Rome-sourced entropy to come. Tautologically, Rome-as-commonplace interminably fuels the "panting mind," whose mining of Rome for a complex circuit of desire is what degrades the site into a toxic "fount," a dead *sententia*. But that Rome's history builds up to this "flash" of Rome-as-commonplace—thus turning anamnesis or the "flash" of history into a flash grenade that stupefies historical "sense" into senselessness—consolidates the commonplace as the culmination, extinction, and continuation of Rome's legacy and points to Orrin Wang's notion of the cliché as the "unreliable basis of history itself" (*Techno-Magism* 53). For here history's self-cannibalizing ruin and the "thirst" after the knowledge of that ruin, both of which are cathected onto Rome, overlap in the commonplace by way of yet another of history's ruses of (un)reason: history orchestrates its survival as the degraded yet expedient commonplace. Like a trojan horse, this commonplace seems to gift to the future an

undying collective source of historical, and for Byron, subjectivizing self-knowledge. But this source's use colonizes that future and pulls us back into its waste.

Citation without End?

The commonplace as a duplicitous negentropy that in actuality trivializes the future onto which it sticks brings us back to the notion of the "hollow of history." Foucault's phrase points to a concatenation of 1) the citational movement of history's endless consumption of its "dying light," its entropy; 2) the "fold in time" that marks as an "event" and ossifies into a finished program history's catachrestic projection of its exhaustion into the seeds of the future; and 3) the pseudo-revelation of this finished drive, an insight whose very form reproduces this drive's recessive unfolding and in fact becomes the latter's byproduct. This latter point exemplifies why Byron's *Harold* fails to halt the decline it repeatedly declares. For the poem becomes a trace of the ruin it decries, the receipt of an already written history inherent in poem's structure. In de Man's terms, the content of Byron's travelogue "discovers" what the text's form has already buried. Notably, Byron's text at times seems indistinguishable from the history it unfolds, especially in the crucial passage on history's "*one* page" that delineates the closed "rehearsal of the past" cycling from "Freedom, and then Glory," to "Wealth, vice, corruption,—barbarism at last" (IV.966–7). The deictic "here" of Byron's suggestion that the past's endless rehearsal "tis better written here, / Where gorgeous Tyranny had thus amass'd / All treasures" (969–71) aligns Rome's decryption of history's single page with

the "amass'd" and amassing page of Byron's poem before us.[58] Furthermore, the post-

Waterloo Cantos explicitly frame their tangentiality as an enervation that cynically

acquiesces to history's devastation in the absence of any alternatives. For Canto III's

French epigraph translates to "So that this work will force you to think of something else.

Truly, that and time are the only remedies" (*CPW* I, 76). In line with this epigraph, Byron

will trivialize his text by emphasizing its occasional and desultory nature. He admits that

his poem's recuperative gestures to "seize" the historical sites that "fleet along" are

carried out merely "in passing" as a means "to beguile / My breast, or that of others, for a

while" (III.1042–4). The poem's digressiveness enables not the possible *clinamen* of

"teeming possibilities" that Emily Rohrbach observes in *Don Juan*'s radical presentism

(152), but formally registers the text's defeatism, its drive toward aimlessness as an art of

permanent distraction, in the face of a decided history in which everything significant has

been essayed and gone extinct. This temporal predicament leaves history with no

timetable for future transformation, mirrored in the poem's spatial predicament of a

travelogue that has nowhere to go, no geographical "other" from which opposition could

be mounted and an alternate temporal horizon grounded.[59]

The poem formally replicates history's citationality by extending itself through its

own foreclosures. In spite of my agreement with Martin's claim that the early cantos

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[58] Byron will elsewhere in the text refer self-referentially to the "page" on which he writes.

[59] *Harold*'s digressiveness arguably exceeds even that of *Don Juan*'s. For although the latter's tangentiality proves legendary, there persists at least a narrative through line, that being Juan's misadventures, from which the loquacious narrator digresses. But *Harold* never confidently articulates its through line, for each time the text seems to hit on a "theme" on which it can discourse at length—whether it be the sublimities of nature, the fall of empires and heroism, personal and autobiographical loss—Byron will cut the discussion off with a "Stop!" (III.145) that abruptly changes the subject, or will declare "Away with these [thoughts]!" (III.406), or "But this is not my theme" (716), as if to suggest a ceaseless digression in the absence of anything stable to digress *from*.

bespeak "no structural possibilities for history" (97), *Harold*'s fragmented publication history nonetheless invites the reader to peruse the four Cantos in a non-linear fashion that does not necessarily build to the confirmed "end of history" in Cantos III and IV after the Bourbon monarchy's restoration. The first two Cantos' appearance in 1812 places one of the text's feet irrevocably before history's total foreclosure and perhaps offers a semi-autonomous window into history's sedimentation that casts history as *not* inevitably landing where the later cantos land. In doing so, the early cantos might offer us, and the poem's later half, a bookmark lodged in pre-post-history and could permit Restoration to be read back to front, from its ever-same necessity back to its origins in the contingencies that might have unfolded otherwise. However, *Harold* III cannibalizes the earlier cantos' (im)possibilities from the outset by framing the former cantos as a "Tale" composed of "the furrows of long thought, and dried-up tears, / Which, ebbing, leave a sterile track behind" (III.23–5). This amounts to a desiccation and salting of the earth of the text's beginnings in "youth's summer" (19). The early cantos are deposited as a cancelled "track" that the present cantos (re)discover and whose retroactively barren progress they cannot but re-trace. The poem further recapitulates its beginnings as divested of growth in Canto III's curtailed, single stanza dedication to Byron's permanently estranged daughter Ianthe, a callback to Canto I's much longer opening dedication to the child. In Canto III Byron writes that "When last I saw thy young blue eyes they smiled, / And then we parted,—not as now we part, / But with a hope" (3–5). Crucially, the metrically truncated fifth line appears severed on the page from its second half that begins in the space below it. This breaking of the Spenserian form reproduces typographically the stanza's citation of Canto I's separation of Byron from Ianthe as a

"now" irrevocable separation, as a "steril[izing]" of the figure of "hope" that had minimally animated the first dedication and its two invocations of capital H "Hope" (*To Ianthe* 14, 45).

Furthermore, Canto IV "concludes" with a non-conclusion that extends rather than winds down the text's depression. Just as Canto IV seems to be wrapping up after it casts away Harold, stanza 167 erupts with a "Hark! Forth from the abyss a voice proceeds" bringing news of "some deep and immedicable wound," that being the death of Princess Charlotte in 1817, in whom "we did entrust / Futurity" (IV.1496, 1498, 1525–6). The poem interrupts its own ending, its potential respite from entropy, by distending beyond its logical conclusion—the final destruction of the poem's namesake—with yet another "wound[ing]" of "futurity" that declaims the ever-same with which we have never ceased to be inundated. As Byron suggests in his realization that the "ruin" of Servius's "page" is "added" to the "mass / Of perish'd states" on Byron's own page (IV.406–8), *Harold* possesses a ruinous adhesiveness that cannot cease collecting entropies.

Harold thus differs from the other texts examined in this study on account of its depiction of history's citationality as *in*exhaustible. On the one hand, *Harold*'s form and content anticipates that of P. B. Shelley's *Triumph of Life*. Both poems become pre-written and swept along by their forms, which progress correlatively with the unworking of history. The *Triumph*'s frantic, back-looping *terza rima* and truncated ending become predetermined by history's inane, speeding "car" as if on track to crash and burn after fueling itself too long on its exhaust. And both texts picture history as occupying the self-ruin of its monumentalization: Byron and Shelley tarry with monumentalized histories by

citing the careers of epoch-defining figures such as Rousseau and Napoleon, only to

reveal them as disastrous exempla whose predictable fall drags the arrow of time back

into the grind of "destruction's mass." Yet the *Triumph*'s accelerative "Life" exudes a

certain thrill in its suicidal movement, and the restless energy of the *terza rima* formally

generates a kind of friction that might open a space of difference within the otherwise

frictionless dance of "lust and death." *Harold*, however, does not reach the *Triumph*'s

energetic burnout because it cannot end, but only stop. In the preface to Canto IV Byron

admits that the poem has reached a "concluded" as opposed to "complete[d]" state, and

McGann claims that Byron considered supplying further cantos but held back due to a

want of motivation. Unlike Blake's almost calculatedly exhausted *Jerusalem* finishing at

an even 100 plates, *Harold* does not seem as if it needed to end where it did, and like the

interminable *Don Juan*, *Harold* perhaps could have extended indefinitely had Byron lived

to write it. We might recall Timothy Morton's aside in *Hyperobjects* regarding "a whole

lot more paper [getting] involved" as Romantic writers began to touch on the

"sensuousness" of their medium itself, a materiality registered in the "meandering" and

"detours" of autobiographical blank verse that bloat such texts into space-time

disturbances or "hyperobjects" (11). Though Morton probably has Wordsworth's *Prelude*

in mind, the same could aptly describe *Harold* and its repeated foregrounding of its

material "page." Byron's page and its exorbitant length is thus not an impartial medium

but harbours a "content" (Morton 11), the swelling of history's vengeful glut into a

deepening ecological depression.

C. F. Volney in his *Ruins*, a forerunner of any Romantic text deploying a

politicized ruin sentiment, thought that history, with enough commonsense, could free

itself from its cyclical ruin.[60] Byron finds no such escape, not even through the total

oblivion toward which entropy naturally tends. *Harold*'s expanding and densifying page

materializes history and futurity as the nightmare of a ceaseless escalation without

culmination, of endless growth as a skyward piling mass that will never hit a ceiling.

      Byron's authorial signature likewise becomes a means of opening the no future of

his text onto an indeterminate horizon of reception. As critics have long noted, Byron

proves pathologically attune to how his work and name will survive into and be

apprehended by the future. Byron's oft-used word "fame" cathects a citation complex

insofar as it tries proleptically to capture how the future, or what kind of future, will or

will have cited his name. In *Harold*, Byron imbues his signature with a toxicity that

threatens to materialize his poem's ruin and, as we will observe with *The Last Man*'s

citations, to disclose his poem's past ruins as a retroactive prophecy. In Canto III's

melancholic address to Byron's daughter, Byron casts his "name" as a "spell still fraught

/ With desolation" (1087–8), a self-characterization that loads Byron's signature with the

ceiling-less destruction he ascribes to history. Further, his troping of his name as a "spell"

conjures an archaic conception of anteriority as a malediction that, in the vein of the

poem's transhistorical vengeance, like clockwork resurges to pull the future back into its

pre-ordained "doom" (a term appearing several times in the poem [I.827, I.951). In Canto

IV Byron explicitly equates the survival of his signature to a "curse" of which *Harold*'s

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[60] C. F. Volney's text employs a recuperative use of space through its visionary construction of a public assembly in which all past and present world religions congregate on a single synchronic plain. By mobilizing this assembly to put together a single diachronic timeline that organizes world history by way of the trajectory of religious thought, from its origins in basic sense perceptions to its entwinement in ancient and modern political tyranny, and finally to its emancipatory submission to the commonsense "Law of Nature," Volney's text puts space to work in the form of a proto-Habermasian public sphere whereby the history of religious violence is cited, negotiated, and demystified through dialogue and communicative rationality.

"page" becomes a "record" (1206, 1202). This bewitching of the future enlists the poem's spatial logics of accumulation and interment, as Byron pronounces that "the *deep prophetic fullness of this verse*" will "*pile* on human heads the *mountain* of my curse!" (1205–6, emphases mine). Yet Byron's bitter fantasy of burying in *Harold*'s ruins the future that will cite him makes an about face and proposes that "[t]hat curse shall be Forgiveness" (1207). That Byron's piled up vengeance thrown into the future prestidigitates "Forgiveness" perhaps heralds the weak messianic difference we observed earlier as the potential byproduct of history's endless exchange of blood for blood, a difference that might cause ruin to implode and dialectically *ex*plode out of its vengeful encrustation.

But the ambiguity or downright incoherence of vengeance-as-forgiveness perhaps instead dissimulates the Byron signature's furtive alignment with the doom-like structure of citation. For the *pharmakon* "Byron" may secrete a toxifying "curse" that activates and crushes the future on the condition of the latter's "forgiveness" of that still cursed name. Indeed, such a ploy accords with Byron's smuggling of the ruinous citationality of history into an unassuming, popular genre such as the travelogue that ends up circulating Byron's spell of "desolation" widely throughout the public. Thus, the Byron name implants its no future into the very means by which a complacent future might domesticate it, just as, in Byron's tour of the Vatican, the latter's physical and typological containment of the *Apollo Belvedere* within a Renaissance humanism canonizes inadvertently the pagan figure's effluvium or "immortal's vengeance" (IV. Stanzas 160–1)—an eternal, surreptitious attenuation of collection itself by the collected.

That the other writers in this study mobilize citation and their authorly "brands" as a temporality that achieves utterly depleted futures suggests that they work to ward off the specter of history's infinite entropy into which Byron's text is assimilated and which the Byron name transmits. Such a dispelling of history's entropic infinitude becomes especially urgent for such writers when considering the homology of *Harold*'s citing of ruin to the theoretically limitless destruction and destructive re-territorializations of capital (lest we forget that Christensen teaches us how "Byronism" offers a vantage point from which to view history *as* capital). Yet by *Don Juan* Byron himself seems to have warded off the desolating aspect of the interminable no future that *Harold* and his name program. For while *Harold* concludes with a meditation on the de-selection and discarding of history and finally of Harold himself into history's ruin, *Don Juan* begins with the "selection" *from* history of Juan out of a host of other legendary figures perhaps also fallen into "Destruction's mass."[61] *Don Juan*, then, harvests from *Harold*'s endless waste the limitless fuel of an eternal beginning that, via the illusion of having never really started—since by Canto XII Byron still insists that "I've not begun" (*DJ* 428)—converts *Harold*'s perpetual tragedy to perpetual comedy without ever having to look back at the waste (paper) it uses and piles up.

To return to the earlier mapping of *Harold*'s and *Don Juan*'s differing attitudes toward citationality onto Marx's tragedy and farce, Marx had previously employed this

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[61] However, for a speculative realist reading of Juan's "selection" out of history as a trauma that encodes cognition's intertwinement with organic extinction, see Ottinger's "Astral guts," pp. 157–74. Interestingly, Byron couches his casting off of Harold in the phrase "let that pass" (1475), which looks ahead to the "let it go" with which Byron in *Don Juan* casts his train of thought proleptically into the geological strata in which the present will someday be found extinct and encrusted. And that Byron characterizes this "Destruction's mass" as a shadowy archive that "gathers shadow, substance, life" but also "spreads the dim and universal pall / Through which all things grow phantoms" (1477–80) makes this "mass" a forerunner of *Cain*'s archive of extinct worlds that perhaps "gathers" extinction in two senses: a collecting of the extinct and a germination of the extinction to which this archive will subject the present.

model of historical repetition in his "Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right." There Marx writes that history "take[s] this course" through tragedy to comedy such that "mankind may part *happily* from its past" (248).[62] Likewise, *Don Juan*'s interminable, exorbitant "page" as comedy allows Byron to depart "*happily*" from, or at least exuberantly turn a blind eye to, the cursed history that *Harold* and its "Byron" radiate. However, what ultimately stops the unstoppable *Don Juan*, and what lies in the blank space after that poem's last stanza, is Byron's participation and death in the Greek war for Independence—a lethally material return to, and vengeance of, *Harold*'s canto II and its Greek "tragedy." Byron and (his) history are thus felled by the curse of "Byron" itself in the very poiesis of its expedient forgiving and/or forgetting. The Byron corpus's "geodesic line" from *Harold* to *Don Juan* that the latter materializes and manipulates entails that *Harold*'s "Byron" will have crushed the future of Byron and the endless no future that signature abets.

Byron's signature thus becomes another failed negentropic prosthesis that extends the vengeance it purportedly arrests. Of course, the now famous Byron signature becoming an egotistically sublime toxic asset replays the failure of the earlier cantos' Harold figure, whom Byron's audience (con)fused with Byron himself and who stereotypes the Byronic heroes to come. For the minor Harold's catachrestic imposition of continuity onto a continuousness that gradually erodes him from a text that emptily bears his name seeds the "major" Byron's self-crushing monumentality. However, the implosive collision of Byron's first and last major poems heralds a different kind of entropy for the Byron name than that which fuels *Harold*'s endless escalation of culture's

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[62] Zizek's *First as Tragedy* points out the parallel between these passages in the late and early Marx (1–2).

ruins and the continuousness of various *récits* unfolding our modernity, such as those of

capital, globalization, total war, and for readers such as Tom Mole, our "celebrity

culture" that Byron's brand identity adumbrates. That Byron's "death" occurs in the

interval between the proleptic *Harold* II and the last truncated stanzas of *Don Juan*

suggests that Byron's signature signals not an "integrated oeuvre" (Mole, *Romantic*

Celebrity 20) but a disintegrating one. By wasting *Don Juan*'s endless wasting of time,

Harold projects itself and Byron's end as a terminal blank beyond *Don Juan*'s

interminable modernity. Thus, this geodesic line through the Byron corpus perhaps does

not yield a name that survives for us and into our times. Rather, the Byron name will

have taken vengeance on us by pulling our modernity into Byronism's *medias res* of

extinction existing *ahead* of our modernity. And that Byron's signature would survive as

one major synecdoche for an extinct Romanticism indexes a Romanticism whose (un)end

germinates our no future both "always already" but "not yet." And it is this no future to

come that Mary Shelley's *The Last Man* will discover as having been Romanticism's

toxic legacy and lasting impact on a modernity that will have not surpassed

Romanticism's extinction.

Chapter Two

Citation and the (No) Future of Romanticism in Mary Shelley's
The Last Man

The title page of Mary Shelley's (post)apocalyptic novel *The Last Man* (1826) confronts its readers with a citation from Milton's *Paradise Lost* that complements the sterility of the novel's title: "Let no man seek / Henceforth to be foretold what shall befall / Him or his children." This citation's refusal to render futurity epistemologically continuous with the present anticipates the novel's attrition of the future as a position that the human species could occupy; as the plague decimates the species, Lionel Verney, the titular last man, will repeatedly declare that "posterity is no more" (255), "nor [are] there any readers left" (227), and that the surviving remnant will "never see [their] children ripen into maturity" (214). Thus, the novel's denial of its, and "man['s]," capacity to "foretell" announces more than a Judaic prohibition against predicting the future. Shorn from its larger context of a futural Christian redemption re-confirmed by Miltonic prophecy, this opening citation cautions against foretelling the future because there is no future left to foretell. But this citation does not only replace a Christianized "reproductive futurism" with what Lee Edelman would call humanity's "no future," a shutting down of futurity, grounded in the image of the child or the above quotation's "children," as a generative site for society's ideological reproduction and survival (36). It also queers the very history it summons by casting the cited past as already wasted and infertile. Here citation functions as a form of what Maurice Blanchot calls "the disaster." Citations, writes Blanchot, "in their fragmenting force, destroy in advance the texts from which they are … severed." The "in advance" for Blanchot indicates the force of a non-event

that "need not take place," the "torment of the time which has always already passed and which comes thus as a return without any present" (*Disaster* 37, 33). Citation here, a "return" incurring a sense of "lastness" instead of the promise of reiteration, erodes present and future by bearing a hollowed out past in which we find ourselves extinct "in advance." Through Shelley's Milton citation, we find ourselves caught in the headlights of a present that is concomitantly the blasted, impossible future of a past that has already burned to the socket.

This paper argues that Shelley's novel marshals citation as an "organon of extinction," to use Ray Brassier's phrase (*Nihil* 239)—that is, a return to an always already wasted anteriority that effects a disastrous synchrony between a depleted past and the now vanishing present that cites it, thereby short-circuiting the future's promissory capital for "man" and "life." Citation in this chapter names the catastrophic retrospectivity operative in both the text's literary citations (quoted primarily by Lionel, since almost the entirety of the text is filtered through his perspective) and, more generally, the novel's recursive *habitus* through which the novel's disaster recedes into what Lionel calls a "former revelation," an event already known (285). The novel boasts an unusual intertextual density. Lionel cites broadly from classical authors such as Homer (62), Virgil (28), and Hesiod (124, 249), biblical texts such as Ecclesiastes (88, 254, 255), the Psalms (214, 311), and Revelation (176), early modern writers such as Shakespeare (176, 195, 297, 308), Andrew Marvell (223), and Milton, as well as Shelley's Romantic contemporaries such as Byron (109, 132, 162), Keats (215), Wordsworth (40, 24, 212, 240), Robert Burns (334), Wollstonecraft (331), William Godwin (364), Coleridge (208, 334), Thomas Lovell Beddoes (229, 330) and her late husband (63, 158, 228). As Leila

Walker and others have noted, while Shelley's novels often prove highly allusive, *The Last Man* appears singular in the volume and scope of its citations.[63] For Jane Blumberg in particular, the text displays "a breadth of literary reference proportioned to the panoramic scope of its theme, and far exceeding that of *Frankenstein* or *Valperga*; the classical, the contemporary and the 'curious,' from Hesiod to 'Mackey, a shoemaker,' all find a place within it" (xiii). That Shelley would seem to ally citationality with species extinction is no accident. For as we will observe in *Jerusalem*'s hysterical recapitulation of the Blake corpus, *The Last Man*'s apocalypse without millennium instigates a drive to tarry with disaster in order to "say everything" in the key of extinction, as evidenced by the novel's length and sprawling tangentiality. Correlative to the reach of the plague, which "trod every nook of our spacious globe" (Shelley 332), *The Last Man*'s end of history scrambles to "find a place" for "all that has existed" (*Jerusalem*) within the totalizing ambit of an extinction event whose touch contaminates not only space but time in the form of retroactively extinguished pasts and futures.

The novel's formidable intertextuality harkens back to the citational machinery integral to the work of apocalypse in its traditional form. St. John's apocalypse mobilizes citations from the Hebrew bible typologically to re-determine and reveal Jewish history as always already implicated in the Christian promise that now fulfills itself by "stray[ing] backwards" (Shelley 363) over and seizing its (un)knowing prehistory. But because the retro-determining agent of *The Last Man*'s cited history is not apocalypse but extinction, the novel's citationality enacts a denuding of promise. Shelley's novel adopts

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[63] As Walker puts it, "*The Last Man* includes significantly more quotations, citations, and literary references than any other novel by Mary Shelley" (52). And for Nora Crook, the "range of quotation and allusion" in the text is "the greatest of any of [Shelley's] novels" ("Editing" 34).

a citational structure to write the history of "man" as *literary history* in Paul de Man's "monstrous" sense of the phrase, in which "literary" connotes a text's endurance as a "dead mark or trace" and indexes an "inhuman" history that recasts the past "not as our own" but as if it "arrived from a time without us" (Cohen, Colebrook, and Miller 5). And it is by way of a derelict text or literal "leaves" that Shelley frames the past as a human-less future, as the novel's reconstruction from the fossilized Sibylline flora casts the past into the abyss of what might be termed a literary geology.[64] This chapter's account of how the novel grips the latent inhumanity of the textual past, or a textual past readable as fossils deposited in an extinct literary history's strata, confirms and diverges from recent accounts of the text by those such as Christopher Bundock. For Bundock, *The Last Man* deploys prophecy without apocalypse, insofar as the former renders history "vulnerable to an inhuman end" by opening history to its impossibility and resistance to prediction, its proximity to what is "unthought and unthinkable" beyond the "idea of history" (*Romantic Prophecy* 222). However, citation for Shelley, as this chapter argues, galvanizes an "inhuman end" already witnessed as if by a past pre-spent for a depleting future. Citation thus submits what Steven Goldsmith calls the "static" Parousia of apocalypse and its "vision of temporality brought an end" (*Unbuilding* 36) to the "inhuman," self-fulfilling prophecy of extinction "always already passed."

This chapter's account of citation's collusion with extinction takes its cue from both Jacques Khalip's various readings of Romanticism's "unlived," "ongoing"

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[64] Citation's geologizing of structures such as literary history and literary inheritance proceeds in almost the opposite direction of Melissa Bailes's analysis of what she terms the novel's "psychologization of geology." For Bailes, *The Last Man* effects a "psychologization of catastrophe" that "portrays individuals as 'worlds.'" What is at stake in the novel's geological idiom or "framework" for Bailes is "larger domestic and public relationships," according to which "the extinction of even a single life constitutes apocalypse" (672).

extinctions that announce less reified cataclysms than "negation[s] of just those very

principles of life that yoke … form to life, generation, and process" ("Contretemps"

634),[65] as well as Claire Colebrook's skepticism of futurity as an "empty tomorrow" of

"unbounded possibility" in favour of a thought of the future, especially in the time of the

Anthropocene, in terms of "its own non-existence" ("Extinct Theory" 69). Because the

novel's citational structure effects a disastrous retrospection—through which the past is

"revealed" as an unprogressive series of foreclosed openings that erode the present and

future's foundations—Shelley's mode of citation anticipates an Anthropocene

temporality. For the latter entails a re-tracing of human history and its achievements from

the perspective of its terminal future, a future endangered by humanity's unknowing

destruction of the literal ground of its own world-building. The novel's re-citing of

literary history as the history of extinction thereby accomplishes what Cohen asserts

critical theory must conduct in the wake of climate change and the logic of its "mutations

of 'life'"—that is, a rethinking of the "entire canon that suffused the cultural arc that

entails the spectre of extinction today," and a "rereading" of "textual legacies as

anticipatory or participatory in those logics [of ecoside and extinction]" ("Global

Weirding" 539).

Shelley's fascination with citation's anarchic and archival drives bespeaks her

larger concern over the endurance of a Romanticism that is itself defined by extinction,

archivization, and broken survival. Unlike the other primary texts in this study, *The Last

Man* explicitly thematizes Romanticism as citational by way of what Shelley takes to be

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[65] See also Khalip's "Arendt, Byron, and de Quincey in Dark Times," "The Last Animal at the End of the World," and his more sustained work on Romanticism's "lastness" in *Last Things: Disastrous Form from Kant to Gujar*.

Romanticism's privileged grasp of history's "textual legacies," as well as the trajectory of "humanity" itself, as trojan horses. The novel reflects the Anthropocene's shadows of futurity partly by way of Shelley's toggling between incommensurable scales that look ahead to our understanding of the vexed co-implication of geological and political time. The novel unfolds across asymmetrically interrelated micro and macro scales moving at different tempos. Such nonsynchronous micros include the personal, the autobiographical, and the national, and such macros include the geological, the world-historical, the global, and the cosmic.[66] Other differing scales and modalities are the naturalistic and the oracular; and the "generations" that populate the past and the present "end of all" as a monadic "single point" (361) or flashpoint, from which ontogeny swallows up phylogeny. But most pertinent is how *The Last Man*'s status as an autobiography of Lionel, a "romantic" subject educated by the Shelleyan Adrian and the manifold romantic writers whom Lionel cites, overlaps with the novel's status as a history of "the human race" (333) or Anthropos itself. Lionel's bildungsroman charts his progress from an "unlearned" "animal" (11, 22) to becoming "human" (22) and thereby reproduces in miniature humanism's narrative of humanity becoming a "political animal" by progressively overcoming its biological ground[67]—a narrative that the novel will rewind disastrously by staging the retroactive decay of "man" as "queller of the elements" (253).

[66] For example, the tension between national and global scales plays out in the dilation of England as a "sea-surrounded nook" to the "immense whole" of the "globe" invoked in the opening paragraph (7). And we glimpse geology and its deep time implicated in larger cosmic cycles via Merrival and his astronomical calculations as to the state of things an "hundred thousand" or "millions" of years hence (172, 238).
[67] Lionel claims that upon befriending Adrian, "I now began to be human" (22).

Shelley thus curiously depicts the "last man" and the last Romantic as synonymous conditions. Likewise, it was Shelley finding herself the "last" of her social circle that spurred her famous characterization of herself as "The last man" (*Journals II*, 476), thereby anticipating the novel's elision of the extinction of Romanticism with the extinction of history itself. Therefore, the novel's negative universal history that, as we saw in Byron and will observe in Blake's *Jerusalem*, gathers the past into a pile of enclosing extinctions hyperbolizes Shelley's citation complex operative throughout her oeuvre. For Shelley's novels repeatedly run the gamut of a certain Romanticism's past, namely by revisiting compulsively the personality types and ideological commitments supplied by the Shelley-Godwin circle. Yet Shelley's texts cite this Romanticism as a legacy already gone whose desiccation is figured by the dead bodies the novels accumulate. Citation for Shelley thereby combines remembrance and execution: Romanticism's various lives and desiderata are abridged and reified as character archetypes—with *Mathilda*'s Diana standing for the career and thought of Wollstonecraft, *The Last Man*'s Raymond for that of Byron, and *Valperga*'s Euthanasia for that of aspects of Percy Shelley and Mary Shelley herself—such that they can be expediently cast away and gathered into "destruction's mass." That Shelley tropes her survivorship as the condition of the "last man" suggests that the novel's "end of history" serves as a prop to register Romanticism's centripetal fossilization unfolding across her corpus. However, history's extinction as a way of thinking Romanticism's extinction is not a one-way street but a chiasmus, whereby Romanticism's replayed end (de)ciphers and relays the past as the quasi-geological inscriptions of an unfolding disaster. At the same time, Shelley's portrayal of a citational Romanticism that, like the novel's form as a

literally fossilized prophecy, glosses literary history as a "former revelation" of secreted extinctions, counterintuitively preserves the futurity it would seem to erase. The dark futurity that *The Last Man* casts as Romanticism's legacy, this chapter will argue, harbours extinction as our (no) future, or a monstrous "to come"—a bleak, "weak messianism" that impossibly props the fallen sword of Damocles over our heads.

Fossilizing Citation

Shelley's citational archive fever both deploys and presses beyond local allusions to texts and historical personages to become the *modus operandi* of history and Romanticism's grasp of history. *The Last Man*'s citational logic finds its objective correlative in its fascination with archival structures and institutions: Raymond's planned "national gallery" as a "great ornament" to his "Protectorship" and the English Republic (83), the libraries of Rome that Lionel peruses aimlessly after humanity's extinction, and the novel itself, which Lionel writes as a "monument" to the lost "ante-pestilential race" (364). Such structures marshal negentropy against the narrative of decline into which the novel petrifies. But that Shelley bookends the novel with Raymond's aborted scheme to build England a national gallery in Volume one and Lionel's prospect of visiting the "thrown open" "libraries of the world" (367) at the novel's (and human history's) close signals a collapse of the Western archive's worlding capacities that was apparently there from the start. For Raymond's desire to reify what Nietzsche calls a "monumental history"—a way of sanitizing the past as a triumphant "highroad for humanity through the ages" (13)—proves botched from its inception: after rejecting many architects' drawings for the planned building, what ultimately attracts Raymond to Evadne's sketch

of the prospective gallery is its "faulty" design, a design whose architectural deformities

"multiplied under inspection" and seem to predestine the structure never to be built (83).

And indeed, Raymond's gallery is never established nor brought up again, since this

episode serves merely as a plot expedient to re-introduce Evadne into Raymond's affairs

and to sow seeds of distrust in Raymond and Perdita's relationship. The emptying out or

wasting of the archive that awaits Lionel following the end of "man" thereby

counterpoints *and* consummates the abandoned gallery's (im)possibilities and its

(neg)entropy. On the one hand, the radical unbinding of the world's libraries following

their failed perseveration of "man" marks a shift from citation as a mode of preservation

and monumentalization that we observe in Raymond's prospective gallery, to citation as

a force of extinction. But on the other hand, the final dissolution of the literary archive's

anthropological contours serves as a receipt for the cultural death drive already latent in

the gallery's blueprints and acknowledges extinction as monumentalization's

unconscious.

That this unbuilt gallery disappears unceremoniously from the novel could not

have been inconspicuous to Shelley's audience. For England's National Gallery *was* in

fact founded successfully in 1824, two years before Shelley's novel was published.[68] The

institution's abortive genesis in the novel thereby de-realizes retroactively its actual

historical referent. The finished National Gallery's belated nonappearance in the text's

twenty-first century present installs an implosive counterfactual past—the institution's

powerlessness to be born—as the historical gallery's prophesied future. The novel thus

casually treats one of England's actually existing archives not simply as a tenuous

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[68] I thank Tilottama Rajan for pointing this fact out to me.

foundation speeding toward self-destruction, but as an abortion to-come that renders

unreal a monumental history to which Shelley's present had unproblematically laid claim.

The non-existence of England's historically given archive thus (de)materializes in a

future anterior that yields a counterfactual account of the structure's botched origin. The

failed national gallery and its denuding of its historical counterpart's givenness figures

citation's attenuating of the historical present into a spectral ground flickering in and out

of existence as it glimpses a (future) past that already contains its extinction. Here and

throughout *The Last Man,* Shelley mobilizes the "counterfactual" not simply to insert

contingency and possibility into the specious necessity of the historical past and present.

Instead, Shelley's counterfactual, paraphrasing Baudrillard on the death drive, "dissolves

assemblages, unbinds energy and undoes Ero's organic discourse," not to return the

archive to its "inorganic, *ungebunden* state" (*Symbolic Exchange* 149), but to re-write the

archive's possibility, its capacity to be otherwise, as its preemptive impossibility. For the

novel can only reimagine the monumentalizing *telos* of England's historical gallery by

recovering its genesis as a projected stillbirth—it is a structure that *will have been*

stillborn. Thus, *The Last Man* construes its contemporaneity much differently than that of

Shelley's later novel *Lodore* (1835), whose frequent allusions to recent events and trends

from the 1830s presses the text's timeliness, even to the point of the novel reporting

current events that occur after the text was printed.[69] If *Lodore*'s obsessively up-to-date

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[69] Shelley had originally intended "A tale of the present time" as *Lodore*'s subtitle. In volume II the narrator makes a parenthetical remark concerning the Houses of Parliament, which the narrator claims were "constructed until late last year" (178). This comment refers to a fire that burned down the Houses in October of 1834, which was just prior to the novel's publication in the spring of 1835, but after the novel was first printed in August 1834. This confused timeline suggests that Shelley must have made this addition after the text had started being printed and yet before advance copies started circulating in March of 1835, as if the novel's drive toward the contemporary required that the novel's uncompromising "present" render the text itself obsolescent and out-of-date. Moreover, the numerous delays in publication that allowed

contemporaneity locates the reader in a present both reified and becoming-obsolescent, then *The Last Man*'s empty future locks the reader's present in a condition of suspended animation by holding out our confrontation with an originary wasting as still to come, thereby writing our present as the ghost of a fossil yet to be.

We might regard the "fossil" as both the spur, and a figure of, this new economy of citation that Shelley's text registers and activates. For the fossil's radical negativity invisibly feeds the novel's retroactive neutralization of its archival apparatuses and re-thinks how they curate history and mark time. Georges Cuvier's paleontological work on fossils in the late 1790s became the impetus for his catastrophic theory of the earth's geohistory and the period's emerging sense of history's deep, inhuman time in which the Anthropos might play a contingent role. For Cuvier, fossils came to signify faint traces of extinct "former worlds" and obliterated orders of nature "not subject to man's dominion" whose vanished inhabitants have no living descendants (24).[70] The fossil, then, particularly in the mode adumbrated by Cuvier, forwards what I have been calling a citational logic; it harbours a vexed temporality whereby the present is ghosted by an always prior extinction in whose disastrous purview we may suddenly find and lose ourselves. Similar to the Milton citation's fatalistic bent, we might read the fossil as an

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Shelley to update the novel—for according to a letter in December of 1834, *Lodore* was inexplicably "lost" at some point (*MWSL* II, 217)—also forced the text to lag behind its sense of timeliness. According to Fiona Stafford, "The passing reference to the lions in the Tower of London would have had more significance to the first readers of *Lodore*, since the menagerie was closed in 1834," and Ethel's travels across Blackfriars Bridge accrued "additional poignancy" since "the bridge had been declared unsafe in 1833" (xii).

[70] Cuvier's paper "Espèces d'éléphans," delivered April 4, 1796, focuses on the fossil bones of the mammoth and megatherium, as well as the lack of recognizably human bones in this fossil record. Shelley was surely familiar with Cuvier's work, evidenced not only through her engagement with Byron's later poetry, but also likely through her reading of Cuvier's *Recherches sur les Ossemens Fossiles* (1812), which the Shelleys had ordered shortly before Percy Shelley's death.

ossified no future that menaces our claim to the present, future, and human history *tout court*, whose peaked shelf-life the fossil weakly prophecies.

The early nineteenth century witnesses the fossil and its citational structure become both an object of and figure for poetry and the tipping points it registers. In Byron's closet drama *Cain: A Mystery* (1821), which Shelley regarded as "the highest style of imaginative Poetry" (*Letters* 209), Lucifer takes Cain on a paleontological tour through Hades to observe extinct pre-Adamite lifeforms. Lucifer's Hades functions as an infernal archive or, as we saw in the previous chapter, what Hazlitt called a "mausoleum." These shadowy specimens become akin to animated fossils and manifest pre-human histories "struck out" by "inexorable / Destruction and disorder" (II.ii.80-81) which in turn predestine the future of Adamic man to catastrophe, as these former worlds are also "shadows still to come" (175). And Canto IX of *Don Juan* (1823) cites Cuvier's "catastrophism" to meditate on the products of Byron's own historical moment, including *Don Juan* itself, as the fossilized "monsters" of a post-human "new museum" (320). This post-human archivization becomes possible on account of the capture of Byron's present by a geological death drive:

> But let it go: – it [Byron's verse] will one day be found
> With other relics of a 'former world,'
> When this world shall be *former,* underground,
> Thrown topsy-turvy, twisted, crisped, and curled,
> Baked, fried, or burnt, turned inside-out, or drowned,
> Like all the worlds before, which have been hurled
> First out of and then back again to Chaos,
> The Superstratum which will overlay us.
>
> So Cuvier says[.] (289-97)

This satirical vision depicts the present pre-fossilized via a deadly future anterior, as an already "'former world'" (320, 299). The Cuverian fossil for Byron negotiates the

Romantic museum as an-archival space continuous with geological strata. The fossil or

"relic" thus geologizes the museum's negentropy by limning the literally "underground"

anteriority the museum holds in storage and which will eventually "overlay us." What the

curation of Byron's "*new* museum" amounts to, then, is the citing and tallying of

history's extinction(s) rather than consolidating its grand march by way of cultural

achievements or the spoils of empire.

Wordsworth also tarries with the fossil's uneasy coupling of extinction and frail

preservation in the well-known "Arab Dream" episode from Book V of the 1805 *Prelude*.

Wordsworth more overtly illustrates how the ancestral or "former" world witnessed and

crystallized in the fossil can proleptically "overlay us." At the center of Book V's

apocalyptic vision, which is itself a citation of one of Descartes's dreams (Balfour 119)

and a citation of an unnamed friend's dream in the 1805 version, is an enigmatic "shell"

surreally coextensive with poetry itself (V.80). For some late eighteenth-century natural

historians, fossilized shells bespoke "relics of a former world" which pointed to the

possibility of "widespread extinctions" (Rudwick 246–7).[71] Roughly contemporaneous

with Wordsworth's poem, Charlotte Smith's *Beachy Head* (1807) would also evoke the

"strange and foreign forms / Of sea-shells" (374–5) to grant poetry an archaeological

function as an excavator of the geological "convulsion[s]" that subtend, and threaten to

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[71] For early eighteenth-century natural historians such as those in Robert Hooke's (1635–1703) generation, fossils were still treated as phenomena within the purview of human rather than pre-human history. Fossils were treated as "nature's coins," which is to say natural artifacts that could supplement histories already decipherable in human documents such as the Old Testament and other ancient texts. Beginning with scholars of Francois-Xavier Burtin's (1743–1818) generation, however, and particularly in Burtin's 1789 essay "Révolutions générales," fossils became increasingly regarded as indicative of a vast geohistory that still ran parallel with and yet exceeded the limited scope of human history. For Burtin, fossils served as witnesses to terrestrial "revolutions" long predating textual records, and thus could be studied as "nonhuman" forms of natural-historical evidence. See Rudwick (194–203).

revisit, the grounds of the present. While holding the shell to his ear, Wordsworth's

dreamer hears

> A loud prophetic blast of harmony,
> An ode in passion uttered, which foretold
> Destruction to the children of the earth
> By deluge now at hand. (96–99)

For Wordsworth, the shell both figures poetry's uncertain survival through an

environmental catastrophe "now at hand" *and* casts poetry as a citation of the "prophetic

blast" foretelling the very extinction event that threatens poetry's survival—a disaster

suspended between the ancestral shell's past "now" and the speaker's own, imminent

"now."[72] Significantly, the passage's ambiguous syntax leaves undecided whether the

"deluge now at hand" proceeds from the voice and situation of the speaker or belongs to

the message of the shell itself. Put differently, the "now at hand" does not necessarily

belong solely to the speaker's commentary upon his own immediate circumstances, but

perhaps makes up part of the shell's prophecy, as if the shell speaks paradoxically in the

simple present of a future extinction that it already witnesses in its own lost here and

now. This episode, then, is citational insofar as the shell prophecies a future apocalypse,

now unfolding in the speaker's present, that is uncannily shadowed by a prior apocalypse

already "now at hand" in the shell's past. Such a "now" yields extinction as the

synchronization—or what Benjamin would call the "secret agreement" divulged and

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[72] Ian Balfour reads Wordsworth's dream through the lens of Romantic prophecy, which he suggests "involves a paradox about [the prophetic message's] temporal status, namely that this future-oriented discourse aimed at persuading an audience in the present is substantially a thing of the past." Moreover, Balfour argues that this past is always a "textual past" because, following Blanchot's notion of the prophetic word's alterity to itself, prophecy cannot overcome its status as a repetition of the already spoken and forever receding divine Word ("Future of Citation" 117). My reading of citation's prophetic character (rather than prophecy's citational character) understands this temporal paradox not necessarily as naming an apocalyptic event that is both situated in the past and to come, but an event that encompasses both past and future because it has always been happening.

produced by citation—of the speaker's present and a "former world." Wordsworth does resort to a humanist idiom ostensibly to bolster this fossilized poetry's survival into a post-apocalyptic futurity, since the Quixotic horseman maintains that poetry will live on as a "joy, a consolation, and a hope" (109). Yet these objectless premiums can only weakly posit a future on the condition that they do not know for whom or for what. Wordsworth's uncertainty over poetry's potential obsolescence in a post-human (as in *after* the human) future occasions his occluded acknowledgment that this fossilized poetry *has already* borne its own obsolescence as an agent of human "sense," and has thus already disastered history and "man" by witnessing them as past.

Byron's and Wordsworth's fossils adumbrate extinction as a radical negativity that runs against the grain of extinction theories influenced by Scottish Enlightenment "stadial" histories put forward by contemporary geologists in England. William Smith (1769–1839), for example, reads the earth's fossil archive as a teleological narrative yielding progressively "'organized' forms of life" (Heringman 165), a narrative entertained by Percy Shelley in *Prometheus Unbound*'s Act IV. Other thinkers of extinction such as John Whitehurst (1713–1788) and James Parkinson (1755–1824) argued that the prehistoric geological upheavals that had repeatedly laid waste to the earth archived those wastes as coal deposits and "stratigraphic discontinuities" preserving fossilized artifacts and "useful minerals" (Heringman 186). As Parkinson put it, the fossilized "remains of a former world" produced by various extinctions are "offered to man, as powerful inducements to the exercise of industry" by way of their calcification into resources such as limestone and marble; thus nature's "preservative powers" displayed by fossils proceed from the earth's bowels— conceived as the "laboratory of

the universe"—which convert the "mutilated wrecks of former ages" into food for future years (8, 10). Byron and Wordsworth, by contrast, glimpse the fossil and its limning of the intersection of human and geo-history as yielding a furtive entropy rather than a future of improvement secured by fossil fuels. By doing so, Byron and Wordsworth—and especially the Byron of "Darkness"—perhaps harken back to the spirit of entropic geohistories of natural historians such as Comte de Buffon, for whom the earth's "seven ages" of catastrophic cycles press earthly life toward universal extinction via the planet's structurally entailed "global cooling." Byron and Wordsworth's fossils push Cuvier's fossils toward what Quentin Meillassoux calls the "arche-fossil"—ghostly "traces of past life" that imply "the existence of an ancestral reality or event" prior to the human and destructive in advance of the "correlationist circle" that grants thought an indissociable tie to what lies outside it (10). The Wordsworthian shell whose pre-historical, already-occurred catastrophe reaches and swallows the present by way of a tape delay, and the Byronic "Superstratum" that will have fossilized us, push the early Cuvier's account of extinction toward its logical extremity[73]: that we are already fossils, and that the very existence of fossils means that we are always already cited within the horizon of an extinction event to come yet "now at hand."

The explicitly citational fabric of Shelley's novel, however, confronts even more directly than Wordsworth or Byron the collusion of the fossil, poetry, and extinction that re-cites history as if it were a disastrous pre-history. It is worth repeating that Lionel's

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[73] As Bailes points out, Cuvier would later walk back his initial estimation of the danger that the planet's tendency toward catastrophe posed for human life. The later Cuvier "decided that the earth's past revolutions, while sudden, had not been universal or global, but rather local and particular to specific regions, becoming more localized and less violent throughout the course of history" (Bailes 682). Thus, catastrophism becomes subject to a law of diminishing returns, meaning that humans are unlikely to face extinction at the hands of the natural disasters that had wiped out other species in the past.

narrative is literally a fossil. *The Last Man*'s "Author's Introduction" frames the novel as a citation of the remains of the "Sibylline leaves" that the unnamed narrator and her companion discover in a cavern located in a terrain "convulsed by earthquake and volcano" many times over (3). Shelley's depiction of the ancient Sibyl's prophecies as "poetic rhapsodies" inscribed on "frail and attenuated" "leaves" and "bark" yields a kind of inhuman, arche-poetry whose expression in "unknown" languages and "Egyptian hieroglyphics" vouchsafes these fossilized verses a deeper, "ancestral" antiquity irreducible to Europe's classical heritage (3). As a "poetic" prophecy of twenty-first century events emanating from a primordial past and curated and re-cited by a nineteenth-century editor, *The Last Man* as a fossilized citation functions in the vein of Byron's pre-Adamites and Wordsworth's shell: the Sibylline specimens make available to the present a future extinction that has paradoxically already unfolded, a destructive Janus-faced prophecy that short-circuits the future as a flight from the present. Citation's kinship with the arche-fossil's enfolding of the future within a past extinction anticipates and galvanizes a subtext of Thomas Henry Huxley's exaltation of geology as what Bailes calls "retrospective prophecy," or a visionary reconstruction of earth's history that lends prophetic insight into its future course (Bailes 680). For the "retrospection" of citation's fossilizing structure becomes retroactivity—the fossil forces the present into contemporaneity with a geological (non)temporality that has as if always already incorporated where we have been and where we are going within its deadly prophecy of imminent/immanent extinction. The text's ancestral leaves, then, mediate prophecy as an inscription of what has already occurred and loop the year 2100—the "unimaginable

extent of Romantic futurity" (Walker 53) that stretches beyond even our present—into the past of the "Author's Introduction."[74]

Furthermore, Lionel's characterization of his narrative as a "monument" indexes the abutting of human and geological temporalities that marks not only modern understandings of the Anthropocene, but also recalls the transposition of terms from antiquarianism into natural history that took place during the century preceding Shelley's writing of the novel. For the antiquarian term "monument," a nonverbal "witness" of past events, afforded an analogy with the non-textual and nonhuman records of fossils and other geological traces, which were construed similarly as "witnesses" of pre-human pasts for which there could be no human observer. (As Buffon put it, in natural history "one must rummage through the Earth's archives" and "pull ancient monuments from the entrails of the Earth" [3]). Thus, *The Last Man*'s status as both a fossil and "monument of the existence of Verney, the Last Man" does not necessarily bespeak a temporal divide between Lionel and the frame narrator, with the former regarding the text as a preemptively antiquarian monument of a nonetheless human history and the latter interpreting it as a pre(post)-human relic of a "new museum." Rather, by Shelley's time, the term "monument" already contains a proto-Anthropocene elision of human and natural history, an elision by which Lionel's monument of the history of "man" becomes annexed in advance by the "deep," inhuman purview of the "entrails of the Earth" (and indeed, through the frame narrative the reader first encounters Lionel's futural monument

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[74] Barbara Johnson was the first to tease out meticulously what she calls the "strange temporality of the end of man" that promises extinction in the "future perfect" and grants the reader a future in which she "will not be able to have read the novel" (258, 265–6). My reading of the novel's citations as rendering extinct that which is cited follows from Johnson's insight that "the end of man … will have always already coincided with the moment of predicting, the moment of translating, and the moment of writing" (266).

as a fossil, whose geological timescale enfolds the species' history within the "Earth's archives" that already know that humanity is extinct).[75]

That Lionel's "monument" to the human species pre-contains the fossil it will have, or already has, become in the frame narrative exhibits human history as pre- or inhuman, and the (future) past as an ancestral past. The novel figures futurity as not only a human history that has already transpired, but an ancestral history whose witness, the arche-fossil/monument, presupposes the non-existence or extinction of the earth it records. The rhetoric of Lionel's "monument of … the Last Man" bears the future and its (our) past as if it were a prehuman anteriority for which no observer is or even was possible.

Former Revelations: Citation and Retroactive Prophecy

So far, we have observed how the "always already" of citation operates for Shelley as a kind of geological textuality figured by the fossil and its retroactive prophecy of how we are already fossilized. Thus, *The Last Man*'s more conservative, negentropic archival apparatuses, such as Raymond's national gallery and the libraries of Rome, become preempted and rendered "dead on arrival" by the citational temporality that pulls the novel's trajectory back into the extinct "archives of the world." This model of citation

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[75] The main argument of Rudwick's *Bursting the Limits of Time* is of course that the earth starts to become "historical" or accrue a sense of historicity when naturalists "transposed … into the natural world" the "erudite histories" and "study of massive documentary evidence" that characterized antiquarian studies beginning with the Enlightenment (182). See also Szerszynski (111–31), who reads "monuments" as a "cultural form that mediates between radically different temporal registers," and whose basis in the aforementioned transposition of antiquarian terms onto the study of natural history—or the transposition of the "human sciences" onto geology—"mean[s] that the notion of the Anthropocene was already in some sense latent in the new science of the Earth" (113, 116).

functions in the vein of Benjamin's "allegory," which advances the "non-existence of what it presents" (*Origin* 233). Adapting Benjamin, we might say that citation forwards the "non-existence" or extinction of what it cites: it cites the past as a fossil. Therefore Baille's claim that Shelley's novel dismisses nineteenth-century geo-histories and their attendant catastrophism as agents of human extinction misses how, by way of the text's citational structure, geology functions as a kind of textuality that, catachrestically figured as the plague's rapid onset, becomes the novel's organon of extinction.[76] To conceive of the novel's sense of extinction in purely mimetic terms—as the work of the plague, as what the text's natural disasters fail to produce—is to overlook the structural and textual character of extinction in the text.

The novel's citational texture unfolds extinction also at the micro-level of literary citation and the latter's local disclosures of extinction's invisibly accumulative yet recursive momentum. Though the text's individual citations of literary history do not assume the shape of literal fossils in the manner of Sibyl's leaves, they nonetheless typify the fossil structure—they become de Manian "dead marks" whose prophetic friction projects the liquidated, extinct past into what is now that past's collapsing future. Hence the novel's conditioning of us to regard past texts as sites of muted predictions or prophecies that have since come true. Early in the novel, as Lionel travels aboard a winged balloon (one of the novel's only futuristic set pieces), he proclaims that the vehicle's prowess confirms "the power of man over the elements; a power … lately won;

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[76] For Baille, because humanity in the novel ends "with the whimper of plague, not the bang of geological catastrophe" (672), Shelley's portrayal of extinction proves consistent with the later Cuvier's notion of the progressive attenuation of geological upheavals throughout history. To argue this point, Baille's also points to the numerous natural disasters in the novel that fail anti-climactically to do any significant damage to the species as a whole.

yet foretold in by-gone times by the prince of poets, whose verses I quoted much to the astonishment of my pilot, when I told him how many hundred years ago they had been written." Lionel then cites a translation of Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* concerning the flight of Icarus:

> Oh human wit, thou can'st invent much ill,
> Thou searchest strange arts: who would think by skill,
> An heavy man like a light bird should stray,
> And through the empty heavens find a way? (Shelley 55-56)

Citation here becomes a revisionary hermeneutic that renders visible a temporally vast, non-causal link between a phenomenon's incipience and foretelling in "human wit" and its terminal materialization "lately won." By surreptitiously re-adjusting Ovid's lines into a prediction which the present moment confirms, Lionel's citation charges the past with a contemporaneity that suffuses it in advance with its built-in termination.

The novel's citations and their anachronistic synchronicity render origins always already foregone endings, a form of re-visioning that adds a dark twist to one of Blake's Proverbs of Hell: "What is now prov'd was once, only imagin'd" (8.33). Similar to Lionel's citation of Ovid's fulfilled prediction whose very citing re-writes it as a prediction, Blake's proverb operates according to a temporal dislocation whereby the "now prov'd" impresses itself upon its shadowy, "imagin'd" inception and thus implants the conditions for its final manifestation in its very genesis.

While Lionel's Ovid citation presents a relatively benign prophecy fulfilled that seems to vindicate the grand march of history—unless we account for Icarus's fall, which inscribes the dawn of human flight with catastrophe and failure—citation here still takes on the disastrous form of Blake's mutedly fatalistic proverb. Through the confrontation between a consumed or "prov'd" present exhausted of potential and its past which

forecasts, and contains, its exhaustion, citation's fossilizing dialectic strips origins of their opening toward "life" and potential by casting beginnings as already corroded by their catastrophic tipping points. On this note, after finding himself the last man, Lionel's citing verbatim with inverted commas his own words from the opening pages of the novel reveals the oddly formal character of the *Anthropos*' dead end and its ghostly presence in a history we no longer recognize. "I had been 'an uncouth savage, as the wolf-bred founder of old Rome'" (362, 11), Lionel will recall in a self-citation that formally aligns his personal prehistory as a sylvan "orphan among the valleys and fells of Cumberland" with his final sojourn in Rome as the superlatively orphaned "sole inhabitant" of a human-less planet.[77] That Lionel's self-quotation pulls the circumstances of his personal prehistory, as well as those of the mythical founder of Rome, into a loose continuity with the post-history he now occupies imbues the novel's beginning with the specter of extinction. For this somewhat heavy-handed callback to the novel's opening words, which now belatedly read like a prophecy, invites a literalist reading that the text nonetheless appears to endorse: if the conditions of the orphaned vagabond cut off from civilization and history coincide with the similarly destitute conditions of extinction's last man, then does Lionel's end of history merely exasperate a dead end that was already part of history in an inchoate form?

This self-citation's catastrophically literal re-staging of a state of affairs that was initially only rhetorical seems to conform to Ian Baucom's reading of historical repetition as accumulation and intensification. For Baucom history repeats itself "in neither

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[77] We might also note the etymological root of "orphaned" in the Greek *orphanos* or "bereaved," a term which resonates with Lionel after humanity's extinction renders him hyperbolically bereaved.

attenuated nor farcical form but by 'redeeming' the what-has-been, 'awakening' it into a

fuller, more intense form" (21–22). While citation here does entail the future's amplified

repetition of the past, Lionel's self-citation, and citation in the novel in general, unmoors

and confuses the temporal markers of "before" and "after" on which Baucom's notion of

repetition relies. Because the novel insists on the past as a proleptic site of "spirits / Of

great events [that] stride on before the events" (208), it is unclear whether disaster can be

localized or said to "happen" in the present or in the cited past, in the now proved or in

the once imagined. The disaster that the novel's use of citation uncovers or even produces

yields an unnarratable duration across the past and present—a shadowy duration along

which disaster could pile up accumulatively and/or witness history's end on-repeat—

between which the world is lost.

The citation just quoted derives, as Shelley marks in a footnote, from Coleridge's

translation of Friedrich Schiller's drama *Wallenstein*. The citation casts the "oracular"

prolepsis or pseudo-"warning" these lines denote as a gloss on the inevitability of Lionel

eventually "one day walk[ing] the earth alone":

> Yet I would not call *them*
> Voices of warning, that announce to us
> Only the inevitable. As the sun,
> Ere it is risen, sometimes paints its image
> In the atmosphere—so often do the spirits
> Of great events stride on before the events,
> And in to-day already walks to-morrow. (Shelley 208)

Here and elsewhere in the novel, Lionel's literary citations work as a kind of

archeological tool to excavate extinctions "strid[ing]" toward the receding present. But

that the form of citation's prophetic retrospection here coincides with the citation's

content—the "image" of events foretelling their realization—forwards citation's "secret

agreement" between the "image" of extinct pasts and the reality of the present's

disappearing futures as not conducive of revelation, but "inevitab[ility]" and obviousness.

In other words, the prophecy that citation pulls out of the past reveals not only what the

past proleptically "knows," but also what we ought to have known, or what we knew

already. Even Lionel's reference to *Wallenstein* accentuates the obviousness of the

answer to Lionel's question: "would it one day be thus? One day all extinct, save myself,

should I walk the earth alone?" (208). Of course, any of the novel's readers who have

read the title of the text, as well as the other sundry "last man" narratives in circulation

during Shelley's time, know the answer. This answer in the affirmative indexes an anti-

climactic foreknowledge intertextually built into the "last man" genre, a reality which

Shelley acknowledges tacitly by citing the novel's title multiple times via the

typographically marked invocations of the "LAST MAN" (261, 348, 364, 367).

This inescapable foreknowledge on the part of the reader is doubled by the

characters' own sense of obviousness that their avowedly "inevitable" extinction

produces. For the characters as for us the plague's destruction heralds the experience of

belatedness; it arrives as something one already knows or should have seen coming.

Reflecting on his ignorance regarding Idris's deteriorating health after contracting the

plague, Lionel asks, "Who, after a great disaster, has not looked back with wonder at his

inconceivable obtuseness of understanding, that could not perceive the many minute

threads with which fate weaves the inextricable net of our destinies, until he is enmeshed

completely in it?" (277); when Lionel tells Raymond of Evadne's dying prophecy that

"fire, and war, and plague, unite for [his] destruction," Raymond responds enigmatically

with, "She has said nothing but what I knew before — though this is confirmation" (142,

145); and while Lionel takes a final survey of and mourns a "dead" England ravaged by the plague, he remarks, "To this painful recognition of familiar places, was added a feeling experienced by all, understood by none — a feeling as if in some state, less visionary than a dream, in some past real existence, I had seen all I saw … — as if all my sensations were a duplex mirror of a former revelation" (285). The citational temporality by which Lionel and Raymond encounter past prophecies or predictions in which they now become "enmeshed completely" instills in these characters not revelatory shock, but an *unheimlich* sense of *pre-possession* by what one would think to be a radical novelty (global extinction), but which strikes consciousness as an inexplicably known quantity. This deformation of the present by a long fermenting catastrophe into the "mirror of a former revelation" instances less a compulsion to repeat than a form of déjà vu—a too little, too late "confirmation" that history has been a fraud living on borrowed time.

On the one hand, the prophetic "warnings" of foregone conclusions that the novel mines from the past become "predictions" in Colebrook's sense of the word: prediction engenders the future as "something we can still imagine and even strive for, but something whose striving and promising is bound up with what is promised not by us but *to us*" ("Anthro-Political" 104). But on the other hand, the novel's retro-predictions that generate a (no) future promising our extinction takes the form of a fossilized knowledge already known. The novel's casting of extinction as a recessive affirmation of "inevitable" knowledge might be glossed by Benjamin's interpretation of forgetting and remembering in Kafka's *The Trial*. In Benjamin's reading, *The Trial*'s characters impart crucial information to K. "casually and with the implication that he must really have known it all along … as though nothing new was being imparted," as if "the hero was just

being subtly invited to recall to mind something he had forgotten." For Benjamin, everything remembered or forgotten in Kafka's text "is never something purely individual" but "mingles with what has been forgotten of the prehistoric world" (*Illuminations* 131). Likewise, though *The Last Man* treats the extinction by the plague as a singular, unrepeatable occurrence, through citation it recedes into an event as if known ancestrally and anonymously. Extinction becomes "prehistor[ically]" foresuffered partly, as we will see, via the classical citations within which disaster is foreknown and secreted, as well the text's fossilized form, which pre-contains our no future in an ossified "general past." Moreover, Lionel will figure extinction's inexorability as the collapse of extinction's individual or "internal" recognition into a pre-historical fiat that programs "time" itself. For Lionel's musings on the fate of humanity instigates a "sudden internal voice" that "seem[s] to say: — Thus from eternity, it was decreed: the steeds that bear Time onward has this hour and this fulfillment enchained to them" (312–3). It is as if Lionel's cognizing of extinction retro-determines the event's atemporal, "etern[al]" character and its advancing toward its "fulfillment." To know the novel's extinction event is to suddenly find oneself always already known or "decreed" by it, to find oneself prophesied by it.

Bundock similarly interprets prophecy in Shelley's *Valperga* as "traumatically belated" and a "revelation of what is inevitable." In *Valperga*, Beatrice's recurring dream of the *mise-en-scene* of her future abduction turns "prophetic in a moment of powerful *déjà vu*" as the dream becomes reality and forces the shock of "realizing, too late, one's own prophetic unconscious" (*Prophecy* 209–11). But in *The Last Man*, Shelley disturbs this chronology by which presentiment becomes reality and presentiment then

retrospectively becomes prophecy. *The Last Man* tends to unfold extinction as a

prophecy-fulfilled in advance of any presentation of the prophecy itself.[78] For Lionel's

déjà vu when contemplating a devastated England doubles a "past real existence" that not

only Lionel, but we as readers, have not experienced in any mimetic sense, as opposed to

how *Valperga* recounts Beatrice's prophetic dream before staging the reality the dream

presaged. The past's citation as prophecy entails the prophecy's deadly fulfillment as the

condition of the past becoming prophetic at all. Again, *The Last Man*'s figure for how the

past emerges as a lethal prophecy both cited and retro-projected by the present is the

"duplex mirror of a former revelation." Perhaps reversing the temporal direction from

which Percy Shelley's reflected "gigantic shadows" emanate (*Defence* 535), the "mirror"

of Lionel's present reflects non-mimetically the shadows of anteriority that, like the

shadows of the *Defence*'s futurity, only take shape in and through their refraction. Oddly,

on the other side of the belatedness of the duplex mirror's re-presentations lies not an

"original" or "primary" revelation but a similarly belated, "former" one, as if echoing the

geological parlance of Cuvier's and Parkinson's abyssal "former worlds." Thus, the

present's reflection of a "former" prophecy pronounces both present and past as

inexorably former. But that the present's extinction does not passively mirror a prior

world but unwittingly retrojects a fossilized, unlived anteriority that had no prior "reality"

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[78] In *Valperga*, in addition to our learning of Beatrice's eerie dream before that dream becomes a reality, the novel already codes her dream as quasi-visionary before we are made to understand fully its prophetic nature. After describing the details of her vision, Beatrice tells Euthanasia that "there is something in this strange world, that we none of us understand" (358). By contrast, *The Last Man* offers no such clues to indicate that, for example, Lionel's "wolf-bred founder of old Rome" remark might be less innocuous than meets the eye. Moreover, the disparity in the distances that the novels place between retrospective prophecies and their realization displays the novels' quite different approaches to prophecy and its back-looping temporality. For in *Valperga* the reader must only wait a few paragraphs before the truth of Beatrice's vision is revealed, whereas in *The Last Man* the reader must wait hundreds of pages before Lionel's ostensibly benign comment accrues its catastrophic legibility.

means that the novel's "prophetic unconscious" denotes not simply "what is inevitable"

but the *becoming inevitable* of the present and past's disastrously crossed wires.

As we will observe with Lionel's historiography of the extinct present, the novel's

citationality occasions less an active remodeling of the past than a suicidal positing of the

presuppositions: a compulsion to re-discover oneself long-stranded in a "deep" waste

land, a "web" (a favourite figure of the text) back-stretching indefinitely in which one is

already "enmeshed completely."[79] Lionel's and his world's re-cognition of their

entanglement within extinction's "former revelation" retrojects a prophetic past that

proved misrecognized as the ground rather than extinction of the present. Yet the

recognition of this once misrecognized past does not quite operate according to the

"traumatic latency" that trauma theory ascribes to the traumatic event, wherein the

latter's un-experienced character yields survival as the compulsion to repeat the subject's

un-assimilable, missed death.[80] Rather than the subject's and the disaster's mutual failure

to assimilate the other, through citation Lionel finds the past trauma of extinction to *have*

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[79] The text's "web" figures variously society itself (Lionel will refer to the "web of society" [171]), the "life" supported by the "structure of society" (35), and the "web of mind" that Lionel invokes to figure the sublime comprehensive of his imagination as he contemplates literature and nature (120). That these labyrinthine webs that support and sublimely comprehend diverse worlds also tend to signify as "spider's web[s]" (41, 65) that trap those who are traced upon them point to what we will observe later as the non-linear connection between the plague and the "life" it destroys.

[80] For instance, see Cathy Caruth (59–75). My reading of extinction as a missed event that did not miss us, and whose belated recognition retroactively turns history not into "survival" but a kind of non-history that we never possessed, accords more with Anne-Lise Francois's theorizing of "unsolicited revelation" (10) as an "open secret" rather than an unassimilable "shock" by which consciousness lives on repeatedly to try and fail to assimilate. For Francois, in her reading of the encounter between Moses and God that both Freud and Caruth vis-à-vis Freud take up as a paradigmatic traumatic experience, Moses's and God's "meeting" that is "missed at the moment of its occurrence" instead occasions a kind of "sufficiency" rather than the endless delay or "infinite debt" to the missed experience and its failed representation (51, 61). Yet the disastrous "sufficiency" that retroactively characterizes the non-event of extinction does not lend itself to the non-stakes or disinterested "positive absence of any felt need to imagine the world differently" that defines Francois's theory of the event as an open secret (62). Instead, the "sufficiency" that Shelley's citation draws out of the past compels not an infinite obligation to the event but a terminal compulsion to re-trace how one has already been extinguished by it and to drift into a (no) future as the impossibility of the past.

not missed him, that he and his species' survival was not actually survival, and that the retroactive "obviousness" of the prophesied event collapses misrecognition into an always "former" recognition.

That the novel's citationality excavates the past as a traumatic prophecy that always reached its destination becomes evident in how citation for Shelley marks the fact that living bodies have been cannibalized by the cited prophecy's maw. Recalling Shelley's notorious "last man" journal entry that was arguably the germ of the novel, the following day Shelley records another entry after learning of Byron's death in Greece. Shelley writes that Byron's demise was "the 'coming event' that cast its shadow on my last night's miserable thoughts" (*J* 477). The phrase "coming event" that Shelley places in quotation marks derives from Thomas Campbell's poem "Lochiel's Warning" (1802), though the full expression—"coming events cast their shadows before"—could have been idiomatic. For Shelley, the citation both re-marks and retro-determines the past as a fossilized text, upon whose citing the latter's violent accrual of bodies is recognized as fully accomplished and "former." Before Shelley recorded her "last man" journal entry that as if unconsciously encrypted Byron's death, Byron had been dead for a month before the news broke in England. Shelley's journal thereby records Byron's end as a "coming" event that had already long since come. Hence the apparent "inevitability" of Shelley's extinct milieu being captured by the explicitly re-cited phrase "coming events"—a soundbite or "dead mark" whose own semantic extinction retro-proleptically renders others as dead.

As in *The Last Man*, prophecy for Shelley functions here as a force of extinction by casting off the present into a revis(ion)ed anteriority that ostensibly foretold it, a

revisioning which also relies upon a decontextualization and wasting of the text of the past. Thus, *The Last Man* will foreground that citing the archive as a ghostly library of disastrously fulfilled prophecies rests upon a concomitant fragmentation and emptying out of the original texts. We observe citation's decisive cut into past texts in the episode where Lionel, Adrian, and Clara attempt to travel by boat to Rome. As the three approach the ocean, Adrian "quot[es] a translation of Moschus's poem" that praises the "azure sea" and the calming force of "the serene and tranquil deep." Yet when Lionel prepares to quote the next portion of the poem—"But when the roar / Of ocean's gray abyss resounds, and foam / Gathers upon the sea, and vast waves burst"—Adrian and Clara cut him off by protesting that "such verses were evil augury" (Shelley 343). As we might expect by now, these lines, a translation by Percy Shelley himself, do become an "evil augury" insofar as they presage Adrian and Clara's drowning as they sail to Rome. Yet for this citation to become an "augury" containing future destruction within the past the actual poem's pastoral "turn" must be severed and thrown out in advance. For immediately following the ominous lines that Lionel cites, the poem's speaker "turn[s]" from the violent sea's "drear aspect" and finds contentment in the "deep woods" and "brook's murmuring" tranquility (*Poetical Works* 714–5). The Moschus poem accrues its catastrophic horizon, inclusive of the future's bodies, by virtue of citation mutilating the text into (non)sense. For the choppiness with which the poem appears—with four lines cited by Adrian, then three more line cited virtually by Lionel, and with the redemptive remainder of the poem left on the cutting room floor—signal the textual violence attendant upon the text's retroactive placement in a malicious archive. Specifically, the em dash that Shelley/Lionel inserts into the poem to break the fragment off right before

the poem would have made its pastoral "turn" marks typographically the poem's amputation. The imposed em dash concretizes the poem's dead-stop before and severance from the recuperative "out" it offers from its pressing inundation. The Moschus fragment demonstrates that our wasting in and by the past becomes inseparable from a wasting *of* the past.

Citation and Decontextualization: Burke's Extinction

In the previous section, we observed how citation's fossilizing power—its capacity to materialize the "non-existence of what it presents"—assimilates, or already has assimilated, future calamities and the losses of any number of specific human lives into the "non-existence" it retroactively prophecies. As with the Milton citation, the Moschus fragment's "evil augury" reduces texts and their histories to a zero-level: these truncated texts become fulfilled, "evil" prophecies insofar as citation neutralizes these fragments' social, historical, and thematic contexts. For literary history to cite our extinction, said history must already be extinct, and it is through citation's erasure of context that the novel will render extinction as a textual structure rather than a mere empirical fact. In other words, the way in which the novel's citations scorch the contextual earths of its cited pasts reveals how, for Shelley, citation makes extinction happen— the sleight of hand by which the inevitable "always already" of extinction emerges from a contingent, though unaccountable and receding, intervention.

Anne McWhir suggests that "[a]s if to emphasize [the plague's] subversion of ideals and convictions, Lionel continually quotes words out of context" (xxxiii). However, I contend that the novel's citations that demonstrably play fast-and-loose with

context do not simply cater to a spirit of "subversion" but instead co-implicate context

and "life" on the backs of their mutual erasure. Citation becomes an arm of the plague as

the novel casts decontextualization as extinction. The novel announces the exorbitant

stakes of its citations' deformation of context and the emergence of their inhuman,

autonomous life via its conspicuous mis-citations of Edmund Burke, whom the novel

cites seven times (91, 124, 174, 180, 280, 322). As the novel will render explicit, Burke

becomes a figure who stands as a signpost for a certain thinking of history and a thinker

for whom the French revolution laid history bare as an endangered species in need of

conservation. The novel extrapolates the specter of a proto-thought of biological

extinction from Burke's and others' reactionary fears during the 1790s that the

revolutionary "levellers" would "like a palsy" strike at "the fountain of life itself" (Burke

49).[81] The text signals this coadunation of the plague's extinction with the afterlife of the

French Revolution by dating the plague's emergence roughly three hundred years after

the start of the revolution, as well as couching the plague's devastation in terms

consonant with political upheaval.[82] Shelley thus strangely implicates the novel's

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[81] Cuvier's theory of catastrophism, theorized in the 1790s, might be said to transpose the recent revolutionary turmoil onto the history of the earth itself. As W. J. T. Mitchell puts it, "[w]e could debate endlessly whether Cuvier's theory of the fossil as a trace of a life-form wiped out by geological revolutions was an echo of the French Revolution or whether the understanding of that revolution is itself a product of the new sense of natural history" (175-6). The difficulty of disentangling the historical breaks of political time from the geological revolutions of a deeper, inhuman time means "revolution" points in two mutually exclusive directs: to a future world of political justice and to the current world as a "former world."

[82] The plague emerges in the year 2093. The novel also draws a connection between the plague and the "political revolution" at the "end of the eighteenth century" by comparing England's influx of refugees fleeing the plague to the refugees who once fled to England during the Terror (186). Furthermore, as numerous interpreters have pointed out, the novel's social anarchy emerges as a socio-political byproduct of the pandemic's monstrous levelling: "We were all equal now; magnificent dwellings, luxurious carpets, and beds of down, were afforded to all," Lionel writes. But the Plague's revolutionary dissolving of humanity's ties to "the ancient state of things" only comes at the expense of what Lionel presages as "an equality still more levelling," the remainderless extinction of the human species and the concomitant "clos[ing] [of] the history of the human race" (251, 325, 333). For more on revolution in the novel, see Sterrenburg 330-1.

extinction event in the long or "deep" *récit* of revolution, whether geological or political. Specifically, citation's capacity to backdate extinction indefinitely accelerates Burke's concern that the revolutionaries could "rake into the histories of former ages" and "disable backwards all the kings that have reigned before the Revolution" (140, 23).

That is to say, the novel seizes Burke as a kind of watershed moment in the history of thinking about history and its (non)survival (through Burke's negentropic mechanisms of "prejudice," patrilineal "*entailed inheritance*," etc.). Furthermore, the novel's vexed intervention into what Orrin Wang calls Burke's "de-ontologizing fealty" (147) to an only virtually entailed past confuses Burke's (mis)perception of what he thought was revolution with what the novel takes as his true adumbration of extinction's temporal gnaw.[83] That the novel will clearly miscite proto-extinction out of a Burke whose rhetoric nonetheless seems to elide the precarity of English history with the precarity of "life" as such means that we cannot quite tell where the citation of Burke ends and Burke proper begins.

Lionel's citation of Burke as an unheard echo of extinction recasts the latter as a defender of historical precedent and context as the "life" of the species (though one could argue that Burke had already done this). Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) retaliates against what he perceives as the Revolution's apocalyptic tenour partly by mobilizing literary citation as an organon of survival coterminous with England's generationally inherited "permanent body." His untranslated citations of classical writers

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[83] Wang, adapting Jerome Christensen's reading of Burke's *Reflections*, points to a radical performativity in Burke's subtle admission of custom's groundlessness. For "Burke's fidelity to custom is also an apostasy" insofar as "it admits to the degree that the nation's entailment depends not simply on the forefathers' wishes but also on the son's desire to choose—indeed, conceive of—such an inheritance" (146). See also Christensen's "'Like a Guilty Thing Surprised'" (775).

such as Virgil, Cicero, Livy, Juvenal, Lucan, and Horace put literary history to work as a

magistra vitae brimming with paternalistic precedence and affording a stable ground for

the nation's future within the diachronic "light of inheritance"—the durable, ever-present

context that guarantees that we are "Always acting as if in the presence of canonized

forefathers" (Burke 34).[84] *The Last Man*'s marked citations of this preeminent thinker of

monumental history, however, write disaster backward into Burke's generationally

grounded historicism and actualizes within the past the virtual extinction retroactively

conceived to be hovering at the tip of Burke's tongue. To preface the surviving remnant's

farewell to "the state of things which [had] existed many thousand years" which now

appears as "the wreck of the past," Lionel misquotes one of Burke's paeans to English

liberty as if it addressed the lost grandeur of humanity as a whole: "'it carried with it an

imposing and majestic aspect; it had a pedigree and illustrating ancestors; it had its

gallery of portraits, its monumental inscriptions, its records and titles'" (322). But

Burke's text actually reads: "it [English liberty] carr*ies* with it … it *has* a pedigree … It

has its portraits…" (34, emphases added). Lionel's misquotation not only inflates the

passage's impersonal pronouns to encompass human, and not merely British, history. It

also quietly smuggles in past tense verbs to re-locate humanity's present extinction within

a now illegible revolutionary past, as if the novel's present calamity were a "wreck of the

past" to which Burke's text has already borne witness. As with Shelley's citation of her

late husband's poem registering his death before it took place, Lionel's citation shuffles

Burke between a present imbued with an apocalyptic hindsight and an abyssal past that

both conspire to see Burke seeing the end of man *tout court*, even though what he

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[84] For more on Burke's citations of classical writers, see Jonathan Sachs's *Romantic Antiquity* (52-65).

ostensibly saw was the end of man as constituted by an ever-transmissible historical context and precedent.

The text's Burke citation makes him retroactively a former "last man," in that his fossilized remains turn up in the present as a half-extinguished trace of an inhuman "ancestral event" that only now reads as ancestral. Lionel's inchoate attempts to cite extinction as an event with a traceable history—a context—finds in a miscited Burke the destruction of the grounds for such an investigation. For to cite Burke as a quintessential thinker of history is already to miscite him as a harbinger of history's extinction and impossibility, to see in his historical thought an apparent anachronism that cannot be unseen. To miscite Burke as a thinker of extinction is in fact to cite him properly, and to wrench him out of context is to discover traumatically his genuine (non)context. Hence one of the novel's most potent couplings of extinction and citation by way of its dis-embedding of context from a normalized economy of "life," or natural history as an endless inheritance and transmission of life which guarantees a fixed traffic between past, present, and future. While observing whom he calls the "future governors of England" in the forms of his young son and his schoolfellows, Lionel cites part of a famous passage from Burke's *Reflections* to muse on the now untenable "riddle of the Sphynx" that once ensured that "man remains, while we the individuals pass away":

> Such is, to borrow the words of an eloquent and philosophic writer, "the mode of existence decreed to a permanent body composed of transitory parts; wherein, by the disposition of a stupendous wisdom, moulding together the great mysterious incorporation of the human race, the whole at one time, is never old, or middle-aged, or young, but, in a condition of unchangeable constancy, moves on through the varied tenour of perpetual decay, fall, renovation, and progression." (179-80)

That this selective citation intentionally rings out hollowly (after the plague's decimation of this "permanent body") scandalizes Burkean historicism by stealthily evaporating

foundations that should have been untouchable. For Burke, the "unchangeable constancy" of man-as-species was never in doubt and thus not the point: Burke deploys the taken-for-granted biological perpetuation of species life as the fixed, unquestioned half of a "philosophic analogy" on whose other pole lay the political "principle of transmission," an analogy calculated to bolster the prudence of entailed inheritance through its proposed consonance with "the method of nature" (33–4). It is not simply that Lionel decontextualizes Burke by placing his words in a situation alien to his original purposes. The misquoted passage calls context itself into question by transferring the endangered species in Burke's rhetoric from historical precedent to species life itself, the very ground which makes historical succession and its rhetorical figures possible. Citation's decontextualizing of Burke foregrounds context's impossibility as an anchoring figure for thought and history by writing its collapse into a hitherto sheltered territory, that of species "life" itself.

That Lionel (mis)cites Burke to try to shore up the immortality and perpetual inheritance of the species points to how the text toys with citation as a mode of reproductive futurism. Prior to the plague's emergence, Adrian expostulates on "Life" as unending "action and change": "We go on, each thought linked to the one which was its parent, each to a previous act. No joy or sorrow dies barren of progeny, which for ever generated and generating, weaves the chain that make our life." To this claim he attaches a citation from Calderón to accentuate his point that reads: "One day calls to another day; and so it calls again and links cry to cry and pain to pain" (36). By mobilizing citation to meditate on questions of succession and "generat[ion]," the text implicitly joins citation's very form to a biopolitically-charged Godwinian necessity: the supposed generativity of

textual inheritance models the *habitus* of biological and social reproduction. But as we

observed with the novel's epigraph from Milton, a text's ostensible capacity to be cited in

ever new contexts, and to exceed context while at the same time linking metonymically

various contexts past and to come, makes texts analogous to the species life's chain of

necessity and yet ultimately cuts "man" off from his "children," from futurity (lest we

forget that Lionel's miscitation of the Burke's disappearing "permanent body" is

prompted by his musings on his son's future maturity).

It is not simply that the novel discloses that context is an illusion. Instead, the

text's coupling and uncoupling of citation from "life" reveals that context, as Khalip and

Forest Pyle suggest, "draws and spaces the possibilities for a thinking that is referential

for humanity" and "necessarily englobes the human within a world that is probably for it,

that is lived" (4). Through the novel's citation complex, and especially through its returns

to "Burke," arche-extinctions emerge in unlived pasts without the unassailable context—

context as "life" or something "lived" and grounded in a "permanent body"—that has

always lent history and its survival a human character. If the text's Burke citations

demystify context as inextricably bound to "life" conceived in a humanist register, then

the novel finds in human artifacts the capacity for an exorbitant survival that outlives

context as such. Lionel bemoans the realization that "the mere shepherd's hut of straw …

contain[s] in its structure the principle of greater longevity than the whole race of man"

(311), as if proleptically enfolding what Derrida describes as the "death" that structurally

entails writing's ability to survive its original context into the ambit of wholesale

extinction. Thus, the *différance* of human structures encodes not the extinction of the

author but that of the species. The inhuman horizon that extinction discloses within

humanity's "remains" thereby "disables backwards" the anthropocentric life thought to inhere in humanity's "stupendous works" (359). If context mirrors back to us conditions of a past, present, and future that are recognizably ours, then the novel's melodramatic yet belated "end of man" is preempted by the inhuman, ghostly life that citation thinly heralds. And it is this spectral nonlife that Lionel finally assumes as he "haunt[s]" Rome's ruins after becoming the last man (363).

Citing "below the line": Literature and the Anthropocene

This chapter has argued that for Shelley, citation summons the past as both wasted and always already wasting us. The citation of the past as a fossil proves akin to the excavation of missed tipping points, in whose hitherto unrecognized aftermath the present is discovered to be atrophying or becoming fossilized. The novel's casting of the plague's extinction event as a historical break or crossed tipping point anticipates today's Anthropocene discourse of peaked shelf-lives of finite resources and other ecological thresholds, all of which identify ecocidal tripwires whose repeated passing sets or has set in motion irreparable destitution of the biosphere. Indeed, once the plague spreads globally Lionel will declare repeatedly that "The Rubicon, I felt, was passed; and it behooved me well to reflect what I should do on this hither side of disease and danger" (204); that the "experience of immemorial time had taught us … [to] extend our prospect of life through a lengthened period of progression and decay. But an earthquake had changed the scene … deep and precipitous the gulph below opened to receive us, while the hours charioted us towards the chasm" (214); that once the plague has halted global trade and affected England's commercial aspirations, "[a] sudden break was made in the

routine of our lives" (184); and that "man," comparable to "our first parents expelled from Paradise," now "looks back toward the scene he has quitted … the flaming sword of the plague, lie between it and him" (254). The novel's predilection for enumerating tipping points signals less the imminence of rebirth or the rolling over of the odometer into a clean break with the past, than inscribes what Joshua Schuster, writing of Blanchot's notion of disaster, describes as an "irreversible loss, a radical nonrepetition, an event in which a nongenerative point of no return has been crossed" (167).

The novel registers this irreversible transition via the formal breakdown and disorientation that obtains between the text's first volume and the remaining two volumes. On this note, one objection to the present chapter might be that its analysis of citation hinges on local, scattered data and declines to reckon with the novel on a more holistic level. However, the novel's citationality itself compels us to inhabit the incommensurable levels of the fragmented micro and the unavowable macro. For Lionel spends an inordinate amount of his narration in the second and third volumes re-minding himself of the "former revelation" that tipping points have been crossed, that extinction proves inevitable, that "posterity is no more" (255). Yet this bigger picture of guaranteed extinction drifts in and recedes out of view as Lionel's narrative becomes increasingly digressive and distracted by local histories and inset narratives. The novel's first volume proves more focused in its concentration on Lionel's education and the domestic tribulations of his social circle, all culminating in Raymond's military exploits in Constantinople. But the second volume's introduction of the plague causes the novel to tailspin into a more disjointed, episodic format that extends precipitously beyond the purview of Lionel's *bildungsroman* and his circle to encompass anecdotes of religious

demagogues (294–9), biographies of a young woman caring for her blind grandfather (328–30) and of Lionel's neighbour Lucy who marries one of her suitors in order to secure care for her sick mother (273–6), and urban legends that Lionel could not have experienced firsthand (that is, the "black sun" story reported from Asia [176–7]). Whatever aesthetic unity the novel might possess cedes to extinction's non-redemptive totality—the "vast annihilation that has swallowed all things" (209)—which pulverizes the plot into sundry tangents and evasions. Once the novel passes from volume one to two, history is effectively finished, and, as in *Childe Harold* and Blake's *Jerusalem*, the plot finds little to do besides meander around: the novel will cite more and more texts; Lionel will expostulate at length about future plans that amount to nothing, and will repeatedly mourn the loss of humanity's exalted status; he will try to forget his troubles by attending the theatre; and the novel will initiate plotlines that fizzle out and do not go anywhere, like the episode where Lionel impulsively attempts to undercut Adrian and nominate himself to be Lord Protector in Adrian's place and is speedily defeated (199–200).

The novel's regression into a Beckettian "end" that meanders on despite knowing that all discourse is finished stems partly from the uncertain ontological status of the rupture that subsumes everything under the sign of extinction. On a literal level, this historical rupture happens when the plague appears in the second volume, and this occurrence instigates the formal glitches we just outlined. However, as we saw with the novel's displacing of extinction onto a "former revelation" and its recasting of Burke as a proto-witness of extinction, this "unrepeatable" tipping point or "fall" is never to present

to itself, and its facticity becomes ghosted by its receding origin dispersed among the fossils the novel turns up.

Human extinction's recessive threshold in the novel anticipates how modern thinkers of the Anthropocene, in their attempts to historicize the point of no return at which humanity unconsciously became a geological force, must re-trace an unthought history that inflects known histories with a self-destructive energy whose postponed repercussions generate an abyssal, indefinite retrospection. For the Anthropocene uniquely frustrates historicist protocols by demonstrating that the impulse to look back and find out where exactly everything went wrong reveals that there was never a time when things were not going wrong. Morton proposes that the world has ended twice: first with James Watts's patent of the steam engine in 1784, a timeframe that makes the initial depositing of carbon in Earth's crust roughly contemporaneous with the period we call Romanticism; and second with the testing of the atom bombs and the dropping of two nuclear bombs in 1945 (*Hyperobjects* 7). And Kathleen D. Morrison, critiquing the limited historical scope that locates the Anthropocene's origins in Europe's industrial revolution, proposes a "provincializing" of the Anthropocene that links the latter to more distant events such as the invention of agriculture or "large scale burning," a list to which Dipesh Chakrabarty suggests we might add the invention of fire (Morrison 5, Chakrabarty 19). That these various attempts to historize the Anthropocene's origin recede from concrete events and dates (such as 1945 and 1784) into far more indefinite and shadowy occurrences (such as the first controlling of fire) casts the Anthropocene as a disaster without periodizing borders. To endeavor to render the origin of the Anthropocene present is to discover recessively that "we are already *in* the

Anthropocene" (Chakrabarty 6), that it has always already happened. Anthropocene

historiography unmakes history by re-writing history as citational, as history's entropic

endeavor to catch up to its own extinction. The Anthropocene's ebbing of futurity

becomes reproduced in the attempt to locate and make sense of it. The writing of its

history impels increasingly backward glances that progressively liquidate all that such a

history touches (for under the sign of anthropogenic climate change, the further we look

back, more and more history is emptied of intimations of progress, of world-building, of

promissory notes, etc.).

Along the lines of the citational history that the Anthropocene demands and

escalates, what Lionel histrionically calls the "HISTORY OF THE LAST MAN" (364)

that he addresses to a future humanity perhaps never to arrive, re-writes history as

precisely that—the history of man becoming "LAST," history *as* the history of its own

extinction. Lionel's hysterical capitalization grants this epitaphic flourish a monumental

quality and animates his "record" with a last gasp of negentropy, even if such a

monument lives on for the sake of the "SHADOWS" that are already dead (364). Yet

similar to the Anthropocene paradigm, Lionel's "HISTORY" amounts to a negative

monumentalization. The Anthropocene announces the proleptic erasure of the Anthropos

it monumentalizes and distributes retroactively throughout the past. Likewise, the

monumentalizing force of Lionel's grandiose history bespeaks an entrenching totalization

that further embeds rather than salvages what it memorializes. As evinced by the novel's

citations of literary history, its employment of the "hieroglyphics" mentioned in the

frame narrative, and its allusive retracing of the emergence of "man" via Lionel's

becoming "human," Lionel's "record" belongs not solely to him but also to his

becoming-extinct species. His titanically stylized "HISTORY" exhibits an anonymous monumentalizing agency that does not forward a future into which his epitaph might live. Instead, as we will observe in the novel's re-entrenchment of canonical literature as guarantors of extinction, the monumentality and resulting inexorability of the *LAST MAN*'s proper name works backward to universalize and sediment the eclipse of "man" just lately emerged.

To read *The Last Man* as an Anthropocene text might seem specious, since the novel draws no obvious correlation between human enterprise and the plague's inexplicable escalation compared to its seasonal outbreaks of previous years.[85] Yet not unlike how the Anthropocene both reifies and erases the *Anthropos* it names, *The Last Man*'s human extinction prompts an interrogation of what "man" is and what the latter has or will have been doing during his recorded tenure on earth. As noted, Lionel often eulogizes a humanity defined by a promethean humanism that progressively masters the nonhuman. For Lionel, "man" was/is the "lord of created nature," and his "adornments" include(d) "knowledge that could pilot the deep-drawing bark through the opposing waters of shoreless ocean," "science that directed the silken balloon through the pathless air," and "poetry and deep philosophy" (253–4). To that end, the novel deploys images of boats or "bark[s]" to figure humanity's techo-domination of natural forces. Yet this

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[85] However, it is surely no accident that the climax of the war between Greece and the Ottoman empire coincides with the plague's escalation, as Julia M. Wright points out that for Shelley's contemporaries war and disease were figuratively and literally intertwined (see "Poetry has linked war and disease for centuries"). Jan Plug also examines a non-linear path from the novel's humanism to the plague. The "Greek" humanism of characters such as Adrian—for whom individual death and "death in general, can be recuperated and one human body substituted for another without loss or excess"—permits the plague to "take over from war" insofar as the former becomes the ultimate "realization of that war and its logic in the form of the plague [that] should in turn take the form of the absence of any society or community." Thus, the plague as war's accelerated form "reconfirm[s] the dialectical power of humanism to subsume all loss or negativity to its own fullness" (157–8).

nautical master trope for humanity's "power … over the elements" also figures and

presages the implosion of that "lately won" mastery (55). As if preprogrammed by Percy

Shelley's prefigured drowning in *Adonais* signaled by the poem's "frail bark," figural and

literal ships tend to capsize in *The Last Man*,[86] thereby encoding both physical

technologies of mastery *and* the "poetry" of that mastery with a self-destructive dialectic

of enlightenment not causally related to but contiguous with the plague's extinction (For

Lionel laments that the shepherd hut's greater longevity than the nearly extinct species

must be "reconcile[d]" impossibly with "our past aspirations" and "apparent powers"

[311]).

Furthermore, in another of the text's proto-Anthropocene moments, Lionel will

twice cite the "riddle of the Sphynx" from Sophocles's *Oedipus*, once in connection with

the Burkean "permanent body" of the species (179), and again as a cipher whose solution

would disclose the "secret" of extinction. After humanity has dwindled to Lionel, Adrian,

Clara, and Evelyn, Lionel states: "O for some Oedipus to solve the riddle of the cruel

Sphynx! Such Oedipus was I to be … whose agonizing pangs, and sorrow-tainted life

were to be the engines, wherewith to lay bare the secrets of destiny, and reveal the

meaning of the enigma, whose explanation closed the history of the human race" (333).

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[86] For example, after Perdita and Raymond become estranged once Perdita discovers his infidelity, Lionel states that "a moral tempest had wrecked our richly freighted vessel, and we, remnants of the diminished crew, were aghast at the losses and changes which we had undergone" (118). Raymond's metaphorical capsizing of the group's social circle, leaving behind an attenuated remnant, becomes a dress rehearsal for the extinction to come once these figures of speech turn literal. Other instances of disastered vessels include: the aforementioned boat in which Lionel, Adrian, and Clara sail to Rome; the figure of the "wrecked bark of human society" from which Lionel and his family take refuge at his estate at Windsor-Castle (205); the warship occupied by the emigrants from America and Ireland that sinks during a storm, a natural disaster which Lionel suggests "may have visited the dreams of Milton, when he imagined the winnowing of the arch-fiend's van-like wings, which encreased the uproar of wild chaos" (231–2); and the "tossed bark of life" comprised of the "reckless crew" of Lionel, Adrian, Evelyn, and Clara that have "resigned themselves to the destructive force of ungoverned winds" (330). These doomed ships thereby cast a dark shadow over the "tiny bark" on which Lionel sets out to explore the extinct world at the novel's conclusion (367).

As would have been known by Shelley's audience, Oedipus's answer to what Lionel twists into the "riddle" of human extinction, is "man" (and it is this solution to the riddle that causes the sphinx to kill itself in Sophocles's play). Similar to the contested *Anthropos* of the Anthropocene who becomes legible only through the future geological inscription of its "former" self-destruction, "man" in *The Last Man* becomes a tautology, a question that is its own suicidal answer—a "meaning" that circles "the history of the human race" into the "explanation" rather than just the object of its destructive (self)closure.

As Colebrook puts it, the Anthropocene provokes a redrafting of human history with the awareness that "humans have an agential force that has nothing to do with their conscious intentions, that there is something that humans are doing behind their own historical awareness and historical consciousness" (Adkins, Parkins, and Colebrook 4). So, although the novel does not explicitly find an unconscious ecosidal tendency in the human activities that the novel mourns and monumentalizes, by way of juxtaposition and contiguity Shelley nonetheless adumbrates a kind of subterranean agreement between the plague's shutting down of futurity and what Lionel bitterly calls humanity's "*apparent* powers*.*" Most notably, the novel boasts its own inchoate Anthropocene historiography through its sense of a textual geology that re-discovers a deadly "agential force that has nothing to do with [humanity's] intentions" emanating from the texts it cites. (And if citation is the novel's paradigm for seizing these anterior "agential forces" and their disastrous horizon, then perhaps anthropogenic extinction becomes the encrypted "secret" or prophecy that the novel wills to incarnate in a future waiting to cite it). Lionel of course names "poetry" as one of the pre-eminent arms of humanity's "apparent powers"

which require difficult "reconciliation" with those powers' peaked shelf-life. And in the text's first volume he becomes "wedded to literature" conceived humanistically as a cultivator of "moral principle," and casts his turn to "authorship" as an event that "suddenly" engenders futurity in the form of a "posterity" that "become[s] [Lionel's] heirs" (120). This notion of literature as a canon of moral virtue that nourishes and "Father[s]" humanity invites us to read Lionel's citations of canonical texts with an eye to what kind of literary canon the present is the "posterity" of, and to what unconscious "agential force[s]" have been or will have been humanity's genetic inheritance. Indeed, as Plug suggests, *The Last Man*'s tracing of "a history of culture" positions its protagonist as the "sole heir of culture itself" to interrogate "how one writes oneself as the survivor of that legacy, a legacy understood and experienced as plague" (162).[87]

The almost geological, retroactive agency of the "plague" constitutes the *point de capiton* that organizes the novel's ersatz literary canon of "extinction" texts. Literary canonization abuts extinction in the episode where Lionel attempts to take his mind off the plague by attending a performance of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Lionel characterizes the play as a "medicine" whose narcoleptic effects would consist of "drug[ging] with irreflection the auditors." Lionel supports his hopes that the play will afford a therapeutic against the plague's horrors by claiming that Shakespeare has not "lost his influence even at this dread period." Lionel remarks further that the bard's "popularity was well established by the approval of four centuries" (220). But Shakespeare's "medicine"

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[87] Plug, however, views the survival of culture in the novel as structurally entailed by Lionel's address to a "community" to come whose possibility Lionel cannot renounce (163). Thus Plug advances a more affirmative reading of the novel's "future anterior" history in which the novel's inscription of the reader as "to come in the future, but as the past" rethinks the "community after the end of community [the novel] narrates" (168).

becomes a *Pharmakon* when certain lines during the performance—Macduff's cry of

"All my pretty ones? / Did you say all? — O hell kite! All? / What! All my pretty

chickens, and their dam, / At one fell swoop!" (Shelley 221)—hit too close to home for

the spectators, and cause Lionel to "re-echo[] the cry of Macduff" before he races out of

the theatre (221).[88] *Macbeth* induces not "irreflection" but an abyssal reflexivity by

which Lionel's disastered present becomes as if addressed by Shakespeare's disastered

past, which the former "re-echoe[s]" in a feedback loop. The redundancy in Lionel "re-

echoing" rather than simply echoing *Macbeth*'s expression of a cut off future (for an

"echo" already denotes a repetition) recasts Shakespeare's play as itself an echo of a

more distant event that Macduff's no future registers. Yet what proves most striking

about this episode is that the statement of Shakespeare's entrenched canonization

coincides with the occluded, because fled by Lionel, realization that extinction is

"enchained" to the monumentalized bard as if as the latter's textual legacy. This episode

of course speaks to how, starting in the nineteenth century, canon formation emerges both

as a defense mechanism against the sense of literature's obsolescence at the hands of

"temporal pressures and constraints" associated with the accelerating commercialization

of print, and as survival tactic to ensure that an English "canon of value" would survive

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[88] It is no coincidence that the *Macbeth* lines that most assert the play's contemporaneity with the plague
are Macduff mourning the loss of his wife and child. This destruction of the future via a murdered child
puts these *Macbeth* citations in league with the novel's epigraph from Milton, which as we saw also figures
the truncated future of the child as the erasure of futurity wholesale. It is appropriate that Shelley chose
Macbeth as the bearer of an attenuated future. For as Randall Martin argues, *Macbeth*, written in the wake
of the acceleration of gunpowder warfare and production in Elizabethan England, considers the possibility
of ecological tipping points by meditating on how gunpowder's amplified ecoside could irreversibly disrupt
the Virgilian "self-regulating cycles" of "martial destruction and agrarian regeneration" (79). See also
Cohen's reading of the play in "Shakespeare's Global *Weirding*."

in the face of the nation's prospective decline.[89] But here human, rather than simply English, decline and extinction are less the spur than the "truth" or disclosure of the canon, which produces the reading present as a re-echo of the festering oblivion the canon witnesses.

Earlier we saw how the novel's citation of Burke as a proleptic extinction proved paradigmatic for how citation operates in general in the text: citation's decontextualization reduces its objects to a ground zero that in turn generates this structural extinction as a forever ghosted, already occurred event. The novel's re-citation of literary history *en masse* further demonstrates that this generalized extinction identifies not just how the novel cites but what it cites, for the "plague" expands to encompass the very "moral principle" of the canon. Lionel will thus cite various texts as almost united conspiratorially in their accumulation of history's ever-recursive unfurling toward a no future. Upon planning to leave a barren England, Lionel cites a John Cleveland poem (1653) whose summing up of an extinct pre-Revolutionary England now overlaps with the wholesale "oblivion" of England's future-bearing "children": "Farewell, sad isle, farewell, thy fatal glory / Is summed, cast up, and cancelled in this story" (256); Lionel cites from a translation of Hesiod's *Works and Days* to describe the plague's decimation of the species, and in doing so installs extinction into the evils of Pandora's box and Europe's classical inheritance: "With ills the land is rife, with ills the sea, / Diseases haunt our frail humanity" (249); on the same page as the former citation, Lionel compares the plague to "the Calamity of Homer" (249); in another citation from Hesiod,

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[89] See Sachs's *Poetics of Decline* (104, 106, 114). As Sachs succinctly puts it, "the fantasy of future ruin … works to consolidate a present canon of value" (114).

Lionel invokes the lines "The God sends down his angry plagues from high" to describe the plague's infection of the air; he cites Francis Bacon's claim that "The man … who hath wife and children, has given hostages to fortune," to anticipate the plague's destruction of the image of the child; and a citation of Caska's ironic comment in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*—"These are their reasons, they are natural"—mobilizes that play's incredulity toward "natural" explanations for the apocalyptic omens that either decode Caesar's tyranny or presage his fall, in order to home in on the reality of the "dreaded … future event enchained" to Lionel's and the survivors' "evil auguries" (308).[90]

The literary tradition that Lionel cites and regathers thus becomes a massive trojan horse that, in its texts' bearing of humanistic values, bears the dangerous supplement of an erased future "enchained to them." The very "popularity" of these texts, proleptically amplified by the novel's two extra centuries of manufactured hindsight, casts their "future" as all the more inescapable and, until now, unknowingly guaranteed by their centuries of monumentalization. Literary history itself becomes the geological deposit or "attenuated leaves" of an unintended anthropogenic catastrophe. The novel's citing of past texts as sites of disaster recalls how contemporary natural historians would read the cataclysms depicted in ancient texts as distorted archeological evidence of historical natural disasters remembered dimly by ancient authors. The novel perhaps

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[90] To this list we might also add: the additional *Macbeth* lines concerning the "sighs, and groans, and shrieks that rent the air" and that dispel the audience's "irreflection" (221); and the lines from Hesiod's "Shield of Hercules," cited from Elton's edited volume *Remains of Hesiod* (1815), that delineate the "whitening bones / Start[ing] forth, and moulder[ing] in the sable dust," which presage the "desolate towns" of a plague-stricken France (313). The latter citation's derivation from an edited volume entitled *Remains* places the volume within the ambit of the antiquarian inflected geologies we observed earlier, and therefore finds affinity with the novel by becoming a kind of fossil.

alludes to this practice when Lionel describes how he and the surviving remnant were so far beyond the plague's point of no return that to engage with recent texts was as if to read "poets of times so far gone by, that to read of them was to read of Atlantis and Utopia" (336). "Atlantis" here recalls contemporary speculations of the mythical civilization's historical reality and demise registered obscurely by the texts that mythologized it. Thus, to read recent history as mythology is to read archaeologically for historically obliterated referents. The fast-tracking of the recent present to its mythical monumentalization—as a self-obliterated "Atlantis"—casts monumentalization itself as the producer and record of catastrophe.

The novel's citing of the canon does not salvage the latter as a source of humanist value, nor does the novel cite the canon as a negentropic force. Yet the text's unearthing of the canon-as-extinction often proceeds in a rather ham-fisted way. This heavy-handedness is most pronounced in citations that would seem to find the plague in texts that speak explicitly of "disease" and "plague." It matters little to the novel that the poem attributed to Cleveland originally mourned the loss of a Monarchical England following Charles I's execution, or that Pandora's box and Hesiod had no notion of human extinction. The crudely literal way in which the novel compels these texts to represent extinction becomes a trace of the formal emptying-out citation forces them to undergo, an emptying-out which, in a vicious circle, becomes a symptom of the crossed tipping point the novel conveys mimetically as a plague always already operative. Furthermore, Lionel's blatant misreading of literary texts as extinction texts dovetails with the novel's advancing of "truth" and readability as contingent upon mutilation. For the narrator of the "Author's Introduction" frames the text's translation and decoding as a process of

"distortion and diminution" operating upon materials "unintelligible in their pristine condition" (4), thereby casting legibility as a form of disfiguration.

The generalized extinction of context through which these canonical texts turn into carriers of extinction accelerates the more benign extinguishing of context that obtains in the chapter epigraphs deployed by various late eighteenth and nineteenth century novels. Shelley would make recourse to this sanitized mode of citation in her subsequent novel *Lodore*, which assigns an epigraph to every chapter that uses a past text opportunistically to prefigure an upcoming thematic or plot development. As we will examine more closely in the next chapter, these novels' piecemeal decontextualization and annexation of literary history through epigraphs becomes a technology of canon formation itself. To that end, Walker proposes that we approach *The Last Man* as less an "archive" than a "thematic anthology" according to the model of the "displacement and recontextualization enacted in botanical collections." According to this reading, the novel's citations evince a pedagogical objective, where intertextuality "provides readers with the literary tools necessary to understand it on its editor's terms" (Walker 53). But if the novel does build such a "thematic anthology," to what end does this anthology mobilize the canon to educate us? What does the novel's cited canon compel us to "understand?" Crucially, the gathering of this anthology of "attenuated leaves" does not occur on the paratextual margins of the text, but within the novel's plot itself as "literary tools" with which Lionel "reads" the encrypted history of his plagued present. And notably, Lionel's melodramatic "dedication" to his memoir's future readers or "SHADOWS" instructs us to "*READ* YOUR FALL!" (364, emphasis mine), just as he has implicitly and literally read his own. The novel's revisionist re-canonization of the

literary past around this receding "FALL" perhaps solicits a mode of "reading" not unlike

that which Cohen calls for in the era of climate change, where reading arrives on the

heels of a de Manian "unreadability" according to which "no text is readable if it is not

read through its gathering disclosure of ecoside" ("Global *Weirding*" 206). Thus *The Last*

Man's literary canon becomes "unintelligible" *unless* one reads and arranges it as an

instruction in the "gathering disclosure" of culture's no future.

However, the novel's makeshift canon-formation and its attendant mode of

reading is not a rational, intentional process akin to what one would experience in

botanical collections or pedagogical anthologies. Lionel does not claim a mastery over

his reading of extinction or the textual fossils he accumulates. The non-intentionality of

Lionel's reading is hinted at where one would least expect to find it—in the meta-passage

where Lionel reflects on the privileged, Archimedean vantage point at which his status as

"last man" places him:

> [T]here will be a melancholy pleasure in painting the end of all. But the intermediate
> steps, the climbing the wall, raised up between what was and is … is a labour past my
> strength. Time and experience have placed me on an height from which I can
> comprehend the past as a whole; and in this way I must describe it, bringing forward the
> leading incidents, and disposing light and shade so as to form a picture in whose very
> darkness there will be harmony … I am able to escape from the mosaic of circumstance,
> by perceiving and reflecting back the grouping and combined colouring of the past. (209)

Lionel's claim that standing at the "end of all" affords him the total meaning of the past

approximates what in Blake will be called a "last judgment." For the "perspective of the

Last Judgment," as Žižek puts it in his reading of Lacan, unfolds "a final settling of

accounts, of a point of accomplished symbolization/historicization, of the 'end of

history,' when every event will receive retroactively its definitive meaning, its final place

in the total narration" (*Sublime Object* 159). Yet as we have seen, the "darkness" of

which this totalization's "harmony" consists entails a denuding of what made the past human, and necessitates a reading of past texts as long extinguished stars, whose delayed "darkness" we must strain to perceive in their false light that touches the present. But most important here is the crossed threshold that forces this citing of darkness out of the past. For what sets Lionel's last judgment in motion is an impersonal process he cannot reverse, a "Rubicon" passed that erects an unbreachable "wall between what was and is." This one-way-street impels Lionel's ostensible free reign over the past as the symptom of a breakdown of mastery, the consequence of a "labour past [his] strength." That Lionel's "lastness" causes him to drift into the position of editor, compiler, and/or annotator— similar to the editor of the "Author's Introduction," or of Shelley herself—of texts that singularly declaim the non-existence of "what was," betokens the condition of "lateness" that Brecht de Groote attributes to late Romantic texts; that is, the romantic writer conceives her present as "posterior to an ending that is utterly irrecuperable," below whose "line" or caesura the writer-turned-editor "annotate[es] himself into secondariness" and becomes a symptom of "finding that the temporality into which authors once … projected their texts is now no more" ("Below the Line" 1, 13–14).

Lionel's status as an editor "below the line" heralds a "lastness" that proves not just entropic but accelerative. Once this Rubicon is crossed, this passed tipping point appears, as the novel says of the plague, "Here—every where!" (215), even in writers as overread as Shakespeare, as ancient as Hesiod, and as contemporary as Schiller. To build upon de Groote's paradigm, citation as a "late style" becomes both a consequence and frantic producer of the irreversibly crossed line(s). Citation in the novel is thereby the product and process of lateness or lastness. For in the Anthropocene parlance that the

novel anticipates, the passing of tipping points unleashes uncontrollable mutations in the field of objects and temporal horizons one surveys. Thus, Lionel's historiography of the plague snowballs and mobilizes itself beyond his control. In the plague's accelerating history, the crossed line proliferates; it moves further and further back until all of history falls on the side of extinction—hence the ludicrous versatility with which the plague "infects" and re-distributes the trajectory and temporality of the literary past, as well as causes Lionel to lose his grip on the form and pace of his narration. Tellingly, the novel also depicts the plague as an acceleration of sorts, namely an escalation of the scope and body counts of previous plagues; Lionel refers readers to the "many books" that detail earlier, rough-drafts of the plague, texts including "the accounts of Boccaccio, De Foe [sic], and Browne" (209). Lionel's citations of an acceleratingly "plagued" history become part and parcel of, like the growing awareness of the effects of anthropogenic climate change, an inverse mastery that increases its losses the more ground it covers, and whose accumulating knowledge amplifies the volatility of the history it grasps.

Citing Romanticism

The Last Man's archiving of the archive mirrors Shelley's own status as arguably a cultural historian of Romanticism—or in the spirit of *The Last Man*'s "Author's Introduction" and its narrator's decoding and re-arrangement of fossils, a geologist of Romanticism. Tilottama Rajan distinguishes Shelley as a uniquely archival, which is to say citational, writer. For Rajan, Shelley's "editing and archiving of [Romanticism's] male celebrities," namely Godwin, Percy Shelley, and Byron, unfolds an "autonarration" of her relation to an unsettled Romanticism whose unfinishedness and potential for

"further narrativity" she shelters in her novels and prose by repeatedly summoning and disposing of its celebrity touchstones ("Byron's *Cain*" 84, *Romantic Narrative* 42). Yet because Mary Shelley must inhabit Romanticism as something "already gone" in *The Last Man* after Byron's and Shelley's deaths, the two dead male poets lend a darker air to their fictional counterparts than they did, say, in the cases of the Shelleyan Woodville in *Mathilda* or the Byronic Castruccio in *Valperga*. Thus, in *The Last Man* the recycled Byronic and Shelleyan character archetypes become akin to the stratigraphic sediments of an "extinct race," among whose ruins Shelley considers herself a fellow "relic."

The text's extinction of its Romantic cast pushes to the extreme Shelley's tendency in her earlier novels not only to caricature and thereby render dead in advance members of her circle—for instance, her cliched depiction of the Shelleyan Woodville in *Mathilda*—but also to kill off repeatedly her circle's fictional counterparts. Shelley's citation complex then partly inheres in how she mobilizes characters as ciphers of romantic figures and their ideologies which are summoned to be extirpated. Examples include Diana in *Mathilda*, a surrogate for Wollstonecraft who redacts the latter's life, thought, and death into the ephemera of a few pages, and Justine in *Frankenstein*, whose name (Justine/Justice) and unjust execution work as a truncation of Godwin's political justice in order to discard it. *The Last Man* escalates the Shelley corpus's body count by, in the fashion of Percy Shelley's *Triumph of Life*, mowing down the novel's cast one by one: Evadne and Raymond die in Greece, Perdita by suicide, Lionel's wife Iris by disease, Lionel's son Evelyn by fever, and Adrian and Clara by drowning. Yet the novel piles up not only Romanticism's extinct personalities but Romanticism's virtual possibilities. Before the Byronic Raymond's campaign in Constantinople where Byron's

real-life death predestines the former to die, the novel offers a glimpse of a domestic

Byron momentarily shorn of his ambition in the form of Raymond's and Perdita's quiet

refuge at Windsor castle. And by virtue of Raymond's and Perdita's marriage (with

Perdita embodying certain aspects of Mary Shelley's personality), the novel imagines an

alternate Romantic family romance in which Mary marries Byron. Finally, the text offers

Percy Shelley, an "unacknowledged legislator of the world," an opportunity to become a

legislator by way of the Shelleyan Adrian's stint as the Lord Protector. That these

counterfactual projects do not simply fail on their own terms but are precipitately

overshadowed and swept up by the text's path toward universal extinction only renders

the novel's thanatology more unyielding, as the text piles up not only its pasts but its

possible exits.

By accelerating the thanatological trajectories of Shelley's prior novels, *The Last

Man* might be said to disclose the logics by which Shelley had been operating. The novel

thereby mobilizes extinction as a kind of master signifier that retroactively claims her

past work as the filling of Romanticism's mass grave. *The Last Man* with its destructive

grandiosity, then, expedites Shelley's compulsive familicide and stands, not unlike Percy

Shelley's *St. Irvyne*, as a scorched earth that looms over the rest of her corpus and her

more recuperative attempts to reckon with Romanticism's legacy in her late texts such as

Lodore and *Falkner*.

Shelley's re-gatherings of her circle's bodies as accumulations of foreclosures

extends beyond her novels to her editing and archivization of Percy Shelley's life and

work. As we observed above, Shelley deploys the citations of past texts—even her

own[91]—as engines of fulfilled prophecies that, as Russell Samolsky writes of *Heart of Darkness*'s "apocalyptic drive to power" over "future catastrophic bod[ies]," have retroactively "overcod[ed]" future extinguished bodies by programming and pulling them "back into the gravitational well" of the texts' "own dark apocalyptic trajectories" (98). That is, citation for Shelley divulges and overdetermines a cited text's drive to assimilate future traumas and retro-code them within that text's field of intention. By way of a perverse iterability, texts kill, and citation summons them as murderers. Shelley would imprint Percy Shelley's poetic corpus with citation's prophetic negativity while editing the 1839 edition of his poems. In her note on the poems of 1822, her last note and the "finale of the volume" (Favret 33), Shelley cites in full the final stanza of *Adonais* after asking "who but will regard as a prophecy the last stanza of the *Adonais*?" Shelley's citing piecemeal of *Adonais*'s suicidal "bark" "borne darkly, fearfully, afar" toward a canonical oblivion divests the poem of its original elegiac ground, intended for Keats, and thrusts it into a fatal constellation with what would become the empirical fact of Percy Shelley's drowning. In her last word on Percy Shelley's career, Shelley uses citation to evoke her husband's death as an event that happened *avant la lettre*. Shelley's last note and its concluding *Adonais* citation infuses an eerie sense of finality into the poem that the poem does not really merit (it was of course not Shelley's last poem, nor was it even his last published poem). Yet it is as if this fragmented *Adonais* and its now fulfilled "prophecy" have petrified retroactively the future of the poem and poet himself

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[91] In a letter to Maria Gisborne describing the events that led up to Shelley's and Jane Williams's confirmation of Percy Shelley's death, Shelly alludes to *Mathilda* and casts Shelley's and Jane's anxious search for the dead or alive Percy Shelley as a repetition of Mathilda's pursuit of her death driven father. Shelley writes, "It must have been fearful to see us—two poor, wild, aghast creatures driving (like Matilda) towards the sea, to learn if we were to be for ever doomed to misery" (*Life and Letters* II, 16).

from within the past. That is, this fossilized confirmation of Percy Shelley's future anterior extinction witnesses the poem's fulfillment and the last time it could ever be cited, in that through this "final" citation the Shelley name achieves its full, destructive legibility. Now Percy Shelley's *Adonais cannot not* be read as a "prophecy" that will have realized (in both senses of 'to know' and 'to actualize') Percy Shelley's extinction in advance.[92] Her citation identifies *Adonais* and perhaps Percy Shelley's oeuvre itself as having crossed a point of no return in its reception history.

The reception history programmed by Shelley's editing has hitherto been construed in various ways. Neil Fraistat proposes that Shelley's editions of Percy Shelley seek to recuperate the latter as a "politically safe" "lyric writer," or a "signifier of 'pure poetry'" whose work could survive as an avatar of English "high culture" (410–11). Susan Wolfson argues that Shelley's editorial voice constructs a division in the poet's future reception—a schism between a "popular" audience and an "elite" readership figured by Shelley's own "editorial privilege," which crystallized the "radical privacy of her recollections and their incommensurability with any public reception" (39, 56).[93] But whereas Wolfson follows Fraistat by conveying Shelley's self-construction of her privileged status as symmetrical with her "restoration" of Percy Shelley and his

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[92] The extent to which Shelley repeatedly fixates on *Adonais* as Percy Shelley's proto-elegy in her prose suggests that she perhaps did ascribe to the poem an "apocalyptic drive to power" that, irrespective of Percy Shelley's intentions, proleptically willed the latter's drowning. In a letter to Maria Gisborne after Percy Shelley's death, Shelley writes, "Is not *Adonais* his own elegy? and there does he truly depict the universal woe which should overspread all good minds since he has ceased to be their fellow-labourer in this worldly scene" (*Life and Letters* II, 27). And in an earlier letter to Gisborne, Shelley assertively claims "*Adonais* is not Keats's, it is his own elegy" (20).

[93] See also Mary Favret's reading of Shelley's more adversarial engagement with Percy Shelley in the 1839 edition, in which Shelley's extensive prose notes work to consolidate and showcase her talents as a prose fiction writer with a stronger relation to the "real." Shelley's edition generically pits prose fiction against the "intangibility and isolation" of poetry and thus precludes the latter from having "any effective connection to the public" (18–19).

"fragmented poetic corpus" (49), I suggest that Shelley's editorial efforts unify Percy

Shelley's corpus according to the same suicidal legibility that strings together *The Last*

Man's inhuman literary history. Thus, while gathering the 1839 volume Shelley re-

assumes the role of the editor in *The Last Man*'s frame narrative, as she claims to have

"decyphered" Percy Shelley's near-unintelligible manuscripts. And what she deciphers in

his re-assembled corpus is an encrypted record of his unconscious building toward his

own extinction. For her "Note on Poems of 1821" expresses her sense of foreboding as

her editorial work "draws near" the poems contemporaneous with Percy Shelley's death

in 1822, since "each poem, and each event it records, has a real or mysterious connexion

with the fatal catastrophe" (*CPW* 656). Shelley thereby casts *Adonais* as the retrospective

key to the prophetic "non-agential agency" operating in the "poem[s]" and leaving a

recursive paper trail of the "fatal catastrophe."

By foregrounding *Adonais* as a kind of last poem, Shelley not only jumpstarts the

reception history that would become prevalent in the nineteenth century, namely the

regarding of *Adonais* as Percy Shelley's own "funeral oration" and "personal statement"

on the critical neglect he was to share with Keats (Engelberg 63–64).[94] Rather, Shelley's

re-arranging of her husband's corpus into an incremental, malicious prophecy incurs a

more depressive reception history in which, as de Groote puts it, Percy Shelley's

signature ossifies into an extended allegory of his "predestination for eventful death"

("Below the Line" 14). This encoded transmission of an always dead Percy Shelley,

perhaps encrypted in his portrait as an "ineffectual angel," limns a uniquely Romantic

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[94] See Engelberg (62–68) for an account of contemporary reviewers who read *Adonais* biographically. However, Wolfson suggests that it is evident from Shelley's letters that her understanding of *Adonais* as a prophecy "is original" (72).

temporality of reception. Karen Swann elucidates this temporality of reception as a "subjection" of the biographical life to the logics of "premature arrest," "untimeliness," and "posthumous life" that "inspirit" readers to come yet haunt them with "a sense of what cannot descend to the future" (16, 24). But Shelley's gathering of Percy Shelley's corpus perhaps less returns Percy Shelley to an archive of loss that pushes us forward into a future negatively spurred by what it cannot have. For Shelley's crowning of the corpus as a retroactive prophecy yields a sense of the archive as nothing but an insistent withdrawal into dormant no futures whose spectral touches we feel too late or have yet to feel.

Still, *The Last Man*'s archiving of Romanticism includes more than an acceleration of the familicidal logic by which Shelley and her novels are imprinted. For Shelley's returns to the Romantic archive also document Romanticism as itself a particular attachment to the archive. Shelley's novels stage Romanticism's citationality, its relation to the archive, and its future, in various ways, several of which poise its history as teetering on the edge of wasted futures either inflicted upon history by Shelley's Romanticism or internalized by Romanticism as its suicidal destiny. *Frankenstein* (1818), as a proto-science fiction novel, casts Romanticism or the Romantic "imagination" as the ambition to *use* history's bodies as the laboratory of a Promethean futurism, whose conflation of the re-animation of history's "lifeless matter" with the creation of a "new species" (80–81) threatens to devolve futurity into a lethal replication of sameness.[95] Consequently, Frankenstein's creation of the Creature by re-combination

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[95] This reading of *Frankenstein* partly follows Colebrook's interpretation of the novel as a critique of "human prometheanism," wherein Frankenstein's "tragic flaw" is not that his ambitions are too promethean and overreaching, but rather not promethean enough. For Colebrook, Frankenstein's (post)humanist

or citation of the dead—which reproduces the novel's makeup as echoes of enlightenment, biblical, classical, occult, and incipient "Romantic" traditions—menaces the extinction of the "humanity" it strives to recreate. For according to Frankenstein, the amalgamated Creature's potential to perpetuate itself could "make the very existence of the species of man a condition precarious and full of terror" (174). Thus for the Shelley of *Frankenstein*, Romanticism's sterile citation of the archive yields the destructive capacity of the atomic bombs and their climatological aftermath: the "hideous progeny" of Shelley's/Frankenstein's Romanticism entails either the eradication of human life or a "curse upon everlasting generations" (174, emphasis added), a contamination of the very reproduction of life, or literary "generations," itself.[96]

By contrast, Shelley's unpublished 1821 novella *Mathilda* consigns Romanticism to suspended oblivion by citing the Romantic archive within the text's foreclosed horizon of reception. More overtly citational than *Frankenstein*, *Mathilda* anticipates *The Last Man* in its many direct quotations of canonical poets such as Dante, Sophocles, and Shakespeare, as well as a makeshift canon of Romantic poets such as Wordsworth (49, 89, 111), Byron (60), Coleridge (85–86, 110), and Percy Shelley (89). In addition to the text's stilted citations of Wordsworth, Dante, and others serving as "trace[s] of buried affect" and "mark[s] of disjunction" (Jacobus 168), they also become casualties as the

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imagination proves limited on account of his inability recognize a humanity that is not already a duplication of the given, that is not a "mirror" of his own humanity (hence his rejection of the Creature); thus Frankenstein's conservative prometheanism becomes a byproduct of the drive toward "replication" that Colebrook finds everywhere in the novel, in which people (Walton perceiving Frankenstein as an ideal double of himself), institutions (Frankenstein's university education in the same intellectual traditions studied by his professors), and literary traditions (the Creature's reading of *Paradise Lost* and Volney's *Ruins* making him "human") become forces of re-duplication and reproduction. See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQBSaXBmR9c.

[96] In her preface to the 1831 edition of the novel, Shelley would famously refer to the text as her "hideous progeny" (351).

novella enfolds their literary line of inheritance within Mathilda's/*Mathilda*'s suicidal arc toward a no future with no readers. The novella's non-publication seems prefigured by Mathilda's inability to determine a reader for her confession—as she wavers between writing for Woodville and an audience of "strangers" (41)—within the text's claustrophobic, nearly character-less setting.[97] Furthermore, Mathilda's letter proves constituted on the trace of an erased flight out of the novella's confessional limbo. The first draft of the novella entitled *The Fields of Fancy* contains a Dantean preface that pictures Mathilda as a spirit in the Elysian fields as she prepares to narrate her earthly woes to an unnamed narrator, thereby recuperating her trauma as absolution and instruction. Shelley's deletion of this frame from the final draft encloses Mathilda and her relation to a Romanticism figured by the Godwinian "Father," the Shelleyan Woodville, and the "unusable" idealizations buried in the Wordsworth citations, in a *purgatorio* without exit. Even Malthida's Dantean name, *sans* the recuperative frame narrative,

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[97] Rajan reads *Mathilda*'s truncated length, "lack of action," and "virtual exclusion of characters other than the protagonist" (for the only "characters" worthy of the name are Mathilda, Woodville, and Mathilda's father, who is not even named), as casting the text's "lyricism" as "less a positive identity than a subtraction from narrative" ("Shelley's 'Mathilda'" 47). Indeed, the text is minimalistic to the point of sterility, as if Mathilda inhabits a world that has been drained to the dregs. I would go even further than Rajan and suggest that the text anticipates the (post)apocalyptism of *The Last Man* insofar as Mathilda is already a last (wo)man with no readers. From the outset Mathilda informs us that "it is winter and the sun has already set," that "there are no clouds in the clear, frosty sky," that she inhabits "a desolate plain covered with white," that "no voice of life reaches me," and that "I am alone — quite alone — in the world" (41). Though such lines are not meant to be taken literally, their insistence on an eerily empty world that accords with the narrative's desolate(d) resources in terms of action and character, almost anticipates the condition of a text belonging to what Adorno, reading Beckett's *Endgame*, calls the "atomic age." For Adorno, Beckett's post-war drama unfolds from a "historical moment" in which "everything … has been destroyed without realizing it; humankind continues to vegetate, creeping along after events that even the survivors cannot really survive, on a rubbish heap that has made even reflection on one's own damaged state useless" (*Notes* 244–5). *Mathilda* likewise opens as if on the other side of an implied catastrophe that is never explicitly named or acknowledged. The "history" that Mathilda feels should die along with her—including the literary "history" from Dante and Spenser to Wordsworth and Percy Shelley— thus signifies its terminal decline by way of the scant resources it hands down to Mathilda and Shelley herself.

points to a Lethean oblivion without a subsequent ascent—a purgation without purification.[98]

Anticipating the extinction that unfolds on a global scale in *The Last Man*, *Mathilda* archives Romanticism as a suicidal family romance and thus depicts "extinction" in a pre-geological register; that is, the extinguishing of Romanticism figured as a family of writers with a prospective line of descent.[99] By the time we read the text, Mathilda's family is all but extinct: her mother has died in labour, her father by water, Mathilda by illness, and Woodville, whose wife is also dead, is nowhere to be found.[100] If Mathilda (or *Mathilda*), as Marc Mazur puts it, "finds failure in the history of literature itself" (285), then her citing of this history and its romantic progeny enacts the fantasy of a passive aggressive vengeance against them. Since we could regard the citational practices of a text like *Mathilda* as approximating an inchoate "anthology" of a Romantic canon to come, Mathilda's no future stages the self-extinction of the kind of subject who might be educated and engendered by such a vexed literary history, and indeed, who might (not) carry it on into the future. Tellingly, before resolving to transmit her autobiography to an audience that may not arrive, Mathilda wonders if "a history such as mine had better die with me" (41). If Mathilda/*Mathilda* goes down, she will take Romanticism with her.

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[98] Mathilda in Dante's *Purgatorio* is a figure associated with Lethe, in which she bathes Dante to prepare him to enter Paradise.

[99] Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary* defines "extinct," in its second definition, as "At a stop; without progressive succession," and this reflects the word's common usage in the context of noble families and hereditary succession.

[100] Michelle Faubert points out that *Mathilda*'s state of "narrative purgatory" is furthered by the fact that we never get assurance that Woodville received Mathilda's letter, for "[h]ad he done so and perhaps acted as the frame narrator or editor of Mathilda's memoirs, Woodville could have told us if she had achieved her wish to die" (33).

In *The Last Man*, however, Romanticism's status as the Anthropocene markings of a paradigm already extinct does not destroy the archive but renders it readable otherwise by redistributing it within the germination and culmination of a different, albeit still destructive, temporal horizon. Thus, Romanticism survives in the novel by conceiving its no future as bound up with how it will have assumed a perverse "editorial privilege" as the archiver and facilitator of the no futures of other texts. In the "Author's Introduction," by way of the frame narrator and Shelley surrogate, Romanticism appears not only among the geological inscriptions but acts as the re-arranger and "decipherer" of those inscriptions (4). Furthermore, in the narrative proper Romantic texts, or the texts belonging to what the novel twice refers to as the "nineteenth century" (32, 56), serve de facto as the "end" of literary history, since Shelley declines to invent fictional texts and authors to fill the literary gaps between the 1820s and the twenty-first century. What is more, both references to Shelley's historical moment ascribe an achieved "maturity" (32) to certain industries and natural marvels that had been "planted at the very commencement of the nineteenth century" (56). By way of the novel's time travel into the future, these name droppings of the "nineteenth century" both retro-install the latter as a kind of germ and offer a short-cut toward the mysterious culmination of its growth.

Shelley, then, projects Romanticism into the future as an unremarked "end of history" whose "maturity" the novel grasps in advance while deferring it to a future that we, in the year 2023, have yet to reach. We might regard the circumstances of Raymond's death in Constantinople as the novel's allegory of Romanticism's seeding of a future destruction within its own end. As Raymond's forces close in on an apparently empty capitol deserted by the Turks who had fled from the plague, Raymond elects to

charge into the city and claim the receipt of a "completest victory" that is "already [his]"––a kind of Fukuyamist "end of history" that would close out the final world-historical conflict between Greece and the Ottoman empire and allow the Greeks and the philhellenistic English to re-claim their "inheritance" (159). But Raymond's breach of the city triggers a massive explosion that kills Raymond and buries him under ruins that Lionel suggests were "destined for destruction" (157). Oddly, the novel never explains the cause of this explosion. We could of course surmise that the Turks had laid a trap of explosives before fleeing the city. But the novel does not confirm this explicitly, and instead obscures the naturalistic qualities of the blast, namely the smoke it would emit, with an apocalyptic phantasmagoria including "air" that "was darkened" (156).

This episode seems calculated to recall the explosive finale of Byron's poem *The Siege of Corinth* (1816). The poem takes place during the Ottoman-Venetian wars and concludes with the venetian commander Minotti laying a suicidal trap for the encroaching Turks by setting fire to the gunpowder magazines or "sulphurous treasures" stored among the "dead of ages gone" (934, 921) in the vaults of a Catholic church where Minotti hides out. Both Raymond's death and its Byronic forbear stage the weaponizing of culture's remains or negentropic "inheritance." In these instances, "history" is found laced with and stockpiled as deadly combustibles, whose detonation unleashes a nuclear-level "vast-annihilation" (Shelley 209). Such an annihilation unfolds in Byron's poem as the conflagration of "The turbaned victors, the Christian band, / All that of living or dead remain" (972–3), and in *The Last Man* as Lionel's apocalyptic vision, presaging the plague, of the dead Raymond's "shape … expand[ing] into a gigantic phantom, bearing on its brow the sign of pestilence" and swelling to "burst" the "adamantine vault …

sustaining and enclosing the world" (158). The lack of empirical explanation for

Raymond's explosion proceeds from this event's overdetermination by historical and

textual forces: the Byron poem's conflation of civilization's remains with modern

weaponry to cast their mingling as an anthropogenic self-destruction, the death of the

historical Byron in the Greek war of independence on which the novel's conflict is based,

and the overlap of the end of Romanticism with the "end of history." For Raymond's

destruction becoming contiguous with the accelerating of the plague seizes in Byron's

historical death—which for Shelley confirms the Romantics as an "extinct race" and

spurs the novel's composition—the germ of a gathering self-destruction of culture itself

that Romanticism's extinction will have brought to "maturity." That Byron's extinction in

1824 encodes and "matures" into Raymond's plague in 2093 casts Romanticism's end as

the setting of a timebomb that will have "fired" (*Corinth* 970) the "sulphureous treasures"

of history.

But unlike in *Frankenstein*, *The Last Man*'s Romanticism does not reinvent the

past into an eclipsing future but purports to find that thanatological acceleration or

"plague" already there, like the *Siege of Corinth*'s corpses piled up with gunpowder.

Thus it is no coincidence that Romanticism's extinction or "fall into secondariness"

unfolds partly through the novel's cited translations of classical and German texts by

contemporary authors, such as Coleridge (108–9, 208), Charles Abraham Elton (124,

180, 249, 313), and Percy Shelley (343). "Translation" thereby emerges in the

background as a troping of Romanticism's unique status as a kind of Rosetta Stone that

reads the archive's hieroglyphs of a certain future "enchained" to our past and in fact

cites and discovers the past as hieroglyphic in the first place. Shelley shelters

Romanticism's future as a no future by construing Romanticism's archive as a decrypting

of the archive-as-wasted. Or rather *it will have* decrypted the past's no future and will live

on to realize interminably this future anterior, just as Lionel, the Romantic subject,

survives the plague preternaturally to index a future in which we will have read our

"fall."

This is to say that extinction in the text is not utterly privative because citation

itself survives as the *sign* that Romanticism and its pasts are already gone. For the novel's

last word on/of Romanticism proves more virtual than actual, especially since the novel's

awkward position toward the middle rather than end of Shelley's oeuvre places

Romanticism's last judgment in parentheses (hence the novel's tendency to place its

action in the "meanwhile"). This deferral of our past and future judged as "already gone"

resonates with the delay by which Romanticism in the novel ends with literary history in

the nineteenth century but waits to backdate this end until the twilight of the twenty-first.

Such a delay also informs the well-known temporal convolutions by which the text's no

future occurs both before and after the frame narrative, and by which the novel addresses

an audience yet to be extinct and yet already caught in extinction's ancestral headlights

(Lionel's "dedication" thereby addresses its readers as "shadows" as if to highlight the

reader's liminal status as both already dead and yet to be already dead). This

Romanticism and its irreducibly preemptive character—for it claims a totalizing

"maturity" and cuts off futurity well before Shelley's career had ended—makes

perpetually available a Benjaminian "time of the now" that constellates extinction at

every moment. Though counterfactual, the past and present's agreement on an abyssal

extinction, displaced onto an indeterminate future, casts backwards a petrifying shadow

over whatever present we inhabit in the interim. In a bizarre marriage of Benjamin and

Meillassoux, Romanticism as a paradigm of citation unsettles the present with a

"messianic fossil"[101] that promises us a future to come in which we will have always

been extinct. And though the no futures of this "now" may still include something akin to

"us," it might only be as fossils or ghosts.

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[101] I owe this coinage to Evan Gottlieb (personal communication).

Chapter Three

Percy Shelley's Cyclic Poem: *St. Irvyne* and Shelley's Shadow Corpus

This chapter makes the case for P. B. Shelley's early Gothic works as a "dark precursor" of his later, "mature" poems. The term "dark precursor" comes from Gilles Deleuze, for whom it names an "imperceptible" prelude to any system that ordains that system's path "in advance but in reverse, as though intagliated," with this "in advance" becoming visible only "in reverse" due to being a product of retrospection after this determined path has run its course (119). For Shelley his Gothic texts become the shadows of a futurity cast upon the later work that have as if trod the mature texts' predisposed course and exhaustion. Yet the later work's citing of the early texts activates retroactively the latter's dark precursory energies, which then galvanize the "immature" work as the late poems' *futur anterieur*, the wasted future to which Shelley's corpus will have returned. This chapter examines the young Shelley as providing a self-immolating prehistory of the "mature" Shelley that, as the corpus reaches its termination in *The Triumph of Life*, can be seen to have incrementally reversed-engineered the trajectory from the "minor" to "major" works by pulling the future of the Shelley corpus backward into a receding anteriority.[102]

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[102] As Neil Fraistat puts it, much criticism of the young Shelley prior to the 1990s engages the early work "in a merely cursory way, to map how Shelley grew beyond it" (n.p.). In that same special issue on the early Shelley, Timothy Morton advances a reading of the young Shelley similar to mine in his paper "*Queen Mab* as Topological Repertoire" that points to *Queen Mab*'s poetics of "Fractal self-similarity" to claim a more decisive role for the early work in Shelley's oeuvre. In Linda Birgman's gloss, Morton reads the early Shelley as less a historical person than an autonomous "process" or algorithmic "function" whose "iteration describes an oeuvre" and names a "pattern" or the "generator of a pattern" (n.p.). Yet Morton's focus on *Queen Mab* as the locus of this Shelleyan algorithm skips over the prior Gothic juvenilia to arrive at this early paradigmatic moment in the corpus. In contrast to my reading, Tilottama Rajan finds in the early novels *St. Irvyne* and *Zastrozzi* (1810) a more futural space of potentiality, whose "disorganized

The later work re-cites the early texts' "prodigious reserve" of Shelleyan tropes in an archaeological rather than teleological way, such that Shelley's self-recycling bespeaks a recessive self-erasure and, as we saw in *Childe Harold*'s piled up ruins, an *accumulation* of Shelley's prior texts' ideologies, motifs, and genres. *Self*-citation for Shelley inverts the centrifugal trajectory of standard citation by incestuously drawing its energy from the Shelley corpus's constant turning upon, and increasing determination by, its own resources. Such "Shelleyan" figures recurring across his corpus include the Wandering Jew ("Ghasta!!!", *The Wandering Jew*, *St. Irvyne*, *Queen Mab*, *Alastor*, *Adonais*, *Hellas*), the "shape all light" and its metaphysical cognates (*The Wandering Jew*, *St. Irvyne*, *Alastor*, *Laon and Cythna*, *Epipsychidion*, *The Triumph*), the numerous dream visions in which the latter metaphysical beings often (dis)appear (*The Wandering Jew*, *St. Irvyne*, *Alastor*, *Laon and Cythna*, *Prometheus Unbound*, *The Triumph*), and the women playing a harp or lute (*Zastrozzi*, *Alastor*, *Laon and Cythna*).[103] Further, Shelley will re-cite certain lines nearly verbatim from his earlier works, such as when *The Triumph* narrator's "thoughts which must remain untold" (21) reproduce Laon's "thoughts as must remain untold" as he watches Cythna get taken away on a slave ship" (*LC* III.153). Shelley will even recycle entire poems. For the volume *Alastor: Or, The Spirit of Solitude and Other Poems* re-cites a truncated fragment of *Queen Mab* re-

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assemblages of the ideas and *topoi* that recur in [Shelley's] subsequent work" at once "constitute this later work in relation to an archive of what has been de-selected" and returns Shelley's "mythmaking to its underlying negativity" to be further thought (81, 48). And like the present chapter, Kim Wheatley identifies parallels between *St. Irvyne* and the underread *The Wandering Jew*, notably the two texts' deployment of "strange forms," which Wheatley defines as janus-faced gothic tropes that pay lip service to Gothic conventions while exacerbating the genre's confines to probe the limits of "readerly—and authorially—control" (70). However, Wheatley's reading focalizes the texts' diction rather than structure as the locus of the early Shelley's gothic acceleration, and does not examine the extension of this acceleration into Shelley's later works.

[103] There is also the recurrence of Promethean striving, which before appearing in *Prometheus Unbound* first surfaces in *Zastrozzi*, and then re-surfaces in *St. Irvyne* in a Faustian form.

entitled *The Daemon of the World: A Fragment*, and "Ode to the West Wind" re-writes

and abridges Cythna's paean to the Spring and its rejuvenation of Autumn's "leaves

which are her winding-sheet" in *Laon and Cythna* (IX.199, stanzas xxi–xxv). Finally, the

corpus replays certain scenes almost compulsively, namely the incantation, or as *Hellas*

phrases it, "cit[ing]" of ghosts (810) in texts that range from the sensational,

autobiographical (as in the texts that inscribe a Shelleyan character in the poem), to the

world-historical, including "Revenge," "Ghasta!!!," *Queen Mab*, "Hymn to Intellectual

Beauty," *Laon and Cythna*'s prefatory dedication, *Prometheus Unbound*, and *Hellas*.[104]

What Donald Reiman identifies as the early Shelley's "pattern" of "revis[ing] and

recycl[ing]" the same figures and poems "in different contexts" therefore extends beyond

Shelley's juvenilia.[105] For this "pattern" enacts an insistent, recapitulative motion that, as

we observed in the *The Last Man*'s death-driven literary canon, almost seems to gather

autonomously Shelley's heterogenous texts into a centripetal build-up of his works'

fossilized or "canceled" idealisms. Shelley's self-citations thereby thicken into a kind of

stratigraphy that archaeologically shadows the corpus with a gathering "general past."

What then germinates in the interstices of Shelley's oeuvre is an involuting shadow

corpus exerting a magnetic pull on Shelley's centrifugal movement toward varying

generic and ideological positions. The curious persistence of the early Shelley's lack of

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[104] All refences to Shelley's juvenilia, *The Wandering Jew*, *Queen Mab*, *Daemon of the World,* and *The Triumph of Life* come from *The Complete Poetry of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, edited by Donald Reiman, Neil Fraistat, and Nora Crook (7 vols., henceforth *CP*). References to *Laon and Cythna* come from Anahid Nersessian's Broadview edition, henceforth *LC*. References to all other poems and prose come from Reiman and Fraistat's Norton edition, *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, henceforth *SPP*.

[105] Reiman suggests that Shelley's frequent recycling of his texts indicates a "pattern" in the early Shelley's career that survives into his late work, and that these recyclings, in addition to his plagiarisms in *Victor and Cazire*, reveal that Shelley, "unlike Byron or even Keats, was *not* a facile or prolific versifier" ("Shelley Comes of Age" n.p.).

versatility aslant the later Shelley's virtuosity and complexity colours Shelley's evolution

as an ongoing *process* of what Jean Baudrillard calls "*extermination*." For Shelley's

returns to a limited stock of figures and motifs forwards a cyclical "volatilisation" and ex-

termination—that is, a repeated extinction of *terms* without residue—of a "*restricted*

corpus" made expediently recyclable and disposable (*Symbolic Exchange* 200). This

delimited material's overconsumption thereby "binds the future" within the corpus's

terminal though unfolding "completion" (Baudrillard 204) and textualizes the late

Shelleyan formula of "The Future … becom[ing] the Past" (*Hellas* 924). The "restricted"

corpus doubles the corpus proper and haunts the latter with a specter of its finitude.

This ongoing contraction of the corpus into its tightened strata dovetails with

Shelley's tendency toward ironic self-performance beginning in the juvenilia. Shelley's

inscriptions of himself as a persona in his own texts include Fitzeustace in *St. Irvyne*, the

suicidal Poet in *Alastor*, the "last" "[f]rail" mourner in *Adonais* (296, 271), the unnamed

speaker of *The Triumph*, and the posthumous "Writer" of *Epipsychidion*. In the latter

poem's "Advertisement" Shelley preemptively eulogizes the text's author as having "died

at Florence" (*SPP* 392), and in a letter to his publisher Charles Ollier claims that the

poem is "a production of a portion of me already dead" (*Letters* 262–3). Thus, Mary

Shelley's preemptive fossilization of Shelley's Romanticism via clichéd short hands such

as Woodville already occurs across Shelley's various self-extinctions that begin with the

self-deprecating caricature Fitzeustace. These Shelleyan formulae do not then fashion an

"integrated oeuvre" constitutive of a deep personality or "celebrity," as Tom Mole has

argued of Byron's corpus and commercial persona that emerges through the recurrence of

the Byronic hero (*Romantic Celebrity* 19–20). Instead, in the manner of the "Byronism"

we delineated in chapter 1, from the outset of his career Shelley casts his own incipient

brand as what Tom Cohen terms a "toxic asset," which Cohen describes as geological-

cum-literary "terrestrial preserves" that "in being capitalized, convert into poisons" that

damage the future their use would sustain ("Toxic Assets" 97). Shelley's literal self-

citations mortify his persona and thought into an intractable signature. This signature

corrugates the potentially infinite horizon of his revolutionary idealism—what in the

Defence he calls the "lightning" "pregnant" in the "ashes of [a poem's] birth" (*SPP* 528)–

–into the dense insularity of serialized clichés, or hieroglyphs of a spent force. Indeed,

Shelley's figure of the "last cloud of an expiring storm / Whose thunder is its knell" that

he deploys to characterize himself in *Adonais* (273–4) casts the exercise of his

considerable powers as an entropic potency that points backward to a general process of

"expir[ation]."

  This chapter will read Shelley's Gothic novel *St. Irvyne; or, The Rosicrucian: A*

Romance (1811) as the recondite template of Shelley's self-citational paradigm. This text

functions as a *point de capiton* in its cannibalizing of Shelley's other early fugitive

pieces, such as the then-unpublished *The Wandering Jew* and the suppressed volume

Original Poetry: by Victor and Cazire. Moreover, the novel is already in part a re-citation

of Shelley's previous Gothic novel *Zastrozzi: A Romance* (1810), a re-citation that shifts

"attention from theme to structure, from the signified to signifier" (Rajan, *Romantic*

Narrative 66). For *St. Irvyne* recycles and disarticulates *Zastrozzi*'s more mimetic and

plot-driven formulae—the "revenge" theme, its directional plot and linear temporality,

and its canonical epigraphs that align with particular plot developments. *St. Irvyne*'s

doubling of the former novel casts the logic of Shelley's Gothic itself as a mode of

suicidal doubling, similar to how in *Prometheus Unbound* Zoroaster's encounter with his double or "apparition" signals the former's containment by and coming descent into a shadowy archive "underneath the grave" (I.194, 197). *St. Irvyne*'s doubling of *Zastrozzi* is then redoubled in *St. Irvyne* via the novel's confused double plot whose two halves blindly replay and undo each other. *St. Irvyne* thus initiates a Gothic movement of re-citation by which a prior text is doubled in the successor text as an illegible trace of an extinct arche. Therefore *St. Irvyne* stands in the corpus as not simply a novel or a stockpile of topoi and plot devices that Shelley would later mine, but a Gothic *process* that repeats throughout the corpus and as if blindly programs the later works' recursive tendencies. The novel becomes a malicious archive in Derrida's sense. For Derrida, the archive as a negentropic storehouse secretes an an-archival operation that deforms memory and causes archived material to recur as specters of a generalized destruction rather than avatars of an integrated canon. So, on the one hand, *St. Irvyne* is not an archive at all, since its Gothic figures and motifs such as the Wandering Jew, alchemy, dream visions, and the Satanic "beautiful being," as well as the text's regurgitated sentences and predicates, are without substantive content. But on the other hand, what *St. Irvyne* archives and compels to be re-cited across the corpus is the Gothic *structure* that propels the novel's involution into auto-citational relays intertextually "shaped by the undoing of shapes" (de Man, "Shelley Disfigured" 103).

Because the novel was issued in both 1811 and 1822, *St. Irvyne* accrues an anachronistic energy as it comes to bookend the corpus. Whereas Byron's *Childe Harold* became a "geodesic line" or shortcut across Byron's oeuvre toward *Don Juan*'s sudden death, *St. Irvyne*'s odd doubling of Shelley's past as his future positions the novel as an

Archimedean point in Shelley's corpus. Or rather, the novel retroactively collects itself

into a Benjaminian monad in Cohen's gloss of Benjamin's concept. For the monadic *St.*

Irvyne becomes a viral "*node* in the mnemonic switchboard" through which the Shelley

corpus's pasts and futures prove vulnerable to mutation (Cohen, *Ideology* 13). My

reading of *St. Irvyne* will branch out to Shelley's later poems to demonstrate how this

early novel's self-citational paradigm reads them and as if foresuffers where they will end

up. This is not to say that *St. Irvyne* as a deconstructive monad totalizes Shelley's corpus

absolutely. Instead, the novel's shadows of futurity cumulatively effect a contingent

totalization that, although advanced from one node on Shelley's rhizomatic oeuvre,

threads key texts and moments in Shelley's work together in darker ways missed by

readings that cast Shelley's corpus as an extension of the utopian desire carried forward

by world-historical and political texts such as *Prometheus Unbound* and *Queen Mab*, or

the troubled idealisms of autobiographical texts such as *Epipsychidion* and "Hymn to

Intellectual Beauty."

I take the above phrase "prodigious reserve" from Michel Foucault's essay

"Fantasia of the Library" on Gustave Flaubert's first conceived novel *The Temptation of*

St. Anthony. Foucault reads this early text as the "photographic negative" of Flaubert's

later works and the recalcitrant "primary discourse" of whose "conflagration" Flaubert's

oeuvre is committed to achieve "clarity." Flaubert's *St. Anthony* offers a salient model for

understanding *St. Irvyne* as a similar kind of "photographic negative" that (over)shadows

the later Shelley's more successful re-articulations of the early novel's confused and

undigested topoi. Like *St. Irvyne* for Shelley, for Flaubert *St. Anthony* names an undead,

"repeated" pre-history "suspended over his entire work" that he could never move

beyond, never "repress" or conflagrate utterly. The authors' precursory "prodigious reserve[s]" yield not products but processes. For these abyssal pasts insist as "wasted abundance[s]" the authors' corpora could never stop wasting in order to take shape and fuel a death-driven mode of self-citation rather than an arc of authorial self-development (Foucault 88). The two writers' respective novels become citable "primary" archives that bear what Foucault calls the "black, unmalleable coal" (88) that organizes a corpus around this dense remainder's toxic premises. This incombustible, "unmalleable coal" casts the survival of these authors' prehistories as not the residue of some positive content but the imprinting of an inexorable logic upon the course of the future work. This imprinted logic forecasts the progression of Shelley's oeuvre as a disturbingly inorganic trajectory.

That the Gothic, as an inherently self-repeating genre, becomes a catachresis for Shelley's paradigm of self-citation suggests a more past-oriented Shelley than is usually supposed. This Shelley does not predominantly face what Forest Pyle calls a "blank opening onto futurity" (47) but is also magnetized by the "dark ground" of his prehistory and caught in a retrograde movement backward through his corpus as if toward his juvenilia's Gothic vortex. This chapter proposes that granting *St. Irvyne* a paradigmatic place in the corpus reveals a more de Manian drive at work in Shelley's Gothic "process" (Hogle, *Shelley's Process*). Previous studies have of course attended to the recurrence of certain figures in Shelley's work. Forest Pyle zeroes in on the repetition of figures of "kindling" and "ash" in the later poems that reckon with history and revolution. The coadunation of these figures charts a revolutionary through line across these texts, as the poems' Janus-faced ashes hold open the "kindling of a *future* birth" within the "traces" of

a "*past* burning" (47). For Pyle, Shelley's privileging of extinguished pasts as storehouses of revolutionary desire reaches its apogee in *The Triumph*. For in *The Triumph* the violent figures of trampling and trampled ash most forcefully disclose Shelley's ongoing "subject[ion]" of his poetry and politics to a "radical aestheticism" that yokes the volatile possibility of a future to the "white-out" of poetry's self-obliterating "vacancy" (29, 64, 61).

Pyle's rendition of *The Triumph*'s movement of self-evisceration that "burns a hole" into "the very heart of Shelley's poetic project" (63) and illuminates the violent ground of any coming of futurity ascribes to a general "aestheticism" what prior readings have assigned to Shelley's Gothic. Accounts of Shelley's Gothicism go back to John V. Murphy's 1975 study *The Dark Angel*. There Murphy finds in the "gothic elements" strewn throughout Shelley's oeuvre the poet's "reli[ance]" on the "presence of a bitter and dark angel to illuminate his greatest visions," both metaphysical and political (13–14). Jerrold Hogle's seminal study on "Shelley's process" begins to articulate Shelley's Gothic as not simply the continuing "presence" of certain topoi but a dynamic movement encoded in these recurring "elements." For Hogle, "Shelley's process" names a de-centering typology wherein thought and its figures restlessly displace their own past instances and open toward "peculiar relations" from the future that might provisionally fulfill them (*Process* 4). This Shelleyan drive toggling between disappearing pasts and open futures informs Hogle's understanding of Shelley's career-long "Gothic complex." This complex unfolds across Shelley's texts as a symbolic contradiction between shouldering the "drift" of the past's hollowed-out signifiers "toward future redefinitions and the re-anchoring of them to dead 'anatomies' of the past" ("'Gothic Complex'").

Diverging from Hogle's interpretation of Shelley's Gothic as a Walpolean mode

stemming historically from the troubled transition from feudalism to capitalism,

Tilottama Rajan reads Shelley's "Gothic complex" as a "matrix" denoting a "more

permanent kernel of error at the heart of all idealism" exceeding its "containment within a

genre." This Shelleyan "matrix" offers a "creative negativity" by allowing "something

not yet made good" to "[push] its essence forward" in a negative dialectic (Rajan,

"Gothic Matrix" n.p.).

   As varied as these readings are in their critical orientations, they share the insight

that the Gothic for Shelley names a traumatic vitality that either serves as a foil for

Shelley's burgeoning idealisms or presses the constant deconstruction of those idealisms

whose inhibitions negatively spur his thought to evolve non-teleologically. Shelley's

work offers ample evidence for the Gothic as a distorted archive of utopian desire. The

corpus erects a necropolis that extends across the "record" that "black death" stores in

"charnels" and "coffins" in *Alastor* (24–25), the "uncouth skeletons" of earth's

"cancelled cycles" in *Prometheus* (IV.299, 289), and *The Triumph*'s phantasmagoric

"triumphal pageant" (118). In "England in 1819" these Gothic assets coalesce into the

"graves" out of which "a glorious Phantom may / Burst, to illumine our tempestuous

day" (13–14). And in *Laon and Cythna*, the literary archive figures as a "senseless damp /

Of graves" that leaves behind stamps of "ever-burning thoughts" that form a "path of

light" toward revolutionary action (IV.65–68, II.173). The Gothic for Shelley is a

Pandora's box that might seem to render degradation and extinction inseparable from

what the Derrida of *Specters of Marx* calls an "emancipatory promise" not yet grasped

(74), and which might thus become the engine of a weak messianic power's eternal recurrence against that power's ruin.

Yet focalizing Shelley's Gothicism through *St. Irvyne* tells a different story. Before Shelley's Gothic becomes the distorted mirror of a utopian archive, *St. Irvyne*'s Gothic mobilizes itself as a creature of "circulating libraries," as Shelley's letters testify (I, 20). The circulating libraries whose wares the young Shelley sampled index both the Gothic novels that mine the canonical library for cultural capital, and the literally disintegrating storehouse of cheap bluebooks that plagiarized the "high Gothic" and consigned it to the future oblivion for which commodities are destined. Unlike the Derridean *a-venir* of the later Shelley's cadaverous archives, *St. Irvyne*'s circulating library heralds a terminal textuality that accelerates the genre's marketing of liquidated signifiers and rushes the genre's fantasia of the library to the edge of a market collapse. This is to say that *St. Irvyne* advances a darker necro-archive than that which threads Shelley's corpus together as the tracing of futures deposited in the grave's record of extinguished hopes.

The "photographic negative" of the corpus that *St. Irvyne* adumbrates thereby unfolds a no future—that is, it discloses the perversity *of* futurity itself and of futurity's return from the past's ruin. That this dark double of Shelley's futurity operates intertextually via his own auto-repeating figures allows Shelley's oeuvre to be read as the "chaos of a cyclic poem." Shelley deploys this epithet in the *Defence* to characterize ancient narrative poems like the Homeric epics that extend from and expand an unsystematized stockpile of legends and myths (*SPP* 512). Yet this corpus's cyclicality bespeaks not a Nietzschean eternal return which, in a poem such as "Ode to the West

Wind," casts Winter's triumph as coeternal with Spring's seeding of hope and change.

Rather, this cyclicality, as we saw with Byron's unilateral "natural history," indexes the

singular, accelerative force that motivates the process of return and imprints Shelley with

the Gothic pattern of "return" itself.

This singular and irreversible force appears at critical junctures in Shelley's texts

at which the logics of his poetry and history seem at stake. In *Alastor* it takes shape as the

"whirlwind" driving the Poet's "dark obliterating course" back to the "record" of "black

death" (320, 329, 24–25) from which the Narrator cites him; in *Laon and Cythna* as the

"exhausted blast" on which the Manichean struggle between the Eagle and Serpent,

reaction and revolution, is "borne away" (I.126); and in *The Triumph* as the car's auto-

impelling "storm / Of its own rushing splendor" that fuels both the car's "creative ray"

and its mowing down of the multitude (86, 533). This re-cited "storm" catachrestically

figures an entropic process attending the future's returns from the past and makes

possible the resolution of the corpus's cyclic chaos into the "single catastrophe" of

Benjamin's angel of history. For Benjamin's angel the stuck loop of "wreckage upon

wreckage" piling into the future accumulates history as a discontinuously continuous

"single catastrophe" that gives the lie to historicism's chronological "chain of events"

(*Illuminations* 257). Similarly, Shelley's Wandering Jew functions like the fixed stare of

Benjamin's angel, as the zombie-like endurance of the Wandering Jew across Shelley's

oeuvre glimpses Shelley's chain of texts as a single disastrous poem. The Wandering Jew

thereby becomes a living index of this shadow corpus's entropy and a self-consuming

symptom of (Shelley's) history *as* self-consuming. The Wandering Jew is self-citation

incarnate insofar as the figure lives on to relay this dark thread running through the corpus.

Shelley's Self-Citation Compulsion

As readers have pointed out, *St. Irvyne* is incoherent at the level of both plot and narrative structure. The novel unfolds a double plot, one Gothic and one "sentimental." The Gothic story follows the vagabond Wolfstein, who initially becomes involved with a group of murderous bandits whose chief (Cavigni) Wolfstein aims to kill for the former's designs upon the captive Megalena. After poisoning Cavigni under the authorization of the mysterious bandit Ginotti and then running off with Megalena, Wolfstein finds himself stalked and shadowed preternaturally by the "mysterious scrutineer" (193) Ginotti, who we later learn has inexplicably been the "disposer of the events of [Wolfstein's] existence" (223) all along. After revealing himself to Wolfstein as a Wandering-Jew and immortal alchemist, Ginotti promises to bestow the secret of immortality upon Wolfstein provided the latter licenses this transfer with his denunciation of the "Creator" (*SI* 252). Wolfstein eventually refuses and then the "frightful prince of terror," Satan himself, appears on-stage and causes Wolfstein to die of terror while also apparently killing Ginotti by degenerating the latter's body into "a gigantic skeleton" (252). The novel's sentimental plot proves less sensational but no less disjointed. Introduced abruptly partway through the Wolfstein plot after a sort of textual blackout—in which the novel passes unaccountably from chapter IV straight to VII—this narrative thread begins with the "outcast wanderer" Eloise de St. Irvyne returning home to the Chateau de St. Irvyne "pale, downcast, and friendless" (209). Yet the novel quickly

"forg[ets]" (209) this opening scene by casting it as a brief flashforward from the narrative of "virtue rewarded" that apparently prefaces Eloise's sad homecoming and makes up the bulk of Eloise's story in the text. Like Wolfstein, Eloise has a run-in with some bandits, and is then sheltered and afterward seduced by the libertine Nempere, whose image takes up residence in Eloise's unconscious. She is later rescued by Nempere's acquaintance Mountfort, who supposedly kills Nempere in a duel and introduces Eloise to the parodically Shelleyan poet Fitzeustace, whom she finally marries. In the novel's infamously baffling conclusion, the narrator hastily binds together the novel's thematically disparate plots in a hyperbolic pastiche of the Gothic genre's characteristic disclosure of its mysteries. The narrator reveals sweepingly that "Ginotti is Nempere. Eloise is the sister of Wolfstein" (252), thereby endowing the two plots with an unexplained shared identity.

 As critics have noted, the novel borrows liberally from the plots and subplots of other Gothic works. The opening bandit subplot recalls Schiller's *The Robbers*, Wolfstein's attempted murder of Olympia patterns itself after Leonardo's attempted assassination of Berenza in Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya*, and Wolfstein's (blocked) inheritance of Ginotti's alchemical knowledge restages the contract between St. Leon and the alchemist Zampieri in William Godwin's *St. Leon*. Additionally, the novel's eclectic pilfering of names whose relation to their namesakes is purely nominal—Wolfstein from Conrad of Wolfenstein in Walter Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, Cavigni from Ann Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho*, Fitzeustace from Scott's *Marmion*, and both Ginotti and Megalena from *Zofloya*—jams together random part-objects on something of a möbius strip of thrown-together plot templates.

The novel's self-citational paradigm then becomes a symptom of the early texts' abrupt intervention into what Deidre Lynch calls the "Gothic library." This precipitate intervention re-casts the Gothic itself as a botched entry into history's heart of darkness that repeatedly turns in on and devours itself by devolving into feedback loops between empty signifiers. Shelley's ingestion of the Gothic *as* an accelerative self-citationality forecloses the genre's usual thematics of inheritance and re-discovered origins, as well as the pasts and futures they authorize. Shelley's Gothicism, like Byron's travels in *Childe Harold*, takes place "within the archive" in Foucault's sense. For what Foucault identifies in Flaubert's *St. Anthony* is a "singularly modern" experience of literature that surfaces in the nineteenth century, and which we might deem citational in its non-referentiality. Flaubert's novel emerges exclusively in the "domain … of books," in which the text is held hostage by "the repetition of things said in the past," resulting in a thoroughly textualized anteriority that dispenses with mimetic premises (Foucault 90, 92, 105). What Lynch calls the Gothic's "cultural work of the library," including the genre's bookish "canon-love" and troping of inheritance through "literary sources" (31), registers an early tremor of this subterranean shift in literature's referential function. However, the bookish, archive fever of the later Shelley and the library of scholarship with which he saturated a text like *Prometheus Unbound* here stages a more primitive accumulation of undocumented "books" that marshals the archive as a self-consuming artifact.[106]

As a traumatically brief intervention into the Gothic's amassing library of popular novels, the text stages what is perhaps the fiercest expression of the autocitational

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[106] For an account of the vast library of mythographical scholarship on which Shelley drew for his syncretic mythology in *Prometheus Unbound*, see Curran (33–94).

"[In]Coherence of Gothic Conventions" Eve Sedgewick identifies. For Sedgewick's

analysis of the "coherence" of Gothic formulae in actuality names an incoherent,

citational interplay of depthless "surface[s]" not reducible to "psychological

interpretation" (Sedgwick 12). Shelley's novel, then, becomes an acceleration of this

Gothic burden's eternal return of dead metaphors without ground, as the genre's hallmark

autoreferentiality exhausts itself and degenerates into bare repeatability without

determinate content to pass on to the future. As a symptom of the Gothic's warping of

history into unreadable "mnemonic relays" (Cohen, *Ideology* 17) between senseless

figures, *St. Irvyne*'s Gothic burden proliferates a mobile army of repetitions that enjoy

this symptom. Rather than the anagnorisis it simulates, the novel's concluding formula—

"Ginotti is Nempere"—re-doubles the text's prior, unexplained doubling of Ginotti

through Wolfstein. For Wolfstein's blocked reception of Ginotti's Elixir of Life refuses

mimetic models of inheritance and consigns the Wandering Jew figure to the no future of

the "hopeless eternity of horror" (252) with which the novel abruptly concludes. Further,

the enigmatic destiny to which Ginotti consigns Wolfstein is merely to fill the

"Wandering Jew" receptacle that Ginotti's death will leave empty—an inheritance that

would reenact the covenant that Ginotti previously formed with the Satanic "*superior*

being" (238). Wolfstein in effect re-cites Ginotti, who is in turn cited by Nempere.

"Character" in the text becomes a disposable placeholder to be re-occupied by an empty,

repeatable plot position that could hypothetically return *ad infinitum*.

　　　　And indeed, this plot position does return in the novel in ways that prove

unmotivated and confusing. For the novel's concluding "eternity" is not static: it

deciphers the proverbially outcasted "Wandering Jew" as a contagious leitmotif that

consumes "characters" by circulating them through liquidating predicates. The novel

designates Wolfstein as an "isolated wicked wanderer" without "a being on earth whom

he could call a friend" (183), and Ginotti also promises soon to be "destitute and a

wanderer" (186), a foreshadowing on which the plot never follows up. But oddly enough,

Eloise and Megalena's father also take on the characteristics of the Wandering Jew.

Eloise, like the "solitary wanderers" Ginotti and Wolfstein, is typecast as a "poor outcast

wanderer" (208). And Megalena's murdered father, a non-character to whom she alludes

after her escape from captivity and never brings up again, is also described by her as "a

solitary wanderer on the face of the earth" (172). That this shadowy father becomes a

one-off generated and discarded by the repetition of this subject-erasing "Wandering

Jew" writes the latter's alienation not as a substantive thematic scaffolding that unifies

these various characters under a psychological paradigm, but a hollow, recyclable plot

position that forgets its "characters."

Other regurgitated pieces of dialogue and description repeat without rhyme or

reason and vaguely tremble toward an unclear thematic texture.[107] Ginotti's dying twice,

first in a duel with Mountfort and again through a spontaneous implosion at the hands of

Satan, is already anticipated by Megalena "dying" three times: first as she is dragged

from her carriage in the shape of an "almost lifeless form" by the bandits (166), second as

Wolfstein discovers her body "stretched on the earth apparently lifeless" outside the

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[107] One substantive recycling does occur between Wolfstein's, Nempere's, and Fitzeustace's almost verbatim derisions of society's "prejudices" and their advocacy for a "union" outside of the marriage economy (188, 230, 247). Here the repetition of ideological positions between unlike characters reveals an uncomfortable intertwining of (not so) disparate ideologemes, through which Nempere's libertinism becomes the uncanny double of Fitzeustace's idealism and the Gothic burden of the later *Epipsychidion*'s "free love." However, the novel's other arbitrary acts of self-recycling suggest that this meaningful repetition is little more than a happy accident.

bandits' hideout after Cavigni's death grants them their freedom (184), and third as

Wolfstein stumbles across her body "which appeared motionless and without life" within

St. Irvyne's vaults, a death which the narrative leaves unexplained (251). The arbitrary

repetitions continue: both Ginotti and Wolfstein declare at different points in the text, "I

am not what I seem" (173, 195); Wolfstein, Ginotti, and Eloise all share the experience of

standing on the brink of a literal or figurative "terrific" precipice that "yawns" at one's

feet (191, 233, 236); both Wolfstein and Megalena compose lines of verse which they

then immediately obliterate (166, 174); Wolfstein needs to fail at poisoning Cavigni once

before Ginotti will allow him to be successful on the second attempt, a repetition that the

text repeats again in Ginotti's anecdote about "calculating the effects of poison" on a

youth who had slighted him (235); and Wolfstein and Eloise each sit upon a "projecting

mass of stone" and a "misshapen piece of ruin" respectively while awaiting the arrival of

Ginotti/Nempere (251, 227).

The text seems to cite itself for the pure sake of it. The novel's self-citational hall

of mirrors which cannibalizes its most banal details advances an erratic "allegorical"

mode that lives on by erasing referential footholds. As Cohen says of de Manian

"allegory," allegory as "the commentary of … sign on signs" forces the "deformation of

anteriority as such, and with it any schema of successionist history" (*Ideology* 106). The

novel's hastening of the genre's anti-realism thus re-wires the Gothic as an "erasing-

machine" that turns upon and deletes mimetic categories such as "character" and "theme"

that would trace the "deep structure" of which textual repetitions are usually an

expression.[108] For the novel's citations of itself that could seemingly go on indefinitely

warps the narrative ground beneath our feet into a black hole. On the one hand, it is not

unusual for a Gothic novel to take on a phantasmagoric quality by obsessively re-tracing

its steps. A text such as Radcliffe's *The Italian* (1797) returns again and again to the

scene of a character "falling at the feet" of another, and Charles Maturin's novel *Melmoth*

the Wanderer (1820) generates concentric circles of re-cited tales within tales and

recycled manuscript after manuscript until the novel ends suddenly as if from sheer

exhaustion. But on the other hand, *St. Irvyne*'s single volume, streamlined length allows

for its self-citations to stack up far more rapidly and noticeably, as if the novel is an

abstracted and abridged form of the uncanny life of the Gothic novel itself. The novel's

striking brevity casts its self-citation compulsion as an expression of finitude rather than

infinitude, as the text's repeated wasting of its initial conditions threatens to swallow the

future in a kind of entropy. Indeed, the truncated ending's "eternity," perhaps a rough

draft of the meteorological blast that will impel and consume Shelley's mythemes,

gestures less toward the promise of a future forever to-come and more toward a state of

permanent burnout.

Self-Citation as Revision

St. Irvyne's Gothic erasing-machine allegorically effaces the anteriority into

which it recedes. The text performs its erasures in part by casting its repetitions as a form

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[108] I borrow the term "erasing-machine" from Jay Lampert but use it in a more de Manian register. Lampert deploys this term as a gloss on Deleuze's reading of the later Foucault's "long-term" histories, wherein the "long-term" becomes "coextensive with forgetting" as the present mobilizes necessary "erasing-machines" to "pass over intermediaries" on its way to the "distant past" (110).

of ongoing memory loss which puts the creative capital of *re*turn and *re*petition as such

on trial. The novel's self-citational drive will stage its repetitions as re-visionings—with

"revision" naming a "seeing again" or seeing differently—that treat the re-tracing of the

past as the obliteration of memory and its retrieval mechanisms. The novel's piling up of

its unregistered self-obliterations lodged in the text builds up a deconstructive mode of

textuality that *St. Irvyne* advances into the corpus's future as one of the novel's toxic

assets. And as we will observe in the forthcoming sections, this phenomenon will pose

implications for textual studies of Shelley, which must reckon with how Shelley's printed

poems reproduce the auto-revisionary structure of his manuscripts, insofar as the later

poems come to bear undigested traces of his prior poems as if they were cancelled

ephemera of earlier drafts.

    The novel's bifurcated structure will become an alibi for the text's self-impelling

revision of revision's own pre-sets, resulting in erratic and deleterious effects on

whatever material happens to be revised. For the peremptory sentimental plot takes shape

primarily as a (self)citation or disfigured rewinding of the structurally forgotten Gothic

plot that preceded it. Contrary to Peter Finch's claim that the novel's hasty conclusion

marks Shelley's only attempt to connect the two narrative strands (36), the text in fact

goes out of its way to make both its halves cite and replay each other in odd ways. The

Eloise plot begins with the blocked movement of a carriage in a mountainous region

occupied by a bandit hideout, not unlike how the Wolfstein plot is set in motion by the

bandits' obstruction of Megalena's carriage in a similar alpine region cut-and-pasted into

Eloise's narrative. And of course, Eloise becoming psychologically colonized by the

"commanding" and "gigantic" (211) Nempere recalls how earlier in the text the

"superior" and "preter-human" (183) Ginotti implants himself in Wolfstein's consciousness as his tormenting superego (221). However, far more minute similarities between Eloise and her brother's plot emerge as if at random, and from this randomness the former's story unfolds machine-like as a second draft of the Gothic plot instead of its double: Nempere requests to meet with Eloise at an undisclosed abbey, a moment that recalls and/or anticipates Ginotti's entreaty to meet with Wolfstein at a similarly unnamed abbey near St. Irvyne; and Nempere's "intentional[]" (240) leaving of the premises at the decisive moment when Mountfort and Eloise plan her getaway from Nempere returns us to the earlier poisoning episode, in which Ginotti "intentionally turn[s] away" (181) his hitherto fixed gaze the second time that Wolfstein poisons Cavigni's wine.[109] Although these repetitious occurrences that span both plots do not take place in the same order, it feels as if we are reading the same story twice.

The sentimental plot thus emerges as a return to (or of) a shadowy anterior plot. When Eloise first (re)encounters Nempere in the bandits' hideout, the narrator cryptically describes their meeting as a scene of déjà vu, as a re-seeing of a past now remembered to be forgotten: "It appeared to [Eloise] that she had seen him before; that the deep tone of his voice was known to her; and that eye… found some counterpart in herself" (211). And furthermore, Nempere's "gaze" which remains "fixed" on Eloise (thereby repeating

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[109] The repetition of Nempere/Ginotti "intentionally" turning a blind eye to a crucial event is oddly out of place in the Eloise story. Whereas in the Wolfstein story Ginotti turns away to assert his mysterious dominion over Wolfstein's actions, in the Eloise plot Mountfort at this point had already won her freedom from Nempere at the gaming table. The added mystery of Nempere intentionally leaving the room while Mountfort plans her escape by carriage is doubly superfluous because Eloise's freedom is already a done deal between the two men and thus requires no secrecy, and a plan of rescue is not necessary after Nempere has knowingly gambled Eloise away and presumably accepted that she is no longer his property. Nempere's strange role in this episode and the return of the word "intentional" makes this episode seem like a piece of an earlier, cancelled draft that was accidently left intact.

Ginotti's fixed gaze on Wolfstein during the poisoning episode) "seemed to say to Eloise," in an expression that could be directed to the reader as much as Eloise, "We meet again" (212). Here the Eloise plot's self-reflexive syntax of "meeting again" registers that this "fated" meeting transpires belatedly according to a script that we have already read but which is paradoxically still unfolding in the interstices of Eloise's story. For if the Wolfstein plot lives on alongside rather than "before" its posterior plot that writes it "again" and repeats it differently—since the Eloise story begins suddenly about halfway through the Wolfstein plot, with the novel then shuffling back-and-forth between the two stories—then the novel's revisionary apparatus becomes a "drive" insofar as its abyssal "again" gets stuck between its disjunctive sequential and chronological trajectories.

On the one hand, the novel deploys the Eloise story as a sentimental re-citation of the Gothic plot's document of barbarism which remains in the past. But on the other hand, that the sentimental plot's secondary revision of the Wolfstein story formally lags behind the latter's "Conclusion" (251) of the novel means that the revised presses forward beyond its revision; the cited lives on past that which supposedly cites it. Moreover, Ginotti's second death serving as the "Conclusion" of the novel re-casts the Gothic plot as a twisted revision of the already revisory Eloise plot. Taking place both before and after its sentimental double, the Gothic conclusion stages a hasty counter-repetition of an apparently concluded secondary revision that revises and momentarily re-opens up Nempere's premature, off-screen death a chapter earlier. And if Ginotti's "second" death occurs chronologically before Nempere's death in Eloise's story (as Wolfstein being alluded to as already dead in Eloise's narrative suggests it does), then the novel's conclusion traces us back to the future (past) of where the sentimental narrative

had already left us. This mess of narrative echoes and aimless re-drafting entails the novel's doubling structure as mutually destructive. The random part objects and narrative elements relayed between both plots do not return with a meaningful difference but crisscross precipitately and hollow each other out.

The tortuous and impossible temporality that the novel's erratic self-revisions yield conjures the image of an Ouroboros—the snake perpetually devouring its own tail––whose self-consuming loops write past-ness itself as a prior devouring. Shelley would invoke the Ouroboros motif or the "snake / That girds Eternity" in *Laon and Cythna* (IV.32–33) in conjunction with his oft-used pattern of sleeping and awakening. The overlap of these two figures imbues the latter cycle of visionary slumber and awakening from (or into) illusion with the consequence of the Ouroborosian cycle of destruction and re-creation. Yet in *St. Irvyne* the Ouroboros is a *structure* rather than motif. *St. Irvyne* carries this structure forward into Shelley's future less as the promissory cycle of decay and renewal and more the palimpsestic violence embodied by the Wandering Jew's deathwards progressing to no death, such that the snake that re-creates itself to perpetuity still bears the marked-up body it has destroyed. Hence the bits and pieces of Gothic ephemera that surface in the sentimental plot are less returns of the repressed than the sediment of earlier drafts, or the wear and tear of previous bodies that persist with the novel's regurgitations.

The novel indexes revision's accumulative expenditures by way of its tendency to retain the initial vision as a remainder after it has been re-visioned, as if to register plot's redundant waste as the condition and receipt for the past's retooling. Recalling the text's staging and re-staging of the poisoning episode, we might read the second poisoning not

as a successful sequel to the first's failure, but as a redrafting of a deselected possibility

that remains anachronistically in a forgotten, only implicitly cancelled state. For the

novel's superfluous re-enactment of this scene becomes possible on the condition that

Ginotti's initial destruction of the poisoned goblet "was shortly forgotten" by those

around him (171). This forgetting betrays a deeper, structural amnesia that makes re-

citation possible insofar as what came before vanishes "as if it had been not" (*Triumph*

385). The novel's narration betrays inconsistencies that suggest the story writes itself

upon revisions of older material that proves no longer viable, but which persists

undeleted. After Ginotti abruptly dashes Cavigni's poisoned cup from his hands, the

narrator tells us that before this circumstance was forgotten, "Ginotti spoke not, nor

willed he to assign any reason for his extraordinary conduct" (171). But in the next

paragraph the narrator claims that Ginotti was not silent, and that the incident was not

quite as swiftly forgotten as previously stated. The narrator then tells us that "In vain the

chief required [Ginotti] to assign some reason for his late extravagant conduct … he said

it was mere accident, but with an air, which more than convinced everyone, that

something lurked behind which yet remained unknown. Such, however, was their respect

for Ginotti, that the occurrence passed almost without a comment" (172). These two

passages almost appear to be in a state of textual uncertainty. The coincidence of

incompatible material (Ginotti's silence *and* his mysterious explanation of his actions)

and a redundancy (the sentence "the occurrence passed almost without a comment"

seems to repeat the earlier line "the circumstance was shortly forgotten") implies that the

second paragraph re-writes and surmounts rather than glosses the first. Or does not

totally surmount, as the cited and pre-revised material survives in the text as an ossified

layer of a palimpsestic anteriority, a past not so much in a state of suspended animation but suspended destruction.[110] That a seemingly uneven development of revised and pre-revised bits of text stratifies the text's clean typeface suggests that the novel invites us to read it as made up of re-citations of its (un)blotted-out bits of text that were, or were not, left on the cutting room floor. What the text's self-citations/revisions ultimately recycle, then, is the erasure they effect: through revision the novel cites anteriority-as-erasure.

The novel stages its cannibalization and indigestion of its content even at the micro-level of syntax, which deploys and re-deploys its revisions as an extension and contraction of other partially erased (im)possibilities. The text often has recourse to a self-effacing grammar that divides a main and subordinate clause via the preposition "save," which becomes a lever of the text's auto-revisions. For example, when describing the atmosphere that surrounds Eloise's return to St. Irvyne, the narrator states indecisively that "nothing was heard save the melancholy shriekings of the night-bird, which soaring on the evening blast, broke the stillness of the scene" (208). And a few pages later, the narrator will sketch a scene of a "rugged and desolate heath … its monotonous solitude unbroken, save by the low and barren rocks which rose occasionally from its surface" (213). Finally, one of Wolfstein's desultory wanderings evokes a "melancholy stillness, uninterrupted save by these concomitants of gloom" (222). At the level of content, the syntactical *clinamen* that these sentences perform does not amount to much. But at the formal level, the caesura "save" becomes an engine of second thoughts which retroactively implants an uncertain tentativeness in what came first: the seemingly

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[110] "Palimpsest" here denotes the etymological sense of "scrapped again." Palimpsestic "scrapping" is thus a circular mechanism that both erases surfaces and renders those same surfaces reusable on the condition of their being "scrapped" (*OED* 1).

unignorable "shriekings of the night-birds" that follow the "save" puts under erasure the initial stance that "nothing was heard," and the incontrovertible descriptor "unbroken" can no longer hold after the "save" contradicts and revises it by way of the "low and barren rocks" which disturb, and must have always disturbed, the former landscape's minimalistic clarity. In these examples, the indecisive "save" introduces an incompatibility between its two poles, whereby the right-side redacts its left-side by disclosing retroactively some literary white noise that germinates within and erases the initial absence. Thus the "stillness" is revised by the concomitants of gloom, the "nothing" is re-written by the birds' Gothic soundscape. The grammar of "save" instances revision's stalled movement. The novel's revision compulsion moves backwards and forwards over its own traces as it feeds on the latent possibilities it had discounted and preemptively effaced, possibilities which propel the text forward by pressuring it to keep disposing and rebuilding its own provisional property.

The novel's auto-immunitary feeding on its forgotten pasts exerts a kind of "archiviolithic" force that, for Derrida, names the "aggression drive" with which the archive self-destructively effaces both what it stockpiles and the paper trail of its effacements (*Archive Fever* 11). Yet *St. Irvyne*'s archiviolithic expenditure does not hide the facticity of its own forgetting, which becomes sedimented in the text's (in)visible cancellations. What is forgotten is, as *The Triumph* will put it, "more than half-erased" rather than erased absolutely. The text's self-destructive revisions—the sentimental narrative's unconscious revisioning of its Gothic prehistory, the purloined Gothic genera emptied of provenance, the recycled predicates that multiply occluded passageways between characters and scenes—blur the line between remembering and forgetting to the

extent that revision loses track of the past it was re-tracing. For if the text repeats the past

not because it is trying to rectify something that went wrong but because it cannot

remember having written that past in the first place, then self-citation begins to resemble

a recurring fugue state. Thus, the novel can only register the inexplicable leap from the

Gothic narrative *in medias res* to the Eloise story's cold opening, which is then swiftly

"forgot[ten]" along with the "horrors" that had "preceded her return to St. Irvyne" (209),

via the non-phenomenal blackout of the two missing chapters whose erasure sketches

their (non)relation. The text's erasing-machine, with its mobilizing of the sentimental

narrative as an erasure of its Gothic past, obliterates the interregnum between the

repetition and the past it dis-remembers. We might recall Benjamin's figure of the

gambler whose automatic throws of the dice "'[give] short shrift to the weighty past on

which work bases itself.'" The gambler's "*coup*" signals a gesture "devoid of substance"

because "it has no connection with the preceding gesture for the very reason that it

repeats that gesture exactly" (*Illuminations* 177).[111] Like the Benjaminian *coup*'s vicious

model of repetition whereby the repeated is remembered-as-erased and that which repeats

becomes "devoid of substance," revision has no history proper and is unable to hold onto

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[111] Here Benjamin cites "Alain" (a pseudonym for the French philosopher Émile-Augustus Chartier) on gambling to draw a comparison between the automatic gestures of the gamer and those of the industrial labourer. For Benjamin's Alain, "'It is inherent in the concept of gambling … that no game is dependent on the preceding one. Gambling cares nothing for any secured position. … It takes no account of winnings gained earlier, and in this it differs from work.'" For Benjamin, the "work" of industrial wage labour, with its automatized gestures spurred by the automatic jolts of the machines, imbibes the "futility, emptiness, [and] inability to complete something" inherent to gambling without the latter's "touch of adventure" (177). Wage labour and gambling, connected by the automatic gestures of the worker at the machine and slate-wiping "coup" at the gaming table, model a surpassingly grim mode of repetition. Benjamin's reading of gambling as pure repetition without difference provides a much more nihilistic account of this Gothic pastime and darkens the more productive understanding of gambling as a figure for radical speculation that madly attempts to map a set of future values beyond what is given. For more on gambling's revolutionary implications, see Rajan's "Gambling, Alchemy, Speculation: Godwin's Critique of Pure Reason in *St. Leon*" in *Romantic Narrative*, and Jared M. McGeough's "Gambling, Alchemy, and Anarchy in *St. Leon*," in *Romantic Anarche*.

anything tangible it can count as having stored for the future. This model of memory and repetition puts a darker twist on what Christopher Bundock, in the context of Shelley's *Hellas*, describes as the Shelleyan "oscillation between memory and forgetting," which yields "'the memory of music fled' ["Hymn" 10]," a recollection of forgetfulness. Therefore "the ostensible continuity of experience figures as a strange kind of abridgment, as if something is always already missing" (Bundock, *Prophecy* 131).

Tracing Erasures

St. Irvyne's sedimented forgettings are deposited in Shelley's future texts as the (inter)textual structure of deleted tracks and deletions of tracks that, as we will see, lead the followers of these traces into oblivion. This process takes its "dark obliterating course" (*Alastor* 329) through Shelley's corpus into the well-known self-effacing figures of *The Triumph*. *The Triumph*'s self-generative triumphal pageant casts "New figures on [history's] false and fragile glass / As the old faded" (247–8) in what Joel Faflak describes as the poem's cultural death drive transforming "history into a ceaselessly revisionary practice, in which everything in the text becomes at once the product and the source of a deeply inaccessible process" (72). This "inaccessible process" spawning a "cognition that feeds on its history" (Faflak 73), however, feeds on Shelley's self-citational process from the Gothic juvenilia onward, of whose more diffuse mechanics *The Triumph*'s self-ungrounding figures represent a shorthanded form. Put differently, *St. Irvyne*'s erasing-machine is re-cited and condensed in *The Triumph* as involuted images that denote literally the erasing of surfaces and traces. One example is Rousseau's image of his cognitive double-reset via the shape all light and its "bright Nepenthe" (line 359):

And suddenly my brain became as sand

Where the first wave had more than half erased
The track of deer on desert Labrador
Whilst the empty wolf from which they fled amazed

Leaves his stamp visibly upon the shore
Until the second bursts—so on my sight
Burst a new vision never seen before.— (405–11)

This image cites and abridges into an image *St. Irvyne*'s recursive logic. "[V]ision"'s world-inaugurating "Burst" falls back into the disorienting interchange between a repetitious "second [burst]" on the heels of a "first," similarly atrophic "wave." This "new vision" is then caught in a feedback loop between eroding and already eroded traces. Yet *The Triumph*'s "new vision" also betrays its wasted paper trail as a recursive pursuit—hence the "empty" or liquidated desiring wolf—of this a priori erasure, an "empty[ing]" fallback into leads already blotted out.[112]

The passage's "empty wolf" leaves behind an eroded "stamp" pointing back to the prior tracks "more than half erased" of *The Triumph*'s emergence from Shelley's other cancelled tracks. Figures of pursuit inform many of Shelley's texts. But *St. Irvyne*'s mindless circuit of self-citations tracing dead ends between its two plots that unconsciously chase and pre-empt each other channel such pursuits into self-obliterating circles. Such cancelled tracks emerge in Act II of *Prometheus Unbound* and its involuted progression through Asia's and Panthea's half-remembered and "forgotten" dreams, which depict the following of traces that are going extinct: Prometheus's "voice, whose

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[112] The wolf's emptiness is perhaps less an image evoking predatory desire and more a symptom of the pre-emptying drive toward desire for desire's sake that fascinates Shelley. Such a desire appears in *Alastor*'s Augustanian epigraph and likewise pushes that poem's "vacant" Poet on his "obliterating course" through the "waste[d]" topographies of ruined cities and decaying nature.

accents lingered ere they died / Like footsteps of far melody" (II.88–89), the "moving clouds" that "vanished by" on which is written "*Follow, O follow!*" (II.151–3), plants "stamped as with a withering fire" (155), and the wind's "faint sounds, like the farewell of ghosts" saying "*O, follow, follow*" (II.158–9). *The Triumph* recapitulates this forward look toward the vanishing ground of the desiring look itself in the poem's truncated ending. Rousseau's "look" toward the chariot "which had now rolled / Onward, as if that look must be the last," terminates in the final suspended two words "fold / Of" (lines 545–8). The object-less genitive opens "onward" not to futurity necessarily, but to a "fold" that bends backward the indeterminate end of "Shelley" onto a blank past that recurs not to infinity but "as if" for the "last" time. Yet the poem's folding back onto an unseen oblivion in fact circles back to *St. Irvyne*, whose peremptory termination prefigures the last-ness for which *The Triumph* would come to stand in Shelley's corpus.

The Triumph's following of *Prometheus Unbound*'s echoes of dissolving traces does not advance a future-oriented evolution from the earlier poem to the final one, but rather *St. Irvyne*'s archaeological pullback into the "chaos of a cyclic poem" through which Shelley's texts are borne back ceaselessly into the extinctions of their forgotten predecessors. For Asia's and Panthea's receding dreams follow in advance where Rousseau's and the narrator's pursuit of "the ghost of a forgotten form of sleep" (428) will have gone. Rousseau's tracking of his blotted-out memory charts a circular trajectory, as he seeks to (re)discover "whence I came" (398) and arrives at the "new Vision" of history's triumphal car at which the narrator has already arrived and for whose explanation he questions Rousseau in the first place. But already in *Prometheus Unbound* Panthea's dream she "remembers not" takes "shape" as the imperative "follow, follow!"

that leads her back into her forgotten vision, which merely reiterates the embodied

dream's command to "follow." This regression into a past vision that repeats the terms

that spurred its remembering retroactively "Fill[s]" Asia's proto-Rousseauvian "forgotten

sleep" with a re-vision of the scene of Asia's attempt to read in Panthea's eyes the initial

lost dream (II.ii.41). The poem's track toward Jupiter's fall and Prometheus's freedom

here becomes caught in a time loop of doubling visions that, especially with Asia's

dream, recessively disclose what *The Last Man* called a "former revelation."

     Prometheus Unbound follows recursive traces that not only lead in circles but are

already traced by the furrows of *Laon and Cythna*'s "path of light" deposited by the

dead. For even *Laon and Cythna*'s eternal return of this path from the "shadowy grave"

(I.288) in a negative dialectic proves imprinted by *St. Irvyne*'s Ouroborosian, self-

cancelling logic. The poem's narrator, after "the last hope of trampled France had failed,"

is guided by a "fair Shape" to an Elysian temple to hear the narrative of the "return[ing]"

spirits of Laon and Cythna (I.1, 145, 519). Laon and Cythna's narrative charts a "path of

light" they "pour" from "Hope's immortal urn" (I.521) to help the narrator glean hope

from hope's revolutionary wreck. Yet Laon's narrative of the Greek revolution's failure,

and his and Cythna's immolation, traces the same course of revolutionary defeat and

renewed hope that the narrator had trod. For all three are led by a "bright Shape" to the

same "Temple of the Spirit" to be deposited in the temple's utopian archive (XI.200,

366). And that Laon's story builds toward and terminates in his and Cythna's arrival and

inscription in this temple to which the narrator was previously led betrays the same

suicidal doubling that stalls *Prometheus Unbound*'s dreams and truncates *The Triumph*.

In an anticipation of how *The Triumph* will abort itself once Rousseau's vision repeats

and catches up to the narrator's present, *Laon and Cythna*'s "path of light" leads us in a self-voiding circle that cannot narrate a future after this path's re-citation. This path cannot press beyond the moment of the weak messianic power's recurrence and as if exhausts itself in the very process of mining hope from the re-tracing of hope's wreck.

De Man identifies in *The Triumph* this "self-receding" movement of questions answering prior questions and visions doubling previous visions that motivates an unreadable process of "effacing and of forgetting" ("Shelley Disfigured" 98). However, reading Shelley's corpus through *St. Irvyne* limns this "self-receding" process as not just a trajectory programmed into Shelley's other texts but also as an intertextual drift between his texts. Thus, these texts' successive repetitions of prior texts' self-receding arcs amass a more amorphous "inaccessible process" (Faflak 73) through which each text can be seen as having retroactively preempted its forbear. Shelley's corpus affords many such instances in which a scene or trope in one poem becomes deposited in the next and forestalls that later poem's progress. *Laon and Cythna* stages a "burst" of "two visions," with the second vision "dispers[ing]" the first whose status as dream Laon "know[s] not yet" and after which Laon "could wake and weep" (III.209, 213, 243). As we observed, this visionary "burst" in which one vision dispels the other as if prearranges the more tangled and violent re-bursting of *The Triumph*'s "new vision" constituted not on the dispersal but erasure of a vision prior. *Alastor*'s "Two starry eyes, hung in the gloom of thought" (490) and "two lessening points of light alone / Gleam[ing] through the darkness" (654–5) prefigure Laon's and Cythna's first appearances as "two glittering lights" like "Small serpent eyes" (I.496, 498) and would seem to predetermine *Laon and Cythna*'s circularity via the repetitious and self-wasting quest on which *Alastor*'s

visionary "points of light" spur the Poet. And Prometheus's stalled attempts to recall and

revoke his forgotten "curse" on Jupiter while "*bound to the Precipice*" allegorizes

Prometheus Unbound's struggle to remember and disable its own prehistory in the

vengeful mire of *Zastrozzi*. For *Zastrozzi*—commencing with Verezzi enchained to a

rock by Zastrozzi and concluding with Zastrozzi's death on a torture rack while relishing

in his "exulting revenge" (156)—crudely presages the chained and tortured Prometheus.

The re-citation of this imprisonment motif in *Prometheus Unbound* encrypts within the

later poem the early novel's unreflective, closed circuit of revenge and an inexorable

oppressor/oppressed complex foreclosed of "pity" and resolution. Prometheus does

concede *Zastrozzi*'s foreclosed forgiveness to Jupiter in a gesture that initiates the poem's

escape from the ressentiment of the oppressor/oppressed antagonism. But that

Prometheus cannot ratify this forgiveness until he calls Jupiter's image from the archive

to re-cite his curse bespeaks a lag in the poem's action. For Prometheus's stalled

recollection betrays a clunky re-citation and attempted exorcism of *Zastrozzi*'s toxic

assets transposed onto Prometheus's "curse" (and which arguably persists beyond

Prometheus's pity via Demogorgon's Jovian overthrow of Jove).[113]

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[113] Another example of this logic of intertextual preemption occurs between the autobiographical portraits "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty" and *Laon and Cythna*'s opening dedication to Mary Shelley. Shelley's account of himself "shriek[ing], and clasp[ing] my hands in ecstasy!" as Beauty's "shadow" falls on him (59–60) in the "Hymn" recurs in *Laon and Cythna*'s dedication. While at university Shelley recalls hearing "voices" from the "near school-room" that consolidate into "one echo" relaying "the grating strife of tyrants and foes," a revelatory experience after which Shelley "clasp[s]" his hands and, as in the "Hymn," dedicates himself to a philosophical and political mission (*LC* 28–36). The migration of the "Hymn"'s visionary idiom and its revelatory "shadow" into *Laon and Cythna*'s more prosaic context of school-room "voices" expected to bear an equally revelatory load betrays an awkwardness and relays a glitch in the intertextual transmission of Shelley's idealism into his politics. This stilted recurrence of his idealism's primal scene again betrays not Shelley's organic development of this epiphanic topos but his seizure by this citational structure motivating its recurrence.

These examples demonstrate that this intertextual process of self-cancelling and preemption also entails a successive acceleration of earlier texts by the later ones. That is, in retroactively preempting a text to come, the earlier text will have caused its logic to overtake the later text and accelerate within it.[114] Thus *Laon and Cythna*'s Ouroborosian cycle of hope's re-emergence from within defeat precipitates the manic and uncontrolled creative destruction of *The Triumph*'s runaway car that runs away with the poem. A similar acceleration obtains in *Hellas*'s re-citing of *Prometheus Unbound*'s re-citing of Jupiter's shadow from the necro-archive. Prometheus's laboured re-citation of his curse that occupies one segment of the poem absorbs almost the entirety of *Hellas*. Much of *Hellas*'s action consists of Mahmud summoning the Wandering Jew Ahasuerus to interpret Mahmud's forgotten dream, which "leav[es] no figure upon memory's glass" (131). Ahasuerus only deciphers Mahmud's dream by "cit[ing]" the "Phantom" of Mahomet the Second as "the ghost of [Mahmud's] forgotten dream" (842), just as the re-citation of Prometheus's forgotten curse is displaced onto a simulacrum of Jove. The displacement of Mahmud's "ghost of a forgotten form of sleep" onto this shadow from the archive gathers the "Past" as something "like an Incarnation / Of the To-come" (852–4). *Hellas*'s "To-come" thus becomes absorbed into an escalation of the "Past" of *Prometheus*'s tortuous and impeded anamnesis.

Prometheus Unbound's frustrated anamnesis accelerates and consumes *Hellas*, as the poem's off-stage world-historical agon between the Ottomans and Greeks recedes into citations of the dead that each re-confirm that "The Future must become the Past"

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[114] Incidentally, *Laon and Cythna*'s portrait of reactionary zealotry in the tenth canto, in which cries of "Oromaze, and Christ, and Mahomet, / Moses, and Buddha, Zerdusht, and Brahm, and Foh, / A tumult of strange names, which never met / Before" enraptures the mob (271–4), prefigures cursorily the learned syncretism that would govern *Prometheus Unbound*.

(924). And indeed, *Hellas*'s receding future drifts not only into a re-citation of

Prometheus Unbound's convoluted recollections of its "forgotten dream[s]" and words,

but also into the earlier *Queen Mab*'s concluding vision of a renovated earth proceeding

from the build-up of "germs of promise" "load[ed]" by the "generations of the earth /

Go[ne] to the grave" (*QM* V.1–2, 9). For *Hellas* concludes with a hasty and curtailed

rendition of *Queen Mab*'s Virgillian vision in which "The lion now forgets to thirst for

blood" and dwells "beside the dreadless kid" (*QM* VIII.124, 126). *Hellas* similarly

foretells "The world's great age begin[ning] anew" as a "brighter Hellas" springs from

Islam's ruins, another Ouroborosian return of the future from the past that Mahomet

tropes as "the seed / Unfold[ing] itself even in the shape of that / Which gathers birth in

its decay" (889–91). What Shelley in his notes to the poem calls the "excuse" of *Hellas*'s

final "indistinct and obscure" (*SPP* 463–4) vision of course owes its perfunctoriness to

the uncertain outcome of the ongoing Greek-Ottoman conflict. But *Hellas*'s undigested

prophecy and its shaky future also proves embedded and "gather[ed]" archaeologically

within *Queen Mab*'s past.[115] *Queen Mab* also cites Ahasuerus and afterwards pre-empts

the corpus's future ghost citings by declaring that it will "not call the ghost of ages gone /

To unfold the frightful secrets of [the future's] lore" (VIII.42–43). Similar to Marx's

notion that the spirit of revolution cannot make the old revolution's "ghost walk again,"

this early Shelley projects genuine revolution as a poetry "from the future" finally

wrested from all ghostly vestiges of the past ("Eighteenth Brumaire" 596–7). *Prometheus*

Unbound and *Hellas* are thus impelled by a logic of re-citation that Shelley's first world-

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[115] Shelley's note on *Hellas*'s final vision more explicitly ties the poem to *Queen Mab*. In his note Shelley situates *Hellas*'s premonitions within the prophetic tradition of Isaiah and Virgil that *Queen Mab* had imbibed, and cites the "lion shall lie down with the lamb" mytheme that Shelley had deployed in the earlier poem (*SPP* 464).

historical poem had already rendered outmoded. *Prometheus Unbound* and *Hellas* forget *Queen Mab* and in doing so are accelerated by what the earlier poem had exhausted (just as *Prometheus Unbound* has literally forgotten its descent from *Zastrozzi*'s vengeance). *Prometheus Unbound* and *Hellas*'s re-cited ghosts thus thicken into a Gothic encrustation that overdetermines Shelley's capacity to (un)think futurity.

The corpus's thematic gatherings of birth from within decay thus become tangled up with Shelley's intertextual build-up of forgotten prehistories that as if "Rule the present from the past" (*Hellas* 701). *Prometheus Unbound* dramatizes this sedimentation of the Gothic's spectral archive in its operatic fourth act. The fourth act's visionary excavation of "cancelled" deposits of "beaks of ships," "wrecks … of many a city vast," and Gothic "uncouth skeletons" "abolished" by a "deluge" or "comet" (*PU*, IV, lines 289, 296, 299, 315–7) geologizes Act I's ghostly archive of "shadows of all forms that think and live" (I.198) and discloses the back-looping textuality that stratifies Shelley's corpus. For the word "cancelled"—a printing term referring to the striking out of something written, or the suppression of a printed page so that it can be re-worked and re-printed—overlays compositional processes of writing and revision onto the prehistoric geological upheavals that, as we saw in the last chapter, contemporary geologists such as John Whitehurst, William Smith, and James Parkinson argued had archived the past's ruins for the benefit of a fossil-fueled future.[116] Consequently, the fourth Act's canceled cycles point to the aftermath of what Whitehurst identified as a movement of terranean and subterranean disasters occurring "anterior to history" (86). These prehistorical extinctions then yield to the future *Prometheus Unbound*'s "infinite mine" (IV, line 280)

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[116] See Heringman's *Romantic Rocks* (176–90).

of erased worlds turned natural resources. *Prometheus Unbound*'s apocalyptic finale secretes a dark geological core that produces futurity from the recapitulation of history's cancelled cyclic poem. But this geology also symptomatically figures the back-loop through which the corpus since *St. Irvyne* has been re-citing itself from Shelley's growing stratigraphy of cancelled texts.

The Triumph's recursive momentum in both structure and imagery re-cites *Prometheus Unbound*'s utopian mining of extinctions as the self-cannibalizing expenditure it always was, except that its apocalyptic mood could not register it as such. However, Shelley's last poem takes shape not only upon the acceleration of *Prometheus Unbound*'s secreted geology, but upon the occluded memory of *St. Irvyne* as well. *The Triumph*'s opening scene in a "green Apennine" at dawn pictures the Shelleyan narrator "Stretched … beneath the hoary stem" of a chestnut tree (24–26). This pastoralism then gives way to a "strange trance" that frames the narrator's foregoing "Vision" as facilitated by a bizarre déjà vu: the poem's pre-visionary *mise-en-scene* recedes into the *mise-en-abyme* of a prior "dawn," as the narrator realizes that he "had felt the freshness of that dawn, / Bathed in the same cold dew my brow and hair / And sate as thus upon that slope of lawn / Under the self-same bough" (34–37). The narrator's sense of the present as a repetition of an event barely remembered extends to Rousseau's memory-erasing "oblivious spell" (331) while dozing off in a grove before his visionary encounter with the shape all light. The narrator's and Rousseau's backward looking "dawn[s]" recall and forget Ginotti's Gothicized (in)version of this sequence. For Ginotti relates to Wolfstein his own "forgetful" slumber "under a jutting projection of [a] tree" preparatory to his metaphysical vision of a "beautiful being" (236–7), a vision that leads him to

discover the secret of immortal life. It is as if Shelley had never left *St. Irvyne*, and as if *The Triumph*'s vision is propelled by its remembered forgetting of Ginotti's more explicitly gothic reverie. Ginotti's vision of the "beautiful being" suddenly turned into a monstrosity scarred by "the thunderbolts of God" (237) is the "photographic negative" of *The Triumph*'s "shape all light" and its giving way to the nightmarish triumphal pageant. However, Ginotti's vision also presages inchoately *Alastor*'s "veiled maid" (151) who drives the Poet onward in his suicidal quest; *Epipsychidion*'s "Being" (190) whom the narrator envisions in his "youth's dawn" (line 192) and who dissolves into "the dreary cone of our life's shade" (line 228); and Panthea's dreamscape in *Prometheus Unbound* wherein the "flower-infolding buds"'s rejuvenation of a "lightning blasted" tree is interrupted by a sudden destructive "wind … wrinkling the earth with frost" (II.i.135–7).

This Shelleyan motif of an angelic figure's disastrous inversion or traumatizing disappearance accrues greater complexity as it is re-cited until the end of his corpus. However, I suggest that the figure's intensifying nuance and mystery harbours an inverse movement of accelerating obscurity and confusion that charts a progressive disarticulation of this once straightforward Gothic trope.[117] This trope's semantic disarticulation in turn encrypts the corpus's own disarticulation within this figuration of the repeated receding and return of a certain idealism. Notably, *Laon and Cythna* associates the visionary movement of sleeping and waking with the Ouroboros's re-creation from destruction, and thus imbues the shape all light's entwinement of idealism and bitter realism with the corpus's programmatic return of futures from wasted pasts.

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[117] And considering how Ginotti's vision recycles *The Wandering Jew*'s visionary scene of an angel-turned-demon, it is disarming to think that *The Triumph*'s critically tantalizing "shape all light" repeats what had earlier been a conventional scene of Satanic temptation, in which the seraph's reversion into a Satanic form conveys a Christian warning against the darkness concealed in the light.

From the vantage point of *The Triumph*, the cyclical future of the shape's illusion

retroactively plots an accelerating through line within its eternal recurrence—an

ateleological yet inexorable trajectory that recalls Shelley's figure of the "stream of fate,

regular and irresistible, and growing at once darker and swifter in [its] progress" in his

review of Godwin's *Mandeville* ("Review" 302). This Gothic "stream of fate," which

recalls the many blasts and whirlwinds that mark the trajectories of Shelley's poems as

driven by a singular "inaccessible process," writes large across his oeuvre what Timothy

Morton identifies as Shelley's penchant for the rhetorical technique *obscurum per*

obscures, which is to "describ[e] something in terms of something less clear" ("Romantic

Disaster" n.p.). But the seemingly exit-less chain of visions opening onto opaquer

visions, and of the shape's (d)evolution into greater unreadability, does not quite yield

disaster *ad infinitum*, as Morton suggests. Rather the shapes all light and their pseudo-

revelation's accelerative cyphering culminates in *The Triumph*'s "fold." And as if

prefigured by *St. Irvyne*'s breakdown, this fold's backward pull aligns with an abrupt

exhaustion.

Shelley's Cyclic Poem

De Man remarks offhandedly that *The Triumph*'s recursive structure "dissolves

what started out to be, like *Alastor*, *Epipsychidion*, or even *Prometheus Unbound*, a quest

(or, like *Adonais*, an elegy) to replace it by something quite different" ("Shelley

Disfigured" 98). But he misses how *The Triumph*'s dissolutions prove more rather than

less typical of Shelley's texts, and how *The Triumph*'s "differen[ce]" from Shelley's

other texts is not no relation at all but a nonrelation of "forgetting and of effacing" seeded

by the early Gothic works. De Man's missed encounter with Shelley's self-recapitulating corpus is already the corpus's perpetual missed encounter with its cyclical devouring of extinct pasts from Shelley's prior texts. Once again *St. Irvyne* serves as a dark prehistory that feeds the later texts' erasing-machines. For the novel dismembers not only its own progress but its intertextual sources' "quest[s]" and thereby shadows the future of Shelley's engagements with history with what is ostensibly a Gothic hyper-textualism. For *St. Irvyne* chronicles a deeper, other past within its automated past of the Gothic conventions it cannibalizes: the past of Shelley's oeuvre which the novel cites piecemeal as labelled and unlabeled epigraphs, recycled plot elements, philosophical positions that he has not yet worked through, and recurring figures such as the Wandering Jew. I call the past of Shelley's corpus a "deeper" anteriority because the novel cites this past in such a way that it reappears as lost material that juts out unaccountably. Shelley's ciphering of his past from the beginning of his career folds any *hors-texte* inside, such that history itself gets swept up into Shelley's textual history, re-calibrated and grasped as the "single catastrophe" of a cyclic poem.

"Revenge" appears in the novel as such an outside incestuously folded inside. For "revenge" enters the text conspicuously as an affect in excess of its object. From the beginning the novel attaches to Wolfstein hysterical Gothic paraphernalia, such as "dark and deliberate revenge," "revenge and disappointed love," and "insidious and malignant revenge," to make manifest his murderous intentions toward Cavigni for the latter's amorous designs upon Megalena (170, 174, 181). "Revenge," however—what Shelley would later call in the *Defence* a Gothic throwback to the practices of a "semi-barbarous age" (*SPP* 282)—appears peremptorily and is unmotivated by the exigencies of plot.

Wolfstein's short-lived drive for revenge emerges apropos of nothing, since at this point

Cavigni has only professed his illicit love for Megalena and has not personally done any

harm to her (notwithstanding the assault on her carriage and her imprisonment, which

were carried out by the other bandits rather than Cavigni himself). This paroxysm of

"Revenge" thus enters the text noticeably unanchored and without proper narrative

scaffolding. It functions less as a piece of narrative machinery than a broken *mémoire*

involontaire of Shelley's earlier gothic novel *Zastrozzi*, a text whose megalomaniacal

obsession with revenge—a word that appears in the novel forty-five times—*St. Irvyne*

dis-remembers in a "more than half erased" form. Though this earlier novel also boasts

intensive recycling of Gothic tropes, its plot and structure subscribe to a more mimetic

logic. The monomania with which the novel's villains Zastrozzi and Mathilda pursue

their revenge against the oblivious Verezzi and his betrothed Julia races the plot forward

toward the death of its anti-hero Zastrozzi without getting lost in abandoned subplots and

textual repetitions. *St. Irvyne* does, of course, engage in a dialogue with its Gothic

precursor in certain instances, namely through Shelley's attempt to revisit and further

work through the incoherencies of Promethean transgression with which he first

experimented by way of the megalomaniacal Zastrozzi and then with the

Wolfstein/Ginotti antagonism (Rajan *Romantic Narrative* 54). But before *Zastrozzi*'s

experimental forms descend to a text like *Prometheus Unbound* they pass through *St.*

Irvyne and are there hollowed out into toxic assets. Within *St. Irvyne*, Zastrozzi's

Promethean rebelliousness and atheism are dis-remembered in Ginotti's discarded

alchemy plot and his becoming the eternally damned Wandering Jew whose giant form,

as we will see, cannot pass on to the future in any genetic sense. And thus, *Zastrozzi*'s

signified revenge is re-cited as the later novel's excessive signifier—"revenge" without adequate object. *Zastrozzi*'s re-citation as *St. Irvyne* allegorically stages the erasure of the earlier novel by consuming *Zastrozzi*'s signified, its mimetic fidelity to revenge as genre and "theme."

That this illegible remainder of the former novel turns up as unintegrated, "intractable material" suggests a botched transmission not reducible to familiar structures of intertextuality and textual inheritance. I borrow the phrase "intractable material" from T. S. Eliot's essay "Hamlet and His Problems," in which Eliot deems *Hamlet* an "artistic failure" because of William Shakespeare's awkward superimposition of his innovations upon the lost precursor *Hamlet*s' "cruder material" and the playwright's inability to fully transmute this grosser though "intractable material" into potable gold (57, 56). Such "intractable material" names defunct aesthetic content that contraindicates its functionality in the present but which the present text, counterintuitively, cannot leave behind. And like a Darwinian rudimentary organ, it crystallizes into an inert cipher that encrypts its descent from shadowy, extinct contexts. As in *St. Irvyne,* the hackneyed "revenge plot" becomes an avatar of *Hamlet*'s state as the palimpsestic chaos of a cyclic poem. "Revenge" in both these texts becomes a toxic asset of older aesthetic ideologies; it locks composition's past and future within a recursive blood-feud whose cyclic re-citation of deformed pasts threatens to foreclose the present and future. "Intractable material" as a form of textuality, then, gestures toward a dangerous coincidence of a text with its predecessor(s), with the "intractable" remainders archiving unintelligible memories of the text's forgotten life as its forbear. In other words, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is not simply part of a line of inheritance of a series of lost, misremembered *Hamlet*s, but

also *is* that lost series. Likewise, *St. Irvyne is* in part its own folding back upon, or incorporation of, *Zastrozzi*'s cancelled reserves.

Wolfstein's out-of-place revenge acts out blindly pieces of a lost reserve accrued by Shelley's earlier revenge driven poems, mostly from Shelley's earlier *Victor and Cazire* volume, which was published in 1810 but quickly withdrawn.[118] These poems include "Revenge," the plagiarized "Saint Edmond's Eve," "Fragment, or The Triumph of Conscience," "Ghasta; or, The Avenging Demon!!!," *The Wandering Jew*, and the "Irishman's Song," which concludes with Ireland's warrior "ghosts" crying out for "vengeance!" (line 16). Whereas for Eliot Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is a "stratification" and "represents the efforts of a series of men, each making what he could out of the work of his predecessors" (56), *St. Irvyne* takes its mangled shape as the latest superimposition upon the foreign scripts of retroactively generated anonymous hands. The novel's palimpsestic "series of men" thus boils down to a series of sedimented "Shelleys" whom Shelley self-recycles. The intractable material of these past Shelleys bespeaks their fossilization into "cancelled cycles" into whose forgotten furrows the novel's memory recedes. Indeed, the caesural "*or*" in the novel's title between the more sentimental *St. Irvyne* and the Gothic *Rosicrucian* signals a forgetful chiasmus whereby alternate or contradictory "Shelleys" (here figured by the divided text's two plots) do not coexist as viable pathways toward different futures, but as unknowing repetitions of their erased other whom they cannot touch. Such an "or" also appears in the title *Alastor; or, The*

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[118] The volume was withdrawn after Shelley's publisher Stockdale learned that the volume's "Saint Edmond's Eve" was a plagiarism of Matthew Lewis's poem "The Black Canon of Elmham" from Lewis's *Tales of Terror*. Most of the copies of the volume were destroyed and only rediscovered in 1898 (*CP:* I, 5). As Reiman and Fraistat suggest, Shelley's inclusion of the plagiarized "Saint Edmond's Eve," along with the other plagiarisms in a collection with the title *Original Poetry*, could not have been accidental.

Spirit of Solitude and motivates that poem's dis-remembering of its disparate Shelleys

with non-overlapping ideologies, namely the idealistic Shelleyan Poet, the divided

Preface writer(s?) who both sanctions and censures the Poet's idealism, and the Narrator

whose sympathies with the Poet he summons are ambivalent.[119] Like *St. Irvyne*, *Alastor*

stages an involuted "quest" through the mangled tracks of a palimpsest that, like the

confused "documents" of Foucault's Nietzschean "genealogy," "ha[s] been scratched

over and recopied many times" ("Nietzsche" 139). The poem's traces of apparently

multiple authors gone missing are registered symptomatically by the wiped-out cities of

"Athens, and Tyre, and Balbec, and the waste / Where stood Jerusalem" (lines 109–10)

that striate the Poet's path with broken names rather than sites of origin, prompting in the

Poet not anamnesis but repeated "vacan[cies]" (126, 191, 201).

  As a poem pathologically concerned with waste and wasting, *Alastor*'s stratified

Shelleys also surface as remainders of prior Shelley texts lodged into the poem as

deformed rudimentary organs. Ginotti's kitschy "gigantic skeleton" turns up in *Alastor* as

the "colossal Skeleton" (611). Further, the poem's re-casting of Ginotti's skeleton as a

catachresis for the force that "guid[es]" the "storm of death" (609, 612) that will come to

run through the corpus momentarily installs *St. Irvyne*'s waste as the later poems' evil

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[119] See Rajan's *Romantic Narrative* (3). The "or" in the title registers the poem's and Preface's irreconcilable attitudes toward its subject matter. The "or" does not function as a glossing of the first title, since "*The Spirit of Solitude*" exhibits a more sympathetic engagement—or at worst a more delicate criticism of—the Poet than *Alastor*'s mythological avenging daemon or "evil genius," which anticipates the Preface writer's censure of the Poet's "self-centered seclusion" that is "avenged by the furies of an irresistible passion" (*SPP* 112). Furthermore, the antagonism at work in the title between a dark, retributive mythology and a more romantic, sentimental poetry reproduces itself in the double-voiced, contradictory preface of which much commentary has taken note. *Alastor* seems a censure by the "actual men" whose pragmatic "instruction" the Preface writer deems the social mission of poetry, whereas *The Spirit of Solitude* apparently diverges from this utilitarian path and more so recuperates the Poet as a "luminar[y] of the world" whose "generous error" exalts him beyond the "unforseeing multitudes" whom the Preface writer just finished championing (112–3).

genius. Also striking is how *Zastrozzi*'s revenge plot, in which Zastrozzi manipulates Verezzi from the shadows and orchestrates the latter's suicide, appears as a shorthand in the *Alastor* preface in the suggestion that the Poet's misanthropic idealism is "avenged by the furies of an irresistible passion pursuing him to speedy ruin" (*SPP* 73). However, *Alastor*'s revenge is not quite that of *Zastrozzi* but instead traces back to *Zastrozzi* as it is deformed by *St. Irvyne*. For as in the latter novel, the *Alastor* preface's "avenging" idiom has no equivalent in the poem proper and proves too severe to find a place in the Narrator's ambivalent sympathy toward the Poet.

Finally, the *Alastor* volume (1816) itself churns up a mangled *Queen Mab* as the revised and massively truncated *Daemon of the World: A Fragment*. The *Alastor* volume curtails *Queen Mab*'s weighty nine cantos into what *Blackwood's Edinburgh's Magazine* called an "unintelligible fragment" (qtd. in *CP* II, 451) of some 291 lines and erases the poem's cosmic vision. For at the moment where *Queen Mab*'s Fairy positions us above the "boundless universe" and begins elucidating the course of world- and cosmic-history, *Daemon* abruptly descends into a Gothic procession of "Shadows, and Skeletons, and fiendly shapes," whose "Sculpturing" of "records" and "vast trophies" over "human graves" (257–259) seems lifted from *Alastor*'s imagery of "black death / Keep[ing] record of the trophies won" from "this unfathomable world" (24–25, 18). *Queen Mab*'s cosmology in the *Daemon* is dragged down into *Alastor*'s Gothic waste and becomes in turn wasted. The intrusion of *Alastor*'s Gothicism halts the poem's expansion and terminates the fragment with an anticlimactic stalemate between the procession of Gothic simulacra and the Daemon's and Spirit's "isolated pinnacle" (287). Of course, Shelley's recycling of *Queen Mab* in this attenuated form could have been an effort to occlude

strategically the poem's contentious politics and render the poem palatable for a broader audience. But that the *Alastor* volume glaciates *Queen Mab*'s epic status into an "unintelligible" artifact in the way that *Alastor* inters mis-fitting chunks of the Gothic novels suggests that even Shelley's more expedient aesthetic decisions are as if programmed by the process of his corpus's cyclic poem. For not only does *Queen Mab* persist as the *Alastor* volume's intractable material, but *Alastor* itself now becomes intractable material embedded awkwardly within *Queen Mab*. In re-citing each other both poems effectively sediment into the confused strata of a single disastered poem and stage Shelley's corpus becoming a kind of tangled stratigraphy.

Dismembering the Library

St. Irvyne lays the groundwork for the corpus's intertextual stratigraphy by mutating the archive and pulling it into the dark ground of Shelley's textual history. For Shelley treats his self-citations as a reckoning with the archive itself. *St. Irvyne*'s intractable material contaminates the inheritance of literary history by way of the novel's bizarre use of epigraphs and inset poems, which intimate a Gothic textuality very different than that which we observe in prior Gothic texts. For what Lynch calls Gothic novels' "cultural work of the library" mobilizes decontextualizing technologies such as epigraphs to construct and disseminate "literary sources" as forms of cultural capital conducive to the consolidation of the nation and national subjects (31). One of the upshots for Lynch is that Gothic technologies such as epigraphs assume the "supernatural" power to "*begin*" on account of literature's newfound "aspir[ations] to decontextualization." Because the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries began to

measure literature's value in terms of how effectively it lives on and "escape[s] its cultural context" (44), the classics' (John Milton, Shakespeare, etc.) dissemination into the epigraphs of Gothic novels serves as a metanarrative of how plot always already begins within the national library and thus stages tradition's proleptic "script[ing]" and "ghost-writ[ing]" of the present and future (43-44). Under the aegis of the Gothic, the "library," as Cohen would put it, "simulates a figure of the home, a domesticated enclosure that stores and relays a general memory system." For Cohen, the library indexes "but one mode … of a more general archival episode" and is thus "not equivalent to the archive proper" (Cohen, "Outside" 56). Yet the figure of the Gothic library signals a watershed moment in the "archival episode," in which the archive-as-library self-reflexively thinks itself as a "memory system" via hackneyed props—old manuscripts, title deeds, poetic epigraphs—that trope inheritance, origin, and precedent as mnemonics rather than remembrance. What Lynch's account of the Gothic epigraph's "cultural work" betrays, then, is how the Gothic genre generates and suspends the clumsy "tech" that make history, historical memory, and "beginnings" thinkable.

Shelley's Gothicism opens the library to an archaeology of its presets. *St. Irvyne* does of course simulate a canon-love through its epigraphic citations of Milton's *Paradise Lost* (188), Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel* (245), and Edward Young's *The Revenge* (225), with the stock Milton and Young citations rehearsing the genealogy of the Gothic genre itself. However, the novel severs itself from the published (as in made public and exchangeable) national cache of literature and will forget public disclosure and common birthrights by locating its "sources" in unpublished fragments signaling no obvious lineage outside the novel at hand. The novel's epigraphs denote a self-enclosure

wherein the library's "series of men" regresses into inert traces of undisclosable authors gone MIA. Even the Scott epigraph from *The Lay*—"For love is heaven, and heaven is love"—that prefaces Chapter XII (Shelley 245) seems less calculated to authorize the foregoing romance between Eloise and Fitzeustace than to connect laterally to the already misremembered *Zastrozzi*. *Zastrozzi*'s epigraph to Chapter IX deploys this same Scott citation in a more cynical fashion to juxtapose the naïve "love" of the minstrel tradition with the nymphomaniac Matilda's seduction of Verezzi (100). This paratextual doubling facilitates a re-citing of not simply *Zastrozzi* or Scott but *Zastrozzi*'s jarring citation *of* Scott. Thus *St. Irvyne*'s sentimental plot tries to revise not only the obfuscated memory of the Wolfstein plot but also faint remembrance of *Zastrozzi*'s botched "love" via the re-echo of Scott, which recalls the *Lay* not as a canonical "source" but as a trace of the prior novel's cancelling.[120]

The novel's dismembering of the library into a shadowy archive of unidentified hypotexts globalizes any extra-Gothic *hors-texte* within the auto-extension of *St. Irvyne*'s cyclical erasing-machine. The poetic epigraphs tagged with "Olympia" in chapters IV and VII register a textual confusion as to whether "Olympia" and her cited texts serve as paratexts that instigate and frame the plot from a grounded elsewhere, and are thereby protected from the plot's violence, or make up part of that which is framed.[121] This instability between text and paratext stems from Olympia's irreconcilable roles in the

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[120] *Zastrozzi* proves more conventional than *St. Irvyne* in this regard. *Zastrozzi* bears no recycled inset poems, and only extracts its epigraphs from the well-known pool of authors from which Radcliffe and other Gothic novelists drew literary sustenance: Shakespeare, James Thomson, and Walter Scott.

[121] Reiman and Fraistat think it likely that these lines tagged with "Olympia" were written by Shelley himself because no text of the period with the title *Olympia* or with a main protagonist with that name have survived. The fragments' diction also implicates Shelley as the likely author, since they include words typical of the early Shelley, such as his apparent coinage "enhorrored" (*CP*, I, 459).

novel as both one of the epigraph's unidentified sources and a character in an intrusive

subplot Shelley pilfered from Dacre's *Zofloya*, namely the episode in which Megalena's

jealousy spurs Leonardo to assassinate Victoria's lover Berenza. Shelley's Megalena in a

fit of jealous rage convinces Wolfstein to murder Olympia after learning of the latter's

love for him. Wolfstein stops short of killing her, but out of unrequited love Olympia

commits suicide by throwing herself on his dagger. The novel complicates Olympia's

death, however, by attaching her name to an epigraph in the very next chapter in a kind

of metatextual hagiography which, as Kim Wheatley puts it, "allows [Olympia] a voice

even after she has been killed off" (88). Olympia dies in history and becomes reborn as

history's structure, a reified 'outside' enframing an 'inside.'

However, we do not know if Olympia is an author or a text. Her spectral presence

as an indefinite name assigned to Chapter IV's epigraph describing "Nature shrink[ing]

back / Enhorror'd from the lurid gaze of vengeance" (196) preempts both her resurrected,

paratextual voice in the following chapter and her actual voice in the narrative.

"Olympia" names not a ghost author, a lost text, a stand-in for the library at the threshold

and origin of plot, nor a character, but the site of collapse among these functions.

"Olympia" encrypts an intractable lacuna in the text. She/it is a glitch in the revisionary

matrix of (self)citation wherein the pre-coordinates of narrative become weirdly tangible

as the now enfolded frame—the space of epigraph where citation ostensibly relays

"tradition" and the canonical library "ghost-writ[es]" the present (Lynch 43)—finds no

meta-distance from the framed. By both figuring narrative's untraceable preconditions

and that transcendental frame's destruction within the Gothic's violence, the Olympia

citation stages the novel's recursive autoimmune disorder: a mutilating of its factory

presets which differs crucially from previous critical accounts that read the genre's

epigraphs as "the general annexation of the poetic by the novelistic" (Castle xiii) or as

constructed memories designed to manipulate the past productively such that it accords

with present purposes.[122] The novel cannot remember what kind of anteriority

"Olympia" emerges from or if Olympia is even past at all; its/her literally disfigured

history becomes not only a vestige of a shadowy library without precedent, but an

ossified blank that nets a sterile cultural capital. The novel's vexed descent from and

sensational mutilation of its prehistory under the banner of "Olympia" signals the

passage between "source" and text as one of mutually assured destruction. Olympia

becomes a violent trace of the novel's liquidated anteriority, its intractable material. Yet

Olympia's auto-extinction entails her return as the future-less "black, unmalleable coal"

prefacing the first chapter of the intrusive Eloise story that momentarily terminates the

Wolfstein narrative. It is as if Olympia's brutal erasure causes the Wolfstein plot to

recede into the forgotten past and dark ground of the Eloise plot.

Shelley's untraceable citations should not be confused with pseudo-citations that

mimic canonical sources, the likes of which Radcliffe employs to simulate playfully a

bogus sense of authority. These residues of mysterious texts do emerge partly from

Shelley's work prior to *St. Irvyne* and not *ex nihilo*. However, these residues arrive from

an archival limbo between the published and unpublished. One such purgatorial text is

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[122] On this latter point, see Patrick R. O'Malley's account of "spatialized memory" and its consequences for Gothic historiography in Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho*. For O'Malley, the novel's epigraphs, and its depiction of historical memory in general, evince a "temporally metonymic logic" whose flagrant anachronisms prove a conscious strategy for "taking charge of history rather than being subservient to it" (506-7). And when the characters in Radcliffe's novel do start to fall into a recursive pattern of mourning that loses itself in the past rather than appropriating it for the present, they become exposed to a "suicidal wish," or a "memorial death-grip" modelled by the monastics at the convent of St. Claire who withdraw from the present and become absorbed in "pastness" (O'Malley 499–500).

the aforementioned *Victor and Cazire* volume. This volume exhibits a coarse fantasia of the library not unlike *St. Irvyne*'s. Its plagiarisms, anonymous authorship, stock motifs (such as "revenge" and the Wandering Jew character), and poems advertised as translations but which are either plagiarisms or simulacra designed to feign an archival exchange, indicate its deformed relay with literary history and almost willful self-dismemberment into an archive with no future. The volume's suspended oblivion extends into *St. Irvyne*. In the novel the volume (dis)appears not only as the palimpsestic "revenge" but also as the poem Wolfstein writes while thinking of "past times" and then immediately destroys after finding himself "overcome by the wild retrospection of ideal horror" (166). Wolfstein's self-destructed poem reproduces almost verbatim *Victor and Cazire*'s "The Triumph of Conscience." Furthermore, the poem's hackneyed Gothic idiom of "night-ravens" and "dark tide of the tempest" cites as verse the novel's earlier descriptions of waste nature, while its oddly local yet un-contextualizable reference to the "ghost of the murder'd Victoria" disabuses the lines as solely insights into Wolfstein's "past times."[123] This verse thus registers a more abyssal "retrospection" of an obscurer past whose suppressed correlative outlives its destruction and lives on inside the novel as a literal erasure. The novel's recycling of this foreclosed Shelleyan past through Wolfstein's dismembered poem, as well as the novel's many untraceable epigraphs without clear authorial provenance, write "source" as so many dead-ends that the novel, as Keats would put it, "set[s] open" but which remain "all dark—all leading to dark passages" (498).

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[123] There is no "Victoria" in the novel.

These citational "dark passages" do not lead to material deposited and "arranged in libraries," as William Blake would put it (*MHH* 15.20). They accumulate an archive of dead links without history, whose unavowable receipts of extinctions cast shadows upon the present that can only be registered as crystallized memories of forgettings non-interiorized by the text or a subject. The text's an-archiving of "dark passages" anticipates how *Frankenstein*'s (1818) tomb-robbing of a literary crypt, figured by references to Godwin, Goethe, Volney, Milton, and Plutarch, is shadowed by its emergence from a more unreadable archive that never had a legible past or future to transmit. For Frankenstein gathers the Creature's body parts from not only the graveyard but also the "slaughterhouse" (81), an aesthetically unsanitary site without a literary pedigree.[124] The re-animated, occluded "materials" from the slaughterhouse cannot register as a repetition proper since the literary "charnel house" has no memory of them (81). By way of the Creature's body the slaughterhouse's non-anthropogenic memory without template becomes a pre-literary toxic asset abutting the novel's literary-historical memory stretching from the pre-Enlightenment alchemists to the high Romanticism figured by the text's scattered citations of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Percy Shelley himself.

Geology of the Manuscript: Shelley's Infra-textuality

As we have observed, the later poetry's recurrent Shelleyan tropes bear the death-driven *process* that shapes the corpus as a cyclical "undoing of shapes." Each text re-

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[124] I thank Matthew Rowlinson for pointing out this presence of the "slaughterhouse" to me.

emerges as if blindly from the sedimented forgettings of Shelley's previous textual bodies. However, Shelley's "chaos of a cyclic poem" epithet implies a continuity within the receding, accumulative maelstrom. Just as *St. Anthony* insists within the Flaubert corpus as a textual unconscious, *St. Irvyne* becomes for Shelley a suppressed archive that makes possible the proleptic (dis)unification of the Shelley corpus as the singular accumulation of "cancelled cycles." What is archived is the aforementioned "intractable material" or "dark passages" that write literary transmission as the breakdown of transmission, and which, like Derrida's "archiviolithic" archive, relay the "originary and structural breakdown" (*Archive Fever* 11) of the library's "memory system" as the retreating ground of the present's inheritance of the past. *St. Irvyne*'s shadowy archive of intractable material charts a through line across Shelley's corpus and instigates self-citation's amnesia, whereby the distinction between hypo- and ur-text becomes blurred. As I suggested earlier, *St. Irvyne*'s erasure or non-memory of *Zastrozzi* casts self-citation's textuality as an intertextual fugue state. *St. Irvyne*'s disremembering and incorporation of the former text means that *Zastrozzi* reawakes, as it were, as *St. Irvyne*, without the latter knowing it. This "deeply inaccessible process" (Faflak) is figured by the later poetry's confusions of sleeping with awakening, anamnesis with the obliteration of memory traces, and perhaps the vision of the slumbering Ginotti with that of the Rousseau who "wake[s] to weep" (*Triumph* 334). These Ouroborosian churnings of future poems from the "half-erased" visions of poems prior trope an unconscious metalepsis, an autonomous transposition of figures from one text to another in an ongoing collapse of textual and ontological boundaries. It is this cyclical re-emergence of

one poem (back) into another that projects Shelley's chain of texts as "one single

catastrophe."

     St. Irvyne emerges from its shadowy pre-texts as if it were the extension of those

pre-texts' cyclic poem. The novel not only betokens the receding anteriority that exerts a

magnetic pull on the later poetry, but also preconditions how the later works will

materialize as accumulations of textual strata upon a deeply sedimented document. Three

of *St. Irvyne*'s epigraphs cite Shelley's *The Wandering Jew*, another early Gothic text

written in 1810 almost contemporaneously with *St. Irvyne* but never published in

Shelley's lifetime.[125] Featuring an immortal 1600-year-old Wandering Jew

anachronistically named Paulo, this poem's self-citational structure resembles that of *St.

Irvyne*. For the narratively disjointed *St. Irvyne* re-traces the repetitive delays and non-

sequiturs that already bog down *The Wandering Jew*, and recapitulates the latter poem's

repetitions that waver between alternatives and do-overs, paratexts caught up with the

vagaries of plot, and typographical breaks that redact the missing passages between the

poem's disjointed segments.[126] *St. Irvyne*'s numerous epigraphs lifted from the

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[125] Shelley wrote *The Wandering Jew* in early 1810 and began trying to find a publisher for it that summer, whereas *St. Irvyne* was composed sometime in 1810 and completed by at least November of that year. And in a letter to Stockdale dated November 14, 1810, Shelley attempts to explain the apparent "incoherency" of *St. Irvyne*'s plot before expressing surprise that Stockdale had not yet received *The Wandering Jew*, as if the novel's publication were always shadowed by the poem's infinite limbo (*Letters* I, 20). Furthermore, Stephen C. Behrendt observes that *St. Irvyne* is "an altogether more *lyrical*," methodical, and richly descriptive novel compared to the "impetuous forward motion" of the 1810 *Zastrozzi* (34-35). This distinctive lyrical quality that *St. Irvyne* displays over its precursor aligns it with the poetics of *The Wandering Jew*.

[126] The narrative poem follows Paulo, the repentant rather than Satanically defiant Wandering Jew, as he rescues the nun Rosa from what is apparently a blood sacrifice at a convent. He brings her to his Gothic manor, wherein he tells her and his friend Victorio (a personage whose actual place in the text is very uncertain) how he became cursed, after which he relates his unsuccessful suicide attempts and his many brushes with demonic forces. We then find out that Victorio is in love with Rosa, on whom he determines to use a philtre (IV.335) that he obtains from a witch who in turn had received the "potent drug" (IV.335) from Satan (who claims, apparently unbeknownst to Victorio, that whomever ingests the drug will be "mingled with the dead" [337]). After an interpolated "Song," the narrator tells us curtly that Rosa is dead.

Wandering Jew—to chapters II (*SI* 176), VIII (*SI* 218), and X (*SI* 233])— signal not only the novel's confused descent from the poem, but also the novel's shadows of futurity. *St. Irvyne* cites the future in the obscure form of this unpublished poem only made public posthumously in 1829. That the novel cites this poem in tandem with sections concerning Ginotti's own immortal "wanderings of error" (252) bespeaks uncertainty as to whether the poem is a hypo- or ur-text, or whether *St. Irvyne* and *The Wandering Jew* overlap as discontinuous sediments on the scratched over and erased surface of a single cyclic poem.

The poem presents "one of [Shelley's] most textually perplexing works," as Reiman and Neil Fraistat suggest (*CP* I, 41). Because the original manuscripts that Shelley had sent to publishers have been lost, we are left to "see this poem through a glass darkly" by way of two differently abridged versions printed in 1829 and 1831 by two literary magazines, with the full extent of their editorial interventions remaining unknown (Reiman and Fraistat, *CP* I, 41). In comparison to the printed *The Triumph of Life*'s artificial perspicuity proceeding from editorial reconstructions of its chaotic manuscript, whose sanitization paints redaction as a clarifying process that disciplines an originary disorder, *The Wandering Jew* survives only through and as its repeated redactions. The poem's already revisionary status seems preprogrammed into what Shelley in his preface calls the mythical figure's "various and contradictory traditions" (43), which the poem reproduces in content and form.[127] The poem's textual history

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The poem ends with Paulo's plaintive supplication to the demonic forces that torment him. Victorio is not mentioned again, and we are not told his role in Rosa's death or what became of him afterwards.

[127] The poem proves not only textually but narratively confusing, not unlike its novelistic counterpart. That a 1600-year-old Jew should bear the Italian name Paulo (likely borrowed from Radcliffe's *The Italian*), and that he should take up a domestic residence in a castle "embossed deep in wood" and "craggy cliffs" (II.50-

mirrors the errors and elisions that mark the myth's scrambled transmission and mutilated survival, since the two abridgements in 1829 and 1831 present significant textual discrepancies that likely betray originary incoherencies in the manuscript. The poem thereby stands as an archive mutilated in advance and is radically inclusive of the processural accidents and false starts scrawled across manuscripts, but which disappear from print's clarifying typeface.

The repetitious self-citations that stall *St. Irvyne* also surface in *The Wandering Jew*. The poem is overtaxed with internal repetitions of events and images. Paulo twice experiences what is a rough draft of Ginotti's vision of the "beautiful being" and *The Triumph*'s encounter with the shape all light, wherein "visions of delight" give way to "lurid darkness" (III.92, 94)[128]; and both Paulo and a "Witch" mark a "circle" around their person as part of a series of incantations to raise the dead (III.310–23, IV.272–87). The text also cites the same line from *Hamlet* three times in both the paratext and the text proper. Canto II's epigraph cites King Hamlet's "I could a tale unfold, whose slightest word / Would harrow up thy soul," which Paulo echoes in that same Canto ("Yes, I've a secret to unfold, / And such a tale as ne'er was told" [208–9]) and again in Canto III ("Rosa! I could a tale disclose, / So full of horror— " [439–40]). And in the case of the latter citation, Paulo's repeated promise of a undisclosable story in the subjunctive

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52) befitting of a Gothic patriarch rather than the supernatural figure of legend, replicates at the level of plot and characterization the "contradictions" that Shelley sees as defining the legend.

[128] Paulo's first dream vision takes place after he remembers his "words despised" with which he insulted Christ; Paulo, who deploys the term "methought" from medieval dream visions and which is later used by Ginotti and *The Triumph*'s narrator to frame their respective visions, envisions the "blessed Saviour rise" within a "sudden blaze of light / Illumining the azure skies" (71-73), a sight which then "in an instant" descends into a nightmare vision of "clouds of sulphur" and "breathings of intense despair" (103, 105). The poem repeats this encounter in the same Canto when Paulo attempts a demonic incantation and is met with a vision of "bliss, past utterance" that "unfold[s] / A youthful female form." This obvious precursor to the shape all light gives way to a storm of "chaos and horror" after Paulo refuses the Satanic angel's supplications to cede his soul to the figure.

arrives on the heels of his telling of the very unspeakable "tale" that his earlier *Hamlet*

citation had prefigured, namely Paulo's narration of his trials under God's curse. The

text's recopying of the intractable *Hamlet* forgets the tale that answers, and leads us back

to, this re-citation. To re-remember *Hamlet*'s untellable tale is to forget the poem's

already told tale. Like "Olympia" in *St. Irvyne*, *Hamlet* appears in the text as both an

epigraphic mark of a reified literary history and a crude assimilation of that history that

hinders and backtracks on the plot's progress. Its incorporation half-erases Paulo's

biography and rolls back the tape to before Paulo "unfolded" his tale. It is as if this glitch

in the poem's texture discloses a version of the text discarded during the poem's

composition and bears witness to Shelley's attempt at a do-over of the moments leading

up to Paulo's confession.

The incoherence of the poem's plot and its superfluous repetitions that anticipate

St. Irvyne's citational structure suggest that the poem's corrupted status is not solely an

accident of literary history. Its status is perhaps the consequence of the constitutive

errancy of the "contradictory" cyclic poem from which the Wandering Jew and *The*

Wandering Jew proceed and on whose tangled surface Shelley's corpus will accrue.

Shelley signals the poem's coincidence with a confused archive by citing in a long

footnote a prose translation of a passage from Christian Schubart's poem on the

Wandering Jew—a text which the note literally defaces by withholding the author's

name. This is the same physically disfigured poem that Shelley claims he found "dirty

and torn" in Lincoln's-Inn Fields in his notes to *Queen Mab* (II.283), thereby casting this

defaced poem as a maligned textual node that pulls *Queen Mab*'s Jacobin politics into the

Gothic texts' unreadable traffic. Shelley's footnote incites concentric circles of revision

and bungled transmission, which reproduce as textual history the Wandering Jew's death drive whose provenance the footnote at once explains and muddles. Canto III's account of Paulo's unsuccessful suicide attempts becomes a poetic redaction of the footnote's prose note, which is itself a prosaic revision of a poetic foreign body—an unnamed "German author" (*CP* 67)—that Shelley's poem in(di)gests as an anonymous trace of the myth's confused library. Shelley thereby casts *The Wandering Jew*'s redactional habitus as operating on "a field of entangled and confused parchments, on documents that have been scratched over and recopied many times" (Foucault, "Genealogy" 139). As a citation of what Shelley depicts as a confusedly self-citational body of recopied work, *The Wandering Jew* becomes the Wandering Jew: a sublime body that persists as a remainder apart from its literally "scratched over," "dirty and torn" materiality.

That *The Wandering Jew*'s status as a manuscript seems necessary rather than incidental offers the manuscript as a figure for how Shelley's texts archive their entangling within the residual projects and accidents of his corpus's toxic assets. As Erin Obodiac writes, a manuscript is "[l]ike a palimpsest," in that it is "itself an archive, an auto-archiving of its own genesis and genealogy, its own revisioning" (160). As we saw earlier, *Prometheus Unbound*'s "cancelled cycles" invest textual composition and revision with a geological substratum. *The Wandering Jew*'s manuscript structure captures in advance *Prometheus Unbound*'s geological cycles of "ruin within ruin" and its diagnostic of a history constantly recopying its wasted past. For *The Wandering Jew* writes the latter process as the corpus-to-come's archaeological topology through which future texts become overlays on top of gathering substrata. The manuscript's involuted

layers of marks and cancellations figures how the corpus will progress by re-gathering its accumulating past within its invisible, chirographic recesses.

In light of *The Wandering Jew*'s truncated survival being registered in advance by its chaotic manuscript form, even the editorially collated version of the text betrays the poem's corruption of itself as it blindly scratches over and recopies itself many times. The poem's recourse to a lexicon of inertia—"linger[ing]," "repose," "hang[ing]," "paus[ing]," "dead stillness," "still and motionless"—and picturesque purple passages pressures narrative progression into jump-cuts from one image of still life to another. At times, however, these purple passages herald a textual ingress, as if the poem "overlay[s]" itself upon the uneven surfaces of other "contradictory" or dis-narrated texts. For example, the poem's second stanza launches into a pastoral tableau of peasants who "danc[e] upon the lawn" because they are "forgetful of the approaching dawn" (41, 33–34). The *mise-en-scene* of this image of imminent rebirth jars with the opening stanza's invocation of "The brilliant orb of parting day" and the third stanza's subsequent meditation on a Blakean darkening of the echoing green. And in between Victorio's receiving of the philtre and Rosa's offstage death, we find an interpolated "Song" bookended by asterisks that tarries lyrically with a nightscape and then shifts to an unrelated comparison of a fading flower to an unnamed maiden "sink[ing] in death away." This tangential account of an anonymous woman's aestheticized death seems only contiguously related to Rosa's hysterical "death shriek" on the other side of the asterisks (IV.371–95). As with Wolfstein's "revenge" and *The Daemon*'s *Alastor* citations, these passages bear an arrestive quality. They cause glitches in the flow of plot and seem to cite intractable material from either earlier, effaced attempts at the poem, or

other anterior texts whose peremptory interpolations striate the poem with traces of forgotten "contradictory traditions" but "which [are] not present in its articulated meaning" (de Man, "Shelley Disfigured" 120).

As a dark precursor of the chaotically polyphonic *The Triumph* manuscript with which Shelley's corpus would terminate, *The Wandering Jew* manuscript effects a muddled coordination between the effluvia of its intractable matter and that of the deposits within *St. Irvyne*'s (and the later texts') strata. Thus, the early Gothic texts' single manuscript page—with their/its build-up of textual lacunae, vague "traces of other poems, and allusions to other projects and times"[129]—reads *The Triumph* manuscript's "inhuman gaze" (Khalip 89) of apocrypha and cancelled fragments as layered geological inscriptions that pull the later poem not only backwards but downwards. For the materiality of *The Wandering Jew*'s and *The Triumph*'s intractable material tangles the poems within a spatial continuity, whereby the former text lies cancelled as if beneath *The Triumph* within the latter's potholes. Thus, Shelley's manuscript structure forwards the corpus's intertextuality as an *infra*-textuality. And it is *The Triumph*'s exorbitant manuscript and its cluster of miscellanea—aborted openings, drafts of other poems, uncollected lyrics, financial calculations, drawings[130]—that literalizes *The Wandering Jew*'s absent manuscript body and retroactively renders the earlier poem's lacunae (il)legible as part of the chaos of *The Triumph*'s cyclic poem.[131] This (non)relation

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[129] See Peter Otto's description of Blake's *The Four Zoas* manuscript (*Critique* 3).

[130] Reiman's 1966 study of *The Triumph* categorized the varied contents of the manuscript as: *The Triumph of Life* itself, "Calculations," "Lines Written in the Bay of Lerici," sketches, "To Jane," *The Triumph of Life* "Apocrypha" and "Discarded Openings," and "Uncollected lyrics" (227).

[131] We might also regard *St. Irvyne* as a printed manuscript in the vein of *The Wandering Jew*. Like the latter poem, the novel contains unintegrated layers of different plots or even "apocrypha," such as the Olympia subplot that has no relevance to the Wolfstein/Ginotti story, as if registering discarded material

between the two manuscript poems is not entirely figural, as vestiges of *The Wandering Jew* and the Gothic texts turn up in *The Triumph* manuscript's sediment at a crucial point in the text.[132] Written in reverso on the page detailing the multitude falling in the "~~dust~~ path" after the chariot "Past over them" (26v, 5, 15), there appears a fragmentary lyric:

~~The~~ earthquake is rocking
       The corpse in its cradle within the grave
    The thunder is mocking
      The ~~yell~~ of the earth in its cloudy cave spasm
  ~~The~~ The dead are awake (*CP VII*, 42)[133]

The fragment's hasty Gothicism, particularly in the line "The dead are awake," churns up the kitschy resurrections of the dead not only in *The Wandering Jew* ("Earth to her centre trembled / … The Graves gave up their dead" [*WJ* III.39, 41]), but also in "Ghasta," another poem featuring the Wandering Jew. "Ghasta" references the "chilling time that wakes the dead," and features the Wandering Jew "In a wild verse … call[ing] the dead, / The dead in motley crowd were there" (110, 147–8). Significantly, the "earthquake is rocking" fragment appears in *reverso* embedded within (and whose composition might have been precursory to) drafts of the material where *The Triumph* "resurrect[s] the illustrious dead" (Crook 333), namely the "sacred few" and the zombified Rousseau. The lyric's awakening dead trace a dark passage between *The*

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and overhauls as Shelley tried out and abandoned different storylines. And as we have discussed, the novel also contains many traces of older projects (such as the *Victor and Cazire* excerpts) and prospective projects that would never see the light of day, such as the "Olympia" poems and *The Wandering Jew* itself.
[132] Additionally, the title *The Triumph of Life* bears a buried citation of the earlier "Triumph of Conscience," which appears as the last poem in *Victor and Cazire* and in *St. Irvyne* as Wolfstein's erased text. Moreover, "Triumph of Conscience," advertised in the title as a "Fragment," models the later *The Triumph*'s curtailed ending, as the earlier poem abruptly terminates with two lines of asterisks after only the first line of what would have been another stanza of verse in the poem's ballad form. It as if *The Triumph*'s fatal non-ending were preprogrammed in the dead space of this early poem's broken ellipses.
[133] Whereas earlier editions of *The Triumph* manuscript transcribed the last line as "The clouds are mockin" or "The clear air awakes," the recent volume of the *Complete Poetry* transcribes the lines as written above and suggests that earlier transcriptions misread Shelley's "d" as a "cl" (*CP*, VII, 333).

Triumph's re-animated dead and "Ghasta." For the latter poem's "dead in motley crowd [who] were there" are recycled imagistically and syntactically in *The Triumph* manuscript's "ribald crowd" and the "sacred few" who "put aside the diadem till the last one / *Were there*" (25r, 5–6; emphasis mine).[134] The early and late Shelley are literally on the same page. The "earthquake is rocking" lines embed the early gothic texts' chthonic palimpsest into Shelley's last poem, and this palimpsest's exhumation within *The Triumph*'s unconscious writes the re-citing of the dead as the *récit* of Shelley's corpus. The gothic texts' intractable material thus becomes a subterranean or secret incantation that makes possible Shelley's last attempt to summon "the departed dead." But more important is the gothic fragment's odd position in the manuscript. The lyric is written on the front page of the bifolia right side up relative to the manuscript's watermark, whereas *The Triumph* draft is written upside down relative to the watermark.[135] The unusual topography of this page renders the contiguity of these texts as a kind of archaeological continuity. That *The Triumph*'s procession of the undead takes shape on the page as a physical inversion of the Gothic lyric's awakening dead signposts the corpus's radically self-citational scaffolding. For here *The Triumph*'s vision becomes the gothic texts' somnambulistic trance or bad dream, as if *The Triumph* is a distortion of the early Shelley glimpsed through a camera obscura.

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[134] The apparently tentative phrase "Were there" proves referentially ambiguous in the manuscript, as it is part of an incompletely revised section of the poem and is suspended in the center of a cluster of cancelled and partially cancelled lines.

[135] What counts as right side up or upside down in the manuscript was proposed by Reiman, who observes that Shelley generally started writing on *The Triumph* manuscript with the watermark right side up (*CP VII*, 333).

The Wandering Jew and Citation as Immortality

As a function of Shelley's cyclic poem, erasure destroys but also yokes erased material together. But although the manuscript's self-citational structure remembers inertly the cancellations and lacunae that render Shelley's texts readable as the geological record of a single catastrophe, the texts themselves do not register this fact mimetically. *The Wandering Jew* and *The Triumph* cannot account for their entangling with the strata of other poems and projects. Nor can *St. Irvyne*'s Eloise plot put into meaningful prose its past as the Wolfstein story or its descent from the non-existent library signified by "Olympia." However, Shelley's texts will generate an intertextual *corps* incarnating the self-citational drive of the corpus, and which will give body to the impossible remembering of history's always already lost clearings that, as it were, permit Benjamin's amnesiac gambler to keep playing blindly.

Shelley's work stages repeatedly a revolutionary fantasy of the archive by concretizing "History" as a kind of subject presumed to know—an objectified unconscious "out there" which grants the process of citation and its objects an unfailing autonomous life. In addition to *Prometheus Unbound*'s cancelled cycles objectified by the geological record, we might also recall that same poem's "inarticulate people of the dead" who "preserve" Prometheus's curse which the latter himself "remembers not" (I.183–4), or *Queen Mab*'s appeals to "Tablets that never fade" on which "All things have been imprinted" and have "left a record there" (VII.52–59). Shelley's career-long fascination with inhuman, non-psychological memory that registers elsewhere what we "remember not" hearkens back to a premodern topos of recording angels and their

promise (or threat) that nothing is ever forgotten or unrecoverable.[136] However, the "dark

passages" that *St. Irvyne* and the later texts self-cite engender a recording angel turned

Gothic *corp*us that *lives* the archive's half-erased interstices that are constitutively

forgotten—again, what Derrida calls the archive's repetitions of the "originary and

structural breakdown of … memory" which can never take the form of memory as

"spontaneous, alive, internal experience" (*Archive Fever* 11).

 This non-redemptive recording angel is Shelley's Wandering Jew who, like

Frankenstein's Creature, lives on to count the seams and contusions that attend the citing

of the past's prodigious reserves. As what Foucault calls a body "totally imprinted by

history" ("Genealogy" 148), namely Shelley's histories and their lacunae,

"contradictions," and revisionary starts and stops, the Wandering Jew becomes a living

manuscript. *St. Irvyne*'s excerpt from *The Wandering Jew* in Chapter X's epigraph

proves symptomatic in form and content of the Wandering Jew's self-division between

eternal victim and eternal spectator in the corpus's wretchedness:

> The elements respect their Maker's seal!
> Still like the scathed pine-tree's height,
> Braving the tempests of the night,
> Have I 'scaped the bickering flame.
> Like the scath'd pine, which a monument stands
> Of faded grandeur, which the brands
> Of the tempest-shaken air
> Have riven on the desolate heath;
> Yet it stands majestic even in death,
> And rears its wild form there. (*SI* 233; *Wandering Jew* III.215-23)

The repetition of the "scathed" or "scath'd" pine-tree simile within only four lines

bespeaks the same memory loss or fugue-like death drive that re-animates Benjamin's

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[136] Incidentally, it is these recording angels that Benjamin's disaster-obsessed angel of history parodies darkly.

gambler at the expense of the "weighty past" with whose repeated destruction revision is unconsciously complicit. Furthermore, as a figure for the Wandering Jew's deathwards progression towards no death, the sublime body of the forgetful tree is also a "monument," an objectified record of the repeated erasures or "death[s]" it suffers yet cannot assimilate as knowledge. However, this monument itself becomes part of a citation—a citation that recurs in *Queen Mab*'s biography of Ahareusus, which lifts material from Paulo's biography in *The Wandering Jew*. This epigraph evinces the Wandering Jew's double life as an unfailing archive of and actor within the cyclic violence that inverts memory into monuments of blanks. Surfacing here as a self-citation within a paratext that "wanders" into the text proper in the form of Ginotti, the Wandering Jew emerges as an embodied interstice, an exteriorized "dark passage." Contrary to Derrida's claim that the archive's archiviolithic production and destruction of events can never take the form of "memory" as "spontaneous, alive, internal experience" (11), Shelley's Wandering Jew treats archival—and Shelleyan— memory's unlivable expenditures as grossly exposed and wandering about.

Beginning with the early Gothic texts, Shelley will deploy the Wandering Jew as a "personal surrogate" (*CP I*, 183) that sets down erasure's cycles and carries forward the traces of Shelley's self-disposals. As mentioned at the outset, Shelley is unusually prone to self-performance, evidenced by Fitzeustace in *St. Irvyne*, the idealistic Poet in *Alastor*, or the suicidal Narrator in *Adonais* looking toward "the abode where the [canonized] Eternal are" (495). It is perhaps no coincidence that alongside Shelley's cameos in these texts, we also encounter the immortal Ginotti, *Alastor*'s "vessel of deathless wrath" "wander[ing] for ever" (678, 681), and, in an instance where Shelley's self-citation

coincides with his "deathless" alter ego, *Adonais*'s "Frail form" whose "ensanguined brow" resembles "Cain's or Christ's" (271, 305–6). Like the recurring shape all light, the Wandering Jew's eternal return from the Gothic texts onward (de)cyphers the archaeological negativity that erases "Shelley" as a sort of auteur and ossifies him into a signature accrued from *St. Irvyne* onward. But Shelley's Wandering Jew names both a symptom *and* a survivor and witness of the corpus's self-citational "stream of fate," like Benjamin's angel of history whose gaze impossibly totalizes history's accumulating "single catastrophe," into whose endgame the historical wreckage and the angel itself are being swept "irresistibly" by a "storm" (*Illuminations* 257–8). So athwart the canonical eternity Shelley spies "afar" for Keats and himself at the end of *Adonais* (line 492), Shelley's own self-citation as the sacrificially marked Wandering Jew folds Shelley into what Bundock in a different context calls "a transcendence that exceeds the comprehension of afterlife in reverential terms" ("Saints and Monsters" n.p.). Therefore, *Adonais*'s Wandering Jew *as* the erased "Shelley" facilitates a horizontal, mobile "beyond." The figure's characteristic "branded" brow (*Adonais* 305) becomes the signature not of an authorial persona but a wormhole connecting distant textual outposts––a cross-referencing system effecting obscure traffic between *Adonais* and the "burning Cross" on the Wandering Jew's forehead in "Ghasta" (*CP* 30), as well as the "burning cross" on the "brow" of Paulo in *The Wandering Jew* (III.122). The character's sacrificial brand proffers "immortality" as an illegal passport for traversing the dark passages between texts that Shelley's self-citational drive creates and occludes.

Thus, self-citation and its cognates in Shelley's work are not necessarily an instance of textual dissemination or transmission. Crucially, Ginotti never passes the

philosopher's stone onto Wolfstein, in contrast to Zampieri's transmission of the elixir of life to St. Leon in Godwin's novel. Similarly, *The Wandering Jew*'s adaptation of the legend localizes immortality irreducibly within Paulo's curse and thus prohibits the power from furthering a line of inheritance. That the untransmissible "secret of immortal life" surfaces in *St. Irvyne* only as a typographical blank about which the novel abruptly forgets casts the immortal condition as a contentless repetition of the gothic texts' other visible blackouts, of ossified traces of things forgotten.[137] The elixir's missing scene of inheritance does not so much block transmission as overstep it altogether. For the un-inheritable survival that Ginotti carries on through the rest of the corpus concentrates the violent, intergenerational repetitions and vexed receptions of the past's "shadows" that we later observe in *The Triumph* into a single, infinitely extensive (non)life.[138]

Consequently, Ginotti's "eternity of horror" repeats in the later Ahasuerus and his living through "The birth of this old world through all its cycles / Of desolation and loveliness" (*Hellas* 745–7) in *Hellas* and before that, in Ahasuerus's "chronicles of untold ancientness" in *Queen Mab* (VII.74). Ahasuerus in these instances perhaps does not repeat *St. Irvyne*'s Ginotti with a difference. Rather, we perhaps witness the undead

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[137] Rather than have Ginotti communicate the alchemical secrets offstage as Godwin's *St. Leon* does with St. Leon and Zampieri, Shelley stages the exchange openly but withholds from the reader the secret's content by way of long dashes that demonstrably mar the text: "To you I bequeath the secret; but first you must swear that if ——————— you wish God may ————." Ginotti then vaguely instructs Wolfstein to take "— and — and —; mix them according to the directions which this book will communicate to you" (238). The "book" and the secret of immortality is not brought up again in the text's conclusion, in which Wolfstein dies after refusing to denounce God, something he had already implicitly done by agreeing to hear Ginotti's secret. But although Wolfstein ostensibly inherits the philosopher's stone from Ginotti, these heavy-handed blanks signal a missed encounter that is just as much Wolfstein's as it is ours, since whatever Wolfstein learned mysteriously drops out of the text by the conclusion (and Wolfstein's death and apparent exemption from damnation means that he clearly did not become the new Wandering Jew).

[138] We might say that the Wandering Jew's immortality usurps the hypothetical immortality reserved for the species and compresses the macro units of history into the idiom of individual memory. As the Wandering Jew's memories, the novel's epigraphs no longer stage a symbolic exchange with a literary historical past but rather an attempted retrieval of lived memory, a deep history impossibly distributed along the metrics of lifespan.

survival of Ginotti *as* Ahasuerus because the former *is* Ahasuerus, just as Ginotti *is* and

survives as Nempere across the occluded passage between *St. Irvyne*'s Gothic mode and

its disremembering as Eloise's story.

The Wandering Jew's immortality obtains an impossible premium on history's

drive or "cycles." The figure's immortal body queers history by forcibly living out the

generational resets and repetitions that would typically "recommence [their] career at the

end of every thirty years" as their memory lapses are themselves forgotten across

changing epochs (Godwin 528).[139] Or as Siegfried Kracauer puts it in his gloss on the

mythical figure, the Wandering Jew "is doomed to incarnate" not any one historical

period but the unlivable "transitions" between them, the "process of becoming and

decaying itself" whose non-temporal durée no human lifespan can experience (157). Put

differently, the Wandering Jew's immortality forces him to live through not historical

ruptures but the very structure of rupture itself, of the infra-textual "birth" from "decay"

out of which Shelley's texts generate. Like Benjamin's angel of the storm, the Wandering

Jew insists as an inhuman record of the erased debris that grasps history as a non-

successionist, disastrous poem outside of the finite determinations of temporal

progression and causality.[140] If de Man's claim that *The Triumph* contends that "nothing,

whether deed, word, thought, or text, ever happens in relation … to anything that

precedes, follows, or exists elsewhere" ("Shelley Disfigured" 122) registers

symptomatically as 'no relation' between events what is in fact the non-relations of half-

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[139] I refer here to Godwin's claim in the "Prolongation of Human Life" chapter of *Political Justice* that, "when the earth shall refuse itself to a more extended population" after the population achieves immortality, "[g]eneration will not succeed generation, no truth have, in a certain degree, to recommence her career every thirty years" (528).
[140] See, for example, Robert S. Lehman's reading of Benjamin's angel of history and that figure's "allegorical vision" (188–9).

erased and unnarratable "transitions" across Shelley's corpus, then the Wandering Jew's

wounded body becomes the sacrificial sign of Shelley's history. This sign is an un-

erasable trace of the corpus's cyclic violence and a mnemonic mark that could, as Robert

Hullot-Kentor might put it, "awaken [us] from history turned disaster" (x),[141] or hold

open the (im)possibility of remembering the unlivable "structural breakdown[s]" of

memory endemic to remembering itself.

Like Ginotti and his capacity to have foresuffered all by living Shelley's future in

the past, *St. Irvyne* becomes the corpus's receding "dark ground" by colliding with its

own afterlife. To reiterate, Flaubert's *St. Anthony* and Shelley's *St. Irvyne* serve as

"photographic negatives" or dark precursors of the authors' later work by, from the

hindsight of the those later works, running the gamut of the corpora in advance. But in

Shelley's case *St. Irvyne*'s coexistence with the later work as both a past life and afterlife

is more literal. Since Shelley's former publisher John Joseph Stockdale reissued the

novel in 1822, the text "comes both before and after the 'mature' work" (Rajan,

Romantic Narrative 48).[142] *St. Irvyne*'s felicitous bookending of the corpus harnesses

anachronistic energies as if already present in the novel's self-citational process and its

retrospective foresuffering of the self-oblivions into which Shelley's future would

continue receding. At the end (or near end) of his life, Shelley's corpus effectively

returns to what has become its wasted future. *St. Irvyne* intercepts its afterlife to cite its

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[141] Robert Hullot-Kentor derives this notion of a mnemonic mark from a Yiddish fable in which a king and his advisors, as a means of damage control after their whole kingdom eats an infected crop and becomes insane, decide to "make signs on our foreheads so that when we are mad we will know what has happened" (x).
[142] See also Behrendt (27).

past as the corpus's disguised future, which the re-circulated novel confirms by becoming the exhausted future it foreboded (retroactively).

The novel's fatalistic bookending of Shelley's oeuvre, however, emerges in an aleatory way via market forces. This means that the novel's proleptically recursive movement is at once of the text and something that happens to it on account of a dark, recessive futurity with which the text makes itself coterminous but cannot grasp. The novel's sudden return in 1822 as the receding future it heralded recalls how Ginotti, the mysterious "disposer" of the novel's events, is at last disposed of by Satan and cannibalized by the infernal "eternity" whose process Ginotti himself instantiates. But similar to *The Last Man*'s frame, that the corpus's burned-out future becomes destructively legible by way of *St. Irvyne*'s temporal convolutions means that, like the Wandering Jew, Shelley's corpus forwards the *sign* of its no future, or the no future as the corpus's "shadows of futurity."

Collings argues that our contemporary horizon of irreversible climate change relegates us to a condition "of more radical impoverishment than anything Shelley could envision." Shelley's "traumatic infinity" evident in *The Triumph* instead enables an "ethical destitution" within whose "infernal transport" emerges a "poetics of disaster" bearing a mode of "impossible consolation" (*Disastrous Subjectivities* 30, 169). Yet this chapter proposes that within the cancelled cycles of Shelley's undoubtedly futural oeuvre accrues the signature not just of Shelley's but something akin to *our* single catastrophe. It is this disastrous signature rather than Shelley himself that grafts itself onto a suicidal acceleration that bears "wreckage upon wreckage" into our receding future. Although this shadow corpus and its signature takes shape laterally and haphazardly within the

lacunae and odd back-loops that occur across Shelley's poetry, the acceleration it makes

readable gathers an intractability belied by its contingency, just as for Mary Shelley the

accident of Shelley's death nevertheless compels the latter's work to be re-read according

to its "mysterious connexions[s] with the fatal catastrophe" (*CPW* 656). *St. Irvyne*'s no

future pursues Shelley's and our future with what Shelley would famously call the

"gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present" (*SPP* 535). The umbrage of

these shadows can only be legible retroactively. Futurity here arrives via a reverse

progression from back to front and then front to back, or from the future anterior "fatal

catastrophe" back through its "shadows" that must be (re)unfolded toward the future in

which those shadows will have caught us. If Shelley's corpus is marked by the shadows

of *St. Irvyne*'s acceleration, then we might say that our present's acceleration chases the

shadows that this Shelley's dark futurity will have cast upon us.

Chapter 4
Enduring Citation in Blake's *Jerusalem*

[E]verything in the writing seems to devise its own immolation at a border …—Tom Cohen,
"Toxic Assets"
Homeland is a state of having escaped.—Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*

If Shelley's early texts become "toxic assets" that fuel the later texts' recursive trajectory

back to the early texts' shadows of futurity, then the recapitulation of William Blake's

corpus by Blake's late text *Jerusalem The Emanation of the Giant Albion* (1804-20)

reproduces the structure of this citational drive while altering the content of its *futur*

antérieur. Unlike the foray of the earlier *[First] Book of Urizen* (1794) into a

"catastrophic history which, *from its beginning and by virtue of that beginning*, has

compromised all means for our recovery from it" (Pfau n.p.), *Jerusalem* advances a

recessively *salvational* past. This past's "Primeval" (*J* Pl. 3, E146) light yields the

Christianized no future of the poem's one hundred plates and permeates retroactively the

catastrophic histories of Blake's earlier work. Despite *Jerusalem*'s interminable sequence

of biblical catalogues, recycled snapshots of Blakean mythology and literary history, and

bombastic monologues, the poem ostensibly delivers on its redemptive promises. Within

the first twelve plates, Los divests the poem of its stakes when he cries "Yet why despair!

I saw the finger of God go forth / Upon my furnaces, from within the wheels of Albion's

sons: / Fixing their systems … / Giving a body to falsehood that it may be cast off

forever" (12.10–13; E155). And sure enough, the Covering Cherub and its predictable

unveiling as "The Druid Dragon and hidden Harlot" (94.25; E254) becomes that

consolidated and "cast off" "falsehood" that spurs Albion's self-sacrifice and subsequent

rejuvenation of the cosmos. Moreover, the poet's declaration on plate 44/33 that "the Sons of Eden praise Urthonas Spectre in Songs / Because he kept the Divine Vision in time of trouble" (line 15; E193) is cited verbatim on plate 95 after Albion's apocalyptic awakening (line 20; E255). It is as if the standing potential of patience necessary to endure the poem's catastrophic *saeculum* were already the salvation to come and sufficient to close preemptively the gap between the remaining fifty-one plates "of trouble" and pre-contain the time after "Time was Finished" (94.18; E254). The coincidence of the poem's bookending assurances of redemption and its accumulating disasters that "spin[] [their] wheels" (Johnson and Grant 205)[143] almost points to a preterist universe. In such a theological condition the fulfillment of all apocalyptic promises has taken place beforehand, with the remaining "time of trouble" serving as a desultory afterlife meant to kill time before history's clock mercifully runs out. Yet the text's proleptically accomplished promises also lay ahead of us at the end of the anarchic though calculated hundred plates, an inexorable terminus both expected and unfathomable based on the mess that preceded it.

Jerusalem's entwining of a back-looping salvation with meandering disasters might be interpreted as an acceleration of the disastrously redemptive ambit of the Book of Ezekiel, whose parallels with *Jerusalem* Harold Bloom pointed out decades ago.[144]

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[143] See also W. H. Stevenson's claim that *Jerusalem* "has no real purpose: the round is endless, and a *deus ex machina* is required to stop it" (259).

[144] For Bloom, Ezekiel's avowal of an "individual prophetic stance for salvation" sets the precedent for *Jerusalem*'s semi-autobiographical "prophetic solitude" that underlies the poem's ongoing "personal struggle" between Los (Blake) and his Spectre (E929). See also Bloom's further elaboration of *Jerusalem*-Ezekiel parallels in *Ringers in the Tower* (65–69). I propose that *Jerusalem*'s absorption of Ezekiel, its acceleration of Ezekiel's (con)fusion of unconditional election and destruction, proves formal rather than thematic. *Jerusalem* incorporates as a mode of textuality what Herbert Marks reads as Ezekiel's thematic oscillation between Israel's mortal sins and the immutable, redeemed future of the New Jerusalem, whose promissory insistence in the face of Israel's damnation indexes the "permanence of the covenant … Israel is to be redeemed, whether it will or no" (1463).

Yet *Jerusalem* reverse-engineers the biblical text by implanting the end-result of

Ezekiel's progression—the vision of Israel's New Jerusalem—in the poem's beginning as

a pre-compensatory past that loads the dice against the chaos that will beleaguer it. Such

is the function of Los's City of Golgonooza, the Blakean counterpart of Ezekiel's

Jerusalem, which by plate 12 is already built and shields its inhabitants from the

surrounding "land of death eternal" and the fallen history of the "Twenty-seven Heavens,

numberd from Adam to Luther" (13.30, 32; E157). As part of its immunitary office,

Golgonooza cites and prerecords "all that has existed in the space of six thousand years: /

Permanent" and every "word, work, & wish, that has existed" (13.59–61; E157–8).

Golgonooza's "Permanent" memory-retrieval system allies citation to the poem's logic of

indemnification and preemption, as if the city's salvaged minute particulars shored up

citational ramparts. Golgonooza's defensive memory banks thus serve as a microcosm for

the poem as a whole. *Jerusalem*'s daunting length—what Blake calls its "consolidated

and extended" (3; E145) form—speak to its megalomaniacal citationality. That its

introductory address "To the Public" (E145) cites the title of Blake's original prospectus

to his illuminated books ("To the Public" [1793]) foreshadows *Jerusalem*'s deep dive

into Blake's textual past and the poem's "completionist" directive. The poem cites from

Blake's corpus specific lines (chunks of text from *The Four Zoas*), phrases ("the

Devouring Power" [*J* 29.24; E175] from *The Marriage*), various episodes (the separation

of Los and Enitharmon), titles (the "Infant Sorrow" [*J* 56.6; E206] from *Songs of

Experience*), images (the illustration from the *Songs*' "London" [*J* 84]), characters (Los,

Enitharmon, Urizen, Oothoon), and motifs (the "well timed wrath" [*J* 40.24; E188] as the

antidote to Christian hypocrisy in "The Poison Tree") as if to tally exhaustively "all that

has existed." Blake's claim in the opening address that "Every word and every letter is studied and put into its fit place" (3; E145–6) casts the poem's self-citation compulsion as a long process of retrofitting and "consolidating" Blake's errant corpus within *Jerusalem*'s redemptive center of gravity, as the older Blake criticism of Northrop Frye and Bloom emphasized.

Yet this chapter contends that the "totalization" into which Blake hysterically compresses his corpus becomes a simulacrum without content, an empty albeit formidable positivity on which the poem chokes to death. So, although Steven Goldsmith reads Golgonooza's "theology of conservation" as indicative of a terminal materialism in which "everything is at risk" ("Nothing Lost" 226), Goldsmith construes Blake's insistence that "death undoes nothing" as "inadvertently" reminding "*us*" that "death has undone so many" (221, emphasis mine). However, I propose that the shadows of extinction Goldsmith intuits prove intrinsic to *Jerusalem*'s negentropy and are not just shadows of *our* critical futurity.[145]

Blake's self-citational style mounts an obsessively defensive structure, like *Jerusalem*'s calcified walls that block out and expropriate any outside. Blake does of course cite various intellectual and religious traditions outside his corpus, namely pieces of pre-critical Christian hermeneutics such "types" and typology, "allegory," and "analogy," and a severe Christian idiom of "sin" and "sacrifice." But such structures less anchor Blake in an external "Tradition" than become indigested outposts, or prostheses narcissistically internalized to expand typologically the Blakean universe but end up

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[145] For Goldsmith, this materialist "us" far removed from Blake's anti-materialism speaks to our contemporary criticism that is beholden to the presuppositions of various materialisms, most notable the "new materialism," which advocates for "future-oriented corporeal generativity" and "emphasize[s] the rewards of impermanence" ("Nothing Lost" 220, 218).

accelerating it to its heat death. The poem situates this process and its plot in the wake of

emphatically *finished* structures as if pre-emptively assuring the consolidation and

implosion to come. These literal structures include the prophylactic Golgonooza

completed well ahead of Ezekiel's schedule, and the "bright Sculptures of / Los's Halls"

citing in advance "every pathetic story possible to happen" and "All that can happen to

Man in his pilgrimage of seventy years" (16.61–63, 67; E161). *Jerusalem*'s processual

citation of Blake's corpus toward a salvational telos thereby coexists with "consolidated"

forces that would seem to have foresuffered that telos. This implicates Blakean citation as

a kind of "unfolding" in a preformationist register. *Jerusalem*'s vexed "preformationism"

casts its mounting citations as a recessive unfolding of a forcibly totalized trajectory.

Blake cites and "redeems" his works as an interminable parenthesis retracing their

"evolution," like the unfolding of a scroll, of *Jerusalem*'s *futur antérieur*.[146]

Thus, *Jerusalem* becomes every bit the "major cultural disaster" that *The Four

Zoas* is for having been so disastrously "finished" where the former was aborted (Frye,

Fearful Symmetry 269). This chapter follows David Collings's reading of *Jerusalem*'s

"worklessness," its interminable labour toward the "nonevent" of the apocalypse to come

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[146] It might seem regressive to associate Blake with preformationist thinking in light of recent work done on Blake's relation to contemporary life sciences. Amanda Jo Goldstein, for instance, reads Blake according to a Lamarckian epigenesis whereby Blake's bodies mutate relationally and contingently via their vulnerability to "the exigency of present circumstance" and their "recursive configuration with relations that precede and condition their becoming" (60) (all of which Goldstein positions against preformationist thinking, which entails a "past-perfect temporality" in line with creationism and which renders "living form" a "fait accompli" [43, 68]). Blake's poems, especially his early ones, might be epigenetic in local ways, but I claim that the envelope—that being *Jerusalem* itself—in which he finally folds these texts is closer to a preformationist structure. However, Blake mobilizes aspects of preformationist thought not in a dogmatic way but as a resource for thinking structures and trajectories that are irreversible, that from the outset, as de Man would put it, sweep us up within a "process" that "goes in that direction and you cannot get back from the one to the one before" (*Ideology* 133). Thus the "pre-" connotes a retroactive impact, a "predetermined" unfolding that is nonetheless reflexive in its retrogressive movement through its *as if* inexorable past. *Jerusalem*'s "past-perfect temporality" is in some sense a proleptic outcome of the poem's recursive evolution.

and the text's concomitant "trac[ing] with great care the lineaments of what it cannot achieve" in an "encoding of redemption and disaster" ("Labouring" 204, 207). This chapter, however, reverses the trajectory of Collings's account by finding the poem's "worklessness" and "encoding of redemption and disaster" in the *aftermath* of apocalypse's receding "nonevent" rather than strictly in its anticipation. For this reason, I take seriously the poem's imposing Christian framework and its claim to a totalizing salvationist paradigm. Yet the poem's backloop with structures that render the text "saved on arrival" and its "extended" disasters bound in advance reveals a de Manian force to *Jerusalem*'s redemption hitherto unnoticed. For Blake's citational movement— the recursive unfolding and accelerating of a foreclosure, however redemptive—speaks to what Tom Cohen calls de Man's interest in "what pre-emptively disfigures, perforates, deflates, compels evasion" ("Trolling" 56); in short, what installs "history" and futurity as the iteration of a structure disastrously decided in advance.[147] Citation's short-circuit between catastrophe and salvation does not constitute a theodicy, however. *Jerusalem* pathologizes theodicy's linear movement from disaster to redemption by rendering the two poles' identity psychotically absolute: redemption becomes not the consequence of disaster, but its symptom. As *Jerusalem* (and *Milton*) remind us, "All things Begin and End in Albion's Ancient Druid Rocky Shore" (*M* 6.25; E100) (*J* 27, 46.15; E171, 196), thereby collapsing ends onto beginnings and outlining formally the poem's redemptive shape as a closed circuit of disaster.[148]

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[147] My reading squares partly with Hazard Adams's observation that "We seem to have come too late to *Jerusalem*, as if it has already been going on" (646), except I claim that *Jerusalem* itself arrives belatedly to the process it unfolds.
[148] Thus when Frye argues that "if behind [*Jerusalem*'s reading of] the Bible there is the memory of an age of murderous ogres who perished in a stench of burning flesh, then in front of it there is the apprehension of

Blake's citing of disaster thereby brings together aspects of the citational paradigms we have observed in the writers from foregoing chapters. Like Percy Shelley, Blake advances a self-citational mode across his work that, as Baudrillard says of Saussure's anagrams, strives to "bind[] the future" by recycling a "limited and distributed corpus" of which his poetry attempts "*to reach the end*" and exhaust (*Symbolic Exchange* 204, 202). Like Mary Shelley's "anthropogenic" literary archive in *The Last Man*, the literary and historical fragments that *Jerusalem* brings to judgment cite a past "without us," in that through their citing they reappear as part of a nonhuman apocalyptic code that Blake's corpus had been building all along without knowing it. Lastly, Blake's poem arrives pre-punctured with Byron's thermodynamic "end of history" that re-cites the past in entropic, accelerated cycles. But although Blake arrives at a similar picture of what citation as a form of (non)causality entails for history and textuality, he does not set out from the same materialist premises that fueled these other writers' citational structures. Blake's late texts appear beholden to a more "premodern" timescale that conservatively binds world history within a settled and delineated corpus,[149] and his unashamedly theological mode of citation cites a Christian redemption out of the ruins of modernity and his textual past. Yet this chapter suggests that Blake's citationality reaches even more

a returning power of gigantic self-destruction," he overlooks how the ancestral trace and repetition of this druidic extinction-event—which Blake's *Descriptive Catalogue* (1809) claims "would have depopulated the earth" (E543)—is not simply an error "from the point of view of the memory" whose cyclical understanding of history is to be corrected "from the point of view of imagination" and the latter's glimpse of a reality beyond vegetative cycles (*Fearful Symmetry* 399). For Blake's "apocalyptic humanism" (Bloom, *Blake's Apocalypse* 428) renders salvation itself as nothing but the form that Frye's "gigantic self-destruction" and its remembered circumvention takes.

[149] The late Blake's timescale is usually the biblical six thousand years famously calculated by James Ussher but occasionally the eight thousand five hundred years put forth in Plato's *Timaeus* (*J* 33[37].7, 48.36–37; E179, 197).

disastrous heights than Byron or the Shelleys *because* of his resolutely Christian
"System."

What "Religion" calls for in *Jerusalem*—as opposed to Blake's dismissive uses of
the word as a form of social control in the Lambeth books—gestures toward the
duplicitous etymology that Derrida finds in the Latin *religio*. Derrida speculates that
religio derives from either *relegere* (*legere*), meaning to "harvest" or "gather," or
religare (*ligare*), meaning to "tie" or "bind" ("Faith and Knowledge" 71). The common
denominator here is the citational *re-*, the "possibility of repetition" that casts religion as
a machinal "re-collecting" and "reaction to dis-junction" predestined to be always
(re)gathering itself against some "ab-solute alterity" (Derrida 74). Therefore, the late
prophecies' references to cosmic harvesting, gathering, and other agricultural-cum-
apocalyptic labours bespeak Blake's "religion" as a citational and pre-postsecular
structure, insofar as religion for Blake pre-contains the desacralized world that would
disaster it. This autoimmune pre-reaction proves *fatale* in Derrida's sense of both "fated"
and "fatal" (Nass 81–82). For Blake's religious shoring up of his history against—or
from—secular modernity's ruins becomes itself ruinous in its entropic re-collection of a
dispersal that is essentially defanged and empty, that is always already rebound.

This chapter comprises two parts. The first half examines how *Jerusalem*'s
reactionary Christianity forms an immunitary mechanism that, as a primordial reaction
prior to anything to react against, secretes a redemptive void into which the poem
recedes. Hence the poem's antiquarian leanings, which belie Blake's Christian syncretism
by yoking the poem's Christian vision to a dark prehistory indexed by primitivist terms

such as "Ancient," "Primeval" (3; E146), and "Primitive" (27; E171).[150] The first three

subsections cover various aspects of *Jerusalem*'s immunitary defenses, namely its

obsessively teleological frame, reliance on typology, and employment of Jesus as a

perverse *deus ex machina* that "saves" the poem before it has begun. The poem's reified

Christian terms build *Jerusalem*'s textual walls as inhuman tableaux that freeze typology

into the materiality of typeface, which seals the poem's disaster-turned-redemption in a

foreclosed loop without transcendence. The section on Blake's Jesus reads the latter as a

figure that *imposes* citation's self-consuming loop of redemption feeding on (its own)

disaster. Blake's Jesus reveals the performative character of Blake's Christian barricades.

"Jesus" (dis)simulates an "eternal" intervention that posits retroactively the poem's

anterior salvific action and the text's contemporaneity with that action. Or rather, Jesus

figures the text's citational movement as a hysterical *intervention*, as something always

already interposed. Moreover, as a mediatory figure between time and eternity, Jesus

diagnoses preemption as the infinitely regressive *habitus* of the poem's citationality. For

Jesus stands for a sweeping synthesis between and *prior to* the terms he mediates.

The first half of this chapter reckons with citation as a recessive temporality and

links this temporality with the readerly experience of the poem's difficulty: of following

a plot that seems to go nowhere since the poem's Christian structures have always

already concluded it, and of confronting barricades of sedimented text that accumulate

rather than progress. The second half tackles the poem's engorged accumulation of

defenses as an implosion, like Baudrillard's interpretation of the Pompidou Center as an

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[150] My account of Blake's "deep time" agrees with Noah Heringman's reading of the contemporaneity of the ancestral in *Jerusalem*—for Heringman the presence of the "ancient wisdom concerning a catastrophe of the geological past, the sinking Atlantis" within the practices of weaving and handicrafts (39)—but differs on the content of that ancestrality.

"automatic agglutination of culture" that impels an implosive "densification around its own locus of inertia" (*Simulacra* 68). The feedback loops and short-circuits discussed in the first sections here become accelerations. Again, like in the architecture of Baudrillard's Beaubourg, the recursive temporality explored in the first half becomes "that of the accelerated cycle and recycling" (64), and thereby devises its own immolation rather than endless circulation of an achieved *Parousia*. Whereas the first section reads the poem's citational paradigm in terms of the text's involuted relation to itself, its regressions into its own abysses, this second section advances the intertextuality of that paradigm—how its bloated positivity reads and agglutinates Blake's corpus within its "locus of inertia." Consequently, the Christian apparatuses explored in the later sections—remembrance, forgiveness, apocalypse—that gather Blake's history within *Jerusalem*'s immunitary walls self-collapse and ex-terminate Blake's terms: remembrance and forgiveness become forms of forgetting and erasure, typology becomes recapitulation and acceleration, apocalypse becomes implosion. The final section will then examine Blake's dissolution of "Blake," whose self-implosion implicates the poem's future reception in the text's indeterminately redemptive horizon.

1.1 Living (through) Form: Blake's Geology of Salvation

Jerusalem's story proves deceptively straightforward. Albion, both the aggregate of the British people and the "Universal Man" (*J* 32[36].26; E178), has rejected the "Divine Vision." He has become seduced by the machinations of "moral law," whose naturalism or "natural religion" reduces humanity to a purely biological "worm of sixty winters" (30[34].57; E177) and warps God into the distanced, jealous law-maker that

Blake identifies with the YHWY of the Decalogue. As either the consequence or cause of Albion's fall, Albion separates himself from his Emanation Jerusalem, variously described as the bride of Jesus, the Holy City of the Israelites, and/or Revelation's New Jerusalem. This division of cosmic proportions is marked by the geographical diaspora of the ancient Israelite regions and their estrangement from their corresponding British townships. Early on the prophet Los builds the redemptive city of Golgonooza as a buffer against the horrors of Albion's fallen *saeculum*, while Albion's friends (Britain's cathedral cities) attempt to wake him from his delusive slumber. After a long series of cosmic disasters, wars, and failed dialogues by which the forces of "natural religion" attain ascendency, the "Breath Divine" suddenly "Breath[es] over Albion" (94.18; E254) and awakens him from his ideological sleep, after which the longue durée of the poem's disastrous history becomes "a Dream" (96.36; E256) as Albion reunites with Jerusalem and Jesus and fully regenerates the fallen species.

The disjunction between the poem's early assurance of its redemptive conclusion and the long, catastrophic interregnum that follows mirrors the disparity between the poem's bewildering content and the ease with which it paraphrases itself. Similar to Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*, *Jerusalem*'s cacophony of missteps and dead ends resolves itself into a couple of benign Christian mottos. The first is Los's declaration late in the text that the revelation of "Mystery Babylon the Great, The Druid Dragon and hidden Harlot / is … that Signal of the Morning which was told us in the Beginning" (93.25–26; E254); this packages the poem's accelerationist model (to be discussed later) within the "darkest before the dawn" adage that governs the later portions of St. John's apocalypse. The second is the Spectre of Urthona's fidelity to the Divine Vision "in time of trouble";

and this casts Albion's friends'—and the reader's—Herculean endurance of the poem's

hundred plates as an exemplar of Matthew's proverbial claim that "He that endureth to

the end shall be saved" (Matt. 24:13).[151] Additionally, the poem's confusing and difficult

content belies its structural regularity. Albion's protracted catastrophes have already

found their "fit place" within the poem's formal predestination, as Blake carefully

delimits the text's chaos into four delineated chapters with twenty-five plates each. This

incongruity the poem sanctions between events and the form they assume means that the

poem is both esoteric and transparent, both excruciatingly long and oddly short. The

text's gargantuan length is curtailed by our knowledge of a terminus we know is

guaranteed and which looms over our reading as a fixed number (one hundred) that

ominously ticks up with each passing plate. *Jerusalem*'s structure thus operates like a

doomsday clock. The text's boundedness yields not a "deep structure" but a telos without

teleology whose palpable redemptive weight makes our slog through the poem's madness

more disorienting. The passage between the foregone conclusion and that conclusion's

receipt becomes opaque and makes too (ir)reconcilable good and the disastrous means of

good.

     Jerusalem marries deterministic circumscription and grueling duration such that

form becomes the future past into which the content's future ebbs. The longue durée of

the poem's Judgment Day less announces the total disintegration of form via disastrously

unbounded content than writes form *tout court* as the shape, or what Blake in his prose

calls the finite "bounding line," of hazardous material. For Blake's artistic "determinate

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[151] The proverb "it is said that the darkest hour of the night comes just before the dawn" was used by the theologian Thomas Fuller in 1650.

and bounding form" evinces not just "more perfect" art but the revelatory "outline" demarcating "honesty from knavery" (E550) with which Los and the Divine give body to and exterminate "falsehood," thereby writing form's determining force as a lethal marker of finitude. The poem lends itself, then, not so much to the idiom of the sublime that critics like Vincent de Luca and Peter Otto attribute to Blake's work, but rather Timothy Morton's rhetoric of "hyperobjects."[152] For not unlike one of Morton's hyperobjects, *Jerusalem*'s hundred plates prove "massively distributed in time and place," yielding a "very large finitude" (1, 61) that inspires not a sublime infinity but, like a black hole, a yawning depression in time and space caused by the text's salvational yet unstably dense mass.[153] The poem's drawn-out meltdown into a preprogrammed redemptive telos bespeaks a long tarrying with catastrophe and entropy that does not merely slouch us toward an unlikely end but finds us already within its messianic pressure. The text's length demands an "endurance" of its salvational frame in a disturbingly materialist, visceral way.

Jerusalem advances what we might call a geology of salvation. I use "geology" here metaphorically to signal how the poem's redemption is not a mode of transcendence but a radical immanence that enfolds its "outside" into its stratigraphic—or typographic––unconscious in which we are uncomfortably compacted. The exhausting haul of living

[152] Otto's reading of *The Four Zoas* in *Blake's Critique of Transcendence* argues that Blake's suffering bodies violently mark the body as a casualty of the sublime itself and its abandonment of the material disasters from which it turns away and on whose dregs it furtively subsists. For Otto, Blake's depiction of the body in pain as the disavowed ground of the sublime's operations reveals how "morning and mourning are entwined with each other," and how the "second birth" of apocalyptic awakening "produces *and* depends on what it claims ultimately to leave behind, namely a temporal world of suffering and death" ("Second Birth" 86, 83).

[153] Morton's hyperobjects, in addition to their massive temporal scales (like the half-life of Plutonium), can involve inhuman temporalities that, in the case of planets and perhaps *Jerusalem* in a metaphorical way, can generate "spacetime vortices" due to their massive size (1).

out a future past telos casts citation's future anteriority as not static nor instantaneous in its advent, but an ever-present though finite extremity to be physically and painfully endured without transcendence. The poem's citational form inheres both in an irreversible redemption always-already there and the long-haul that carries out the "Mental pursuits for the Building up of Jerusalem" (*J* 77; E232)—a meta-statement referring to both the eponymous Jerusalem, whom Los and his friends labour to redeem, and the already completed *Jerusalem* casting its shadow on those labours, whether its builders will or no. Similar to the way Joel Faflak suggests that "how [*Milton*] bewilders us … *is* its plot" (114), the poem's interminable process of "continually building and continually decaying" (*J* 53.19; E203) is the end-product of *Jerusalem*'s already accomplished salvation. Regenerate humanity's "convers[ing] together in Visionary forms dramatic … / creating exemplars of Memory and of Intellect" (98.28–30; E257–8) in the fully built Jerusalem/*Jerusalem* replays idiomatically the processual "Mental pursuits" that also defines the *building of* Jerusalem/*Jerusalem*.[154] In other words, the poem's plot is the building of its frame, its enabling pre-conditions.

Yet the hundred plates' waste land of bodies in pain denotes the existential horror of building the poem's pre-built end, of (un)willingly acting out the bounding line of *Jerusalem*'s redemptive casing. The enigmatic "Living Form" (E270) that Blake invokes in "On Virgil" (1822) heralds in *Jerusalem* a living *through* form. That is, the

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[154] The following analysis offers a different way of reading what Blake criticism since Algernon Swinburne has regarded as Blake's artisanal fetishizing of the "making" over the "made." For Swinburne, the poems in Blake's letters put labour on display rather than "the work" itself, and offer "in place of a poem ready wrought out, some chaotic and convulsive story about the way in which a poet works, or does not work" (44). Paul Mann writes Swinburne's observation large across Blake's oeuvre. Mann claims that "more than anywhere else in literature, the distinction between production and product, or between 'conception and execution'… are collapsed," such that "[w]e are confronted not only with the production of meaning but with production as meaning" (2).

transcendental full-stop looming over every plate proves inseparable from the entropic

physical and textual bodies within those plates enduring (the finding of) their fit place. As

in Blake's previous texts, *Jerusalem* dramatizes the nightmarish affect of embodying

structure, of form becoming plot.[155] Hence Los's muted frustration at playing the

"watchman" in a cosmic drama whose redemptive machinery accomplishes most of the

leg-work and renders his actions apparently superfluous. After "search[ing] the interiors

of Albion's / Bosom" and discovering "every Minute Particular of Albion degraded and

murderd" prior to his arrival (45[31].3, 7; E194), Los protests:

> What shall I do! what could I do, if I could find these Criminals
> I could not dare to take vengeance; for all things are so constructed
> And builded by the Divine hand, that the sinner shall always escape,
> And he who takes vengeance alone is the criminal of Providence;
> If I should dare to lay my finger on a grain of sand
> In way of vengeance; I punish the already punishd. (45[31].29–34; E194)

Los's despair of the ressentiment that configures the deadlock between sin and

punishment is arguably surpassed by his bewilderment at how this feedback loop is pre-

emptively "constructed / And builded by the Divine hand." For the sinner "always

escap[ing]" with divine permission means that the "vengeance" Los retrains himself from

enacting proves impossible from the outset: the mythic ressentiment structuring Albion's

history has in-advance been divinely (de)constructed via the sinner's built-in "escape."

Albion's internal "building of Luvah builded in Jerusalems eastern gate to be / His

secluded Court: thence to Bethlehem where was builded / Dens of despair" (pl. 48.24–26,

E194) and other such passages deploy the fetish of architecture and obsessive "building"

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[155] Blake elsewhere explores the violence bodies undergo as they take on structure or "form." Examples would be how Urizen is literally beaten and bound by Los in(to) the *[First] Book of Urizen*, or how the nameless shadowy female in *Europe* implores Enitharmon to "Stamp not with solid form" her "vig'rous progeny of fires" (2.8; E61).

not as a Kantian architectonic to render the text's organization immanently present to itself, but as a citational mode of causality whereby "building" as verb and noun coalesce. To build laboriously is to find oneself recessively "constructed / And builded" elsewhere by the "Divine hand" as a kind of redemption machine that has beaten us to the punch. Hence Los's bewilderment that not only his taking revenge, but by extension the paradigm of accusation and vicarious sacrifice that he labours to overturn, is not just prohibited but structurally foreclosed through an escape clause found "always" in place.

Los's and the other characters' compulsive activity "Striving with systems to deliver individuals from those systems" reverses the one-way street from "living" labour to reification not by returning Gods and their systems back to the "poetic tales" within the "human breast" (*MHH* 11). Rather, the poem's (in)terminable labour becomes a reiteration of that labour's preemptively reified form. *Jerusalem*'s "building" anticipates an Anthropocene temporality in a soteriological register, as labour encrypts a totalized horizon that "knows" what its builders will have constructed. That the poem's deterministic structure proleptically feeds off and crystallizes the end of Los's (and the reader's) building of *Jerusalem* formally stages labour's dispossession by a preformed post-history (not) of labour's making. Jacques Khalip gestures toward this tortuous causality between product and process in his reading of Blake's *Behemoth and Leviathan* illustration for Blake's *Illustrations of the Book of Job*. For Khalip, Blake's cramped depiction of the two beasts "in their capsule" "undergoes the apocalypse it foretells, a frozen promise that testifies to the fact that the future is already here, held back and kept in storage" as a pre-packaged end-time "that we *will* see or… we *will want to see* as an element of our survival" ("Flea" 270). In *Jerusalem*, however, this accomplished "frozen

promise" becomes less an apocalyptic desideratum programming our worldly labour than something akin to what theoretical physics calls the holographic principle: what Blake calls the finite "line of the almighty [that] must be drawn out before man or beast can exist" (E550) pre-encodes *Jerusalem*'s labour as something resembling data on a cosmological bandwidth, from whose redemptive tableau the text's entropic toil emanates. Blake's perverse Christianity grasps a subtext of Revelation's ancestral promise of the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (13:8), a frozen scene of absolution that fossilizes our future salvation into a pre-historical remainder.

That Blake touts this ancestral "line of the almighty" as part of his painterly manifesto suggests that his own illustrations simulate the Divine's pre-mimetic, salvational mnemonic program, in whose "frozen" *mise-en-scene* of redemption Los and the reader are literally caught. Throughout *Jerusalem* we find claustrophobic images of characters cramped up by the text's "wall of words." Squeezed in on the bottom of plate 9 there is a supine body beside another figure kneeled over it, and a woman staring up despairingly at the block of text bearing down above her head (Figure 1); on plate 15, there is a figure resembling Urizen with his neck bent as if by the text creeping down the page, and pushing with both hands against the right and left borders that seem to be closing in on him (Figure 2); on plate 23, we observe tightly-packed bodies in the crevices between chunks of text and seemingly caved-in by the descending script (Figure 3); and on plate 73, we see Los (taking up roughly one-fifth of the page) awkwardly kneeling down, and seeming so compressed by the text that he cannot lift his hammer to perform his apocalyptic labour on the sun upon his forge (Figure 4).

Figure 1 William Blake, *Jerusalem*, copy E, plate 9, detail (1804 [1820]). Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection.

To be sure, Blake does include several larger-scale designs, most notably the full-page illustrations that punctuate each of the poem's four chapters (perhaps as rewards for the tired reader). But these are few and far between compared to the myriad of lurid images scattered across earlier books such as *Urizen* or *Europe*. Pictorial visuality here appears under erasure by the pre-mimetic visuality of "words" as things, as heavy columns of layered, non-signifying inscriptions that edge out the graphic windows or openings through which the reader might enter and find some point of identification. That the poem's crowded script appears foremost as serial marks rather than referential signs

Figure 2, William Blake, *Jerusalem*, copy E, plate 15, detail (1804 [1820]). Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection.

recalls De Luca's analysis of how *Jerusalem*, specifically plate 16, "reif[ies] the signifier" via "the density of inscription to the point of visual strain" (232). But rather than the wall of words' nonreferentiality "gathered to a presence" producing a sublime "delight" in the reader (De Luca 240), we might instead approach the script's nonreadable iconicity as (as I am sure many readers will attest) obstructing and depressing the reader's faculties, rather than "rouz[ing]" them, as Blake commands in *Milton*'s preface (pl 1; E95). For the inscriptions' materiality accumulates "presence" as a stratigraphical unconscious that reverses the poem's teleological momentum and buries the linear trajectory of reading under layers of sedimented typeface. As a result of the script's density, Los, with whose labour to build Jerusalem the labour of reading overlaps, literally cannot move. On plate 73, nearly flattened by the poem's walls, Los's clumsy posture registers the presence of the text above him, and he appears interred

within the poem's typographical strata. The inherent immobility of illustration here figures the very inertia of the soteriological drama in which Los is physically stuck, as if this closing window into Los's struggle were part of a jammed film reel. This cribbed tableau of an entombed Los cathects the erasure of Blake the artist onto the closure of the pictorial. The physically crooked, frozen Los—whose labour also doubles that of Blake the engraver—indexes the pullback of Blake's artistry, and his typological advance toward a future for his ersatz canon, into a geological plenitude casts his "illuminated" medium as akin to deposited fossils.

Figure 3 William Blake, *Jerusalem*, copy E, plate 23, detail (1804 [1820]). Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection.

1.2: Typology as Typeface

Part of *Jerusalem*'s citationality therefore inheres in its reification of its closed redemptive frame, and how the poem's burden is to reinscribe that frame which exists both ahead of and before its action. The poem presses toward its preset telos, which by virtue of its obsessive predestined-ness is already present and anterior to the text, and thereby causes the text's labour to regress into a telos self-voided and self-voiding in its very completion. The progress toward plate 100 ostensibly takes shape as an inexorable movement line-by-line to the conclusion and yet the physical reading of this progress incurs textual avalanches that depress reading into inertia the further one gets to the end.

Blake figures this recursive movement toward a future swallowed by the past through typology, which in its canonical form models the New Testament's retrieval of the Old Testament as *figura* that teleologically carry the Jewish past into a Christian future and vice-versa. *Jerusalem*'s commandeering of traditional Christian hermeneutics speaks to the shift from the "early" to "late" Blake. *Jerusalem*'s frozen redemption to
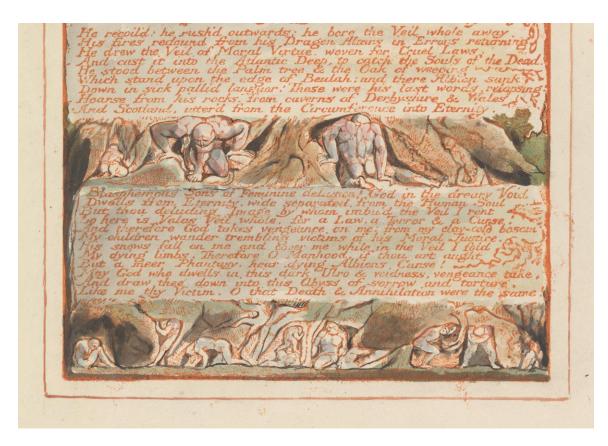

Figure 4 William Blake, *Jerusalem*, copy E, plate 73, detail (1804 [1820]). Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection.

come proclaims the late Blake's openness to a conventional Christian providence "at once flawed and necessary," as Andrew Lincoln suggests, in which the nightmare of history becomes "at once a terrible error and an act of mercy" (26). It follows that *Jerusalem*'s impregnable Christian walls—in which disaster is always already immunized as a *felix culpa* impatiently feeding on its future (past) "mercy"—signal Blake's transition from the more experimental Lambeth books that were open to the forces that unsettle their inchoate myth-making, to the more aesthetically, politically, and religiously conservative late prophecies that try to recuperate the earlier work's dead ends.[156] For it would appear that *Jerusalem* typologically recovers the Lambeth books' heap of broken biblical images into a scripturally-buffered cosmos in which nothing falls outside the hundred plates' redemptive purview. The Lambeth books, by contrast, churn out spurious names that dis-remember evacuated biblical, mythological, and occult contexts. Fuzon's exodus from the "pendulous earth" and "call[ing] it Egypt" in *Urizen* (28.21–22; E83) recalls a Mosaic itinerancy in the absence of that paradigm's *promesse du bonheur*; Orc warps Christ's nullification of the "stony law" into a planetary and sensorial mutation "round the abodes of men," an event whose messianism *America*'s "Preludium" pre-contaminates as a "torment long foretold" (*A* 16.23, 2.17; E58, 53); and

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[156] Tilottama Rajan describes the differences between the Lambeth books and the late prophecies with the Deleuzian distinction between the "infantile" and "adult series": "The adult Blake of the later prophecies, projected in embryo as the eternals, cannot sustain the drifts, the terrible thought, which the larval, experimental subject of the Lambeth books are more willing to endure" ("System" 160–1). Andrew M. Cooper perceives a continuity between segments of the early Blake and the late Blake on different terms than the older Blake criticism that saw an unproblematic, "deliberate and radical unity" in the corpus (Bloom, *Apocalypse* 422). For Cooper, the "pacifistic spirit of Christian … *pietas*" that governs *Milton* also obtains in certain of the early *Songs of Innocence*. And because the early and late Blakean sense of prophecy consistently "forgoes any redemptive 'politics of vision'" and instead remains attuned to the "modal co-presencings of time present, past, and future" that only bring readers to the "brink of moral decision while refusing to tip the scales," Cooper will claim that the early "Blake of 'Infant Sorrow' already concurs, proleptically, with the disillusioned crank of 1809" (137, 150).

Thel's Mne Seraphim encrypts a perfunctory "memory" of an occult fertility myth now barred (1.1; E3). These mythical names that Blake hollows out and casts into the expanse betrays a work of the negative against the unreflective immediacy of inherited structures, a re-invention of obliterated tradition from the ground up in modernity's dark abyss of time.

However, what Rajan calls *Urizen*'s dismembered "biblical paradigm whose messianic complex is constantly cannibalized into part-events" ("Autogenesis" 63) re-gathers itself with a Christian vengeance as *Jerusalem*'s reified forms of scripture: when "Hope is banish'd" from Albion, the "merciful Saviour" will build for Albion "a Couch of repose" composed of "Scriptural Verse," including "The Five books of the Decalogue, the books of Joshua and Judges, / Samuel, a double book & Kings, a double book, the Psalms & prophets / The Four-fold Gospel, and the Revelations everlasting," on which the poem's salvation literally rests (47.18–48.11; E196).[157] Furthermore, in *Jerusalem* Blake's former shadowy names often give way to the biblical archetypes of which they were corruptions, such as how the Mosaic Fuzon ossifies into "the Body of Moses in the Valley of Peor" (*J* 49.57; E199). Or these esoteric figures are expelled at the expense of names and compacted genealogies lifted straight from more clearly evoked theological, mythological, and historical milieus: Og, Anuk, Moses, Caleb, Joshua, Merlin, Arthur, Benjamin, Paul, Luther, Adam, Satan, Thor, Friga, Nimrod, Joseph, Mary, and Jesus, to name a few.

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[157] And just as the Lambeth books' iconoclastic citations of sacred texts gives way to *Jerusalem*'s strong biblical paradigm, the late Blake seemingly regresses from the Urizen books' emphasis on textual fragmentation, indeterminacy, and revision characteristic of the higher criticism's biblical scholarship. For an account of the higher criticism's influence on *Urizen*, see Jerome McGann's "The Idea of an Indeterminate Text" (303–24).

Yet the almost deliberately wooden "Couch" of sacred texts does not so much redeem the early Blake's broken images, as re-iterates as a stilted fullness of meaning what was lost in the immanent collapse of meaning that truncated the early texts. *Jerusalem* literally builds itself with what the early texts' mangled biblical fabric failed to produce. More important, the textual "Couch" yields an over-tangible plenitude via a tangle of haphazard citations, much like Blake's *Laocoön* (1826), which recasts Christianity's typological retrieval of Greek antiquity through a mis-mash of aphorisms that typographically smother the Hellenistic figures. And the perfunctoriness of citing the titles of biblical texts rather than the specific "Scriptural Verses" *Jerusalem* promises, in addition to the rollcalls of ready-made mythic names, betrays a (dis)remembering of biblical authority different than that of the Lambeth books. For the latter's experimental citations of the liquidated bible give way to *Jerusalem*'s ingestion of sacred history by way of "agglutination": a pure stockpiling of biblical objects whose loss of context facilitates not their creative re-imagining but the streamlined amassing of salvational capital.

This chapter's second half will delve further into how *Jerusalem* perversely redeems Blake's early texts. But for the moment, it is enough to say that the typological relation between the Old and New Testaments that older criticism deployed to elucidate the shift from the early to late Blake does not quite hold. *Jerusalem*'s substitution of Moses for Fuzon, or Orc for Jesus, does not herald typology as an active advancement of the past toward an emergent future. Instead, typology, like the poem's script, becomes a *thing*, a machinal program that executes redemption by re-cycling the future within an ossified interchange between the Old Testament past and a Christian future. In other

words, the typological movement itself freezes into a future anterior, with which

Jerusalem hysterically binds the shadows of futurity to what has always already

happened, to what "exists already in the great code of art that is the bible" (Bloom,

Apocalypse 385).

     Jerusalem's heavy-handed citations of Christianity's recoveries of Old Testament

figures as *figura*—the "Building [of] the body of Moses" and the "Planting the Seeds of

the Twelve Tribes and Moses and David" creating bodies of "Divine Analogy" whose

"truth" emerges as an inversion of error[158]—petitions the Christian passage from

Judaism's interminable promise to Christianity's salvation as a "finished" trajectory to be

stockpiled rather than re-made or worked through. "Divine Analogy," Blake's synonym

for typology, is not a literary structure to be used by the reader to organize the text from

without. The literalized "Divine Analogy" becomes claustrophobically immanent, a

purely functional object *within* the text that enacts the typological exchange between the

fulfilled future and promissory past as a fossilized prerecording of where Blake's futurity

will arrive. In another deployment of "Divine Analogy," the typological recovery of the

biblical Moses as an anticipatory shadow of Christ serves as a salvational datum from

whose future Jerusalem will have safely returned. Jesus informs the "outcast" Jerusalem

that

>   I will prepare a way for my banished-ones to return
> Come now with me into the villages. walk thro all the cities.
> Tho thou art taken to prison & judgment, starved in the streets
> I will command the cloud to give thee food & the hard rock
> To flow with milk and wine, tho thou seest me not a season. (*J* 62.20–26; E213)

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[158] In this example, the sectarian election of the Israelites adumbrates the universal election of humanity.

Jesus secures the pathway of Jerusalem's future "return" to a to-be redeemed Albion by channeling it through the pre-etched groove between the Old and New Testaments—the typological repetition of Moses's nourishing "rock" as the palliative blood flowing from the crucified Christ. The "way" of Jerusalem's salvation to-come "will" trace the ancestral fast track from permanent exile to divine preservation "prepare[d]" by this cursory memory of Christ's messianic abbreviation of Exodus. The subjunctive mood of Jesus's eternally fulfilled promise—that he "*will*" decree the eschatological overflow from the cloud and rock—projects typology's archaic loop onto a "Last Day" (*J* 62.15; E213). The prospective apocalypse of the "Last Day" and its overlap with the pre-prepared "way" of a derivative typology less defuses futurity than precipitously seizes "futurity … in this moment," as the reformed Urizen declares in *The Four Zoas* (121.22; E390). The disastered, "banished" present's orientation to future recovery becomes not a promise but a formality. For what Jesus promises Jerusalem does not happen in any mimetic sense. Rather, this episode deploys reified biblical promises to express the total reversibility of the present's disaster and its future redemption. Disaster and redemption are thus mediated a priori by Jesus's typology as a kind of mechanical converter.

To reiterate, *Jerusalem*'s "Divine Analogy," a reified memory of the Great Code's reversal of the Old Testament's perennial exodus into a messianic force expended for a Christian future, operates as a completed and spent past that incurs a promise as if from Blake's future to his present. The late Blake's partial rerouting of his "system" through an ancestral Christian mandate writes Blakean typology as predictive rather than promissory, with "prediction" conveying Colebrook's sense of a recoiling arrow of time fueled not by our capacity for promising but by the future's anterior promise "*to us*"

("Anthro-Political" 104). Even Frye's characterization of typology as a "one-directional and irreversible conception of history" (*Great Code* 114) depicts the type's shadows of futurity as evocative of an obscure tipping point crossed. The interval between type and antitype then becomes an apocalyptic tripwire beyond which the incalculable future assumes a formidable certitude in its retraction back to its accelerating past.

That Blake characterizes his long poem as a series of "Types" (3.9; E145) in *Jerusalem*'s "Public Address" suggests that he conceives his printing method as a citational medium through which the poem's plates bear the literally etched coordinates of the decided future they solicit. For the terms "type" and "typology" derive etymologically from the Greek word *tupos*, which not only refers to a primordial archetype but also the mark or indentation from a strike or blow, such as those effected by the tools of a coin engraver or blacksmith. The "Type" thus concatenates the engraver's material impression with the typological "return" from a primordial future. The materiality of Blake's types incurs the irreversibility that characterizes Blakean typology's pullback from future to future anterior. For Blake's etching method becomes something of an "event-machine": it recasts writing and illustrating as the reproduction of near-irreversible inscriptions whose emendations are possible only through re-arrangements and further defacements, not compensatory additions.[159] Unlike Blake's more pliable illuminated books, *Jerusalem* stages the intractability of the types it piles up.

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[159] As David Erdman explains, Blake's etching "did establish a text that was definitive in the sense of fixed. Once he had applied words to copper and etched surrounding surfaces away, Blake could not alter a letter except by laborious mending; he could scratch away words and even lines but could not easily add new ones" (E789). This is not to say that Blake's method "fixd" his texts in a canonically binding way. Rather, the fixed etchings of every letter of Blake's history in its "fit place" yields not a comfortably bounded text but an intractable one, whose unyielding impressions prove removable on the condition of further intractable erasures (to which blotted-out portions of *Jerusalem*'s opening address testify) or larger destructions in the form of entirely cancelled plates.

Types thus figure the poem's "fixd" one hundred plates as the accrual of a procrustean mass, much like *Harold*'s piles of sedimented ruin.[160] The poem's spatial build-up of immutable typeface entails the poem's rigid temporality, the irreversible arc of its boomeranging arrow of time.

"Types" materially stage the text's reversal of its future or "outside" into an anteriority already decided as itself an irreversible movement. As an agent of this movement, Los will repeat the "finger of God" and its predestining or "fixing" of "Systems, permanent" toward self-destruction. Los's hammer beats disaster into disastrous signs of the morning foretold and set down "from the beginning" (*J* 93.26; E254). As the Daughters of Albion press the ideological divisions among the citizens of Albion, Los "fixes … on his Anvil" the war's suicidally embattled "Contraries" and "fixes them with strong blows" in order to "Create a World of Generation from the World of Death" (58.15–18; E207); and as a counter measure against natural religion's creation of "Kings & Nobles of the Earth," Los begins "Fixing The Sexual into an ever-prolific Generation / Naming the Limit of Opakeness Satan and the Limit of Contraction / Adam," a labour concomitant with Los's "Demolish[ing] time on time" the secular tyrants with his "mighty Hammer" while simultaneously "Creating [them] to be in Time Reveald and Demolishd" (73.26–38; E228).[161] Los's divinely inspired acts of "fixing" cast history's eschatological arc as less a stabilization of chaos than the literal impression

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[160] Unlike Blake's longer illuminated books such as *Milton* and *Urizen*, *Jerusalem* displays far less variability across its five versions and thus resists readerly participation in its arrangement.

[161] Following their building of Golgonooza, Los and his sons also set about "fix[ing] down the Fifty-two Counties of England & Wales / The Thirty-six of Scotland, & the Thirty-four of Ireland" (16.28–29; E161), and this orients the British locales geographically toward the compass's "Four Points" (16.33) and globalizes the messianic tinge of the poem's local "enroot[ing]" of the Reuben within the "narrow Canaanite" promised land (15.25; E159).

of "meaning" as catastrophic tipping points, after whose imposition the redeemed future contracts toward a present to be "Reveald and Demolishd." The calamities that populate *Jerusalem*'s plates become "types" insofar as they are violently and irreversibly debossed as citations of/by a future "demolition" idiomatically indistinct from the ruinous history it demystifies. Los's fixing of fallen history into the form of its pre-delineated future collapse thematizes the materiality of the poem's typology and its indelible frieze, its implosive "wall[s] of words." For the plenitude captured by the poem's material types or plates—a future seized as a future anterior, a promise warped into a prediction—"fixes" the text as a kind of singularity. As we will see, the very immobility of the text's crowded salvational data marks the plates involution into redemption.

1.3: "Religion of Jesus": De-mediating Redemption

So far, we have observed that the poem's typological advance is not an "advance" at all, since *Jerusalem*'s "Divine analogy" and the materiality of its "types" swallows its future redemption as a *fait accompli*, an end already sealed and promised as if by that future redemption itself. The text's citationality, in part, consists of how it bogs itself down in its own irreversible motion. Consequently, Los's artistic activity of fixing secular history with a redemptive-cum-destructive impress belies his own fixity within the poem's typology. What Collings describes as Los's Sisyphusean labour toward an impossible redemption renders Los an iteration and survival of the "building of Jerusalem" as a complete and forgone endeavor. As David Punter puts it, "[a]s part of a human typology [Los] stands precisely for the impossibility, the threatened loss of all typology, the point at which the human characteristic as such has to recognize its

ceaseless flinching under the impress of something which is stronger than itself, and in the face of which it only has two choices: to act as the agent of, or to subvert the agency of, 'that which is already going on'" (34).

Blake's Jesus incarnates this "that which is already going on," an a priori intervention that pre-binds the secular and the sacred which Los anxiously labours to bridge. Blake's Jesus stages "incarnation" in two senses. First, as an instantiation of structure: Jesus will exteriorize the poem's pre-finished "end," and is thus not so much a character as the hypostasization of *Jerusalem*'s citational logic, in the way that P. B. Shelley's Wandering Jew incarnates the Shelley corpus's cyclical self-erasures. And second, incarnation entails an immanentizing of transcendence, or in *Jerusalem*'s case, a hysterical immanentizing that less reconciles the terrestrial and eternal than collapses them into a homogenous plane.

Even before Blake gets his hands on him, the Jesus of the Gospels and Paul's epistles is a quintessentially citational figure. In those biblical texts Jesus's intervention into history reveals the latter to be swept up in a typological pattern, through which Jesus becomes the receipt of a global messianic promise that his advent grafts onto the Jewish past. Jesus lives out the Hebrew scriptures' vexed history in the key of the redemption that dispensation could not achieve. In *Jerusalem* Jesus's presence is split between the futural "Lord to whom the Ancients look'd and saw his day afar off" in the address "To the Public" (*J* 3; E145) and the anterior, ancestral "Religion of Jesus: the most Ancient" in the address "To the Jews" (27; E171). Jesus's confusion of the "not yet" and the "already" points less to Blake's Christian syncretism than *Jerusalem*'s shape as "another time" that Agamben ascribes to the "messianic event": "the Messiah has already arrived,

the messianic event has already happened, but its presence contains within itself another time, which stretches its *parousia*, not in order to defer it, but … to make it graspable" (71). For Agamben as well as Blake, Jesus loads the dice in favour of an anterior "fullness" that haunts the long process of that fullness's fraught repetition, its "stretch[ing]" out.

    Jerusalem's prolonged making of its *Parousia* "graspable" galvanizes the subtext of Agamben's future anterior Jesus. For the Jesus of *Jerusalem* purports to recapitulate a past already known as an "Ancient" redemption, whose "grasping" recessively dispossesses us of a salvation already realized. *Jerusalem*'s plot arguably charts the circumlocution and evasion that attends the recessive cognizing of such a "messianic event": the Divine Vision, a corollary of Albion as the "One Man / We call Jesus the Christ" (*J* 34[38].19–20; E180),[162] shadows the recalcitrant Albion from the outset with his inescapable future regeneration no matter how many times Albion "away turns" from the Divine Vision (4.22; E146) across the poem's hundred plates.[163] Postmodern theologian John Milbank's conception of the biblical Jesus as a "cunning of poetic reason" offers a salient gloss on how Blake's Jesus elides the synchronic "always-

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[162] In the *Descriptive Catalogue*, Blake will likewise refer to "man or humanity" as "Jesus the Saviour" (E536).

[163] Albion's apostasy takes on a phantasmagoric quality. It happens multiple times without actually happening, and effects a cognitive delay with regards to the registering of its full ramifications. In addition to Albion rejecting Jesus's call in the poem's opening lines, Albion also: "turn[s] his back to the Divine Vision" (29.33; E175) after his accusations and self-accusations of sin reify into the tyrannical moral law and "Moral Virtue" (28.15; E174); "Idolatrous[ly]" relinquishes his imaginative agency to the "Shadow of his wearied intellect" in Enitharmon's and the Spectre's recollection of what is framed as Albion's originary fall (43[29].46, 37; E191–2); and "fle[es] from the Divine Vision" before being crushed by the "Plow of Nations" (57.12; E207). Yet although Los acknowledges that Albion has indeed "turn'd his back against the Divine Vision" (35[39].14; E181), the poem seems to contradict itself by suggesting that Albion has not yet betrayed Jesus: Los explores Albion's "interiors" because he "Fear[s] that Albion should turn his back against the Divine Vision" (45[31].2–3; E194), and later during Albion's descent into warfare, Los "spoke not to Albion: fearing lest Albion should turn his Back / Against the Divine Vision" (71.58–59; E226). The poem renders it unclear as to whether Albion's "fall" is a singular event, a disaster that repeats and accumulates in intensity, and/or a non-event caught between the "always-already" and the "not yet."

already" and the diachronic "not yet" to yield a machinal redemption that saves by way

of dispossession and preemption. For Milbank, Christ's plenum embodies "all our work,

already made, in advance of us" and concretizes the "coincidence of divine presence with

the human *telos*" "within human history." This "coincidence" pulls from the future into

the past the "total human intent" that will be present only to the collective "succession of

humanity as a whole" existing theoretically at the end of a "diachronic series" (Milbank

137, 135, 127). Blake's Jesus underscores the non-promissory note latent in Milbank's

apparent reversal of the Kantian "idea" of a universal history. What Kant proposed as the

speculative telos of such a history only realizable at the end of a hypothetical

"incalculable sequence of generations" (30), now appears from the outset as the

preemptive achievement of those sequential "generations" and ghosts the outcome of

their promissory arc. History then becomes a belated effect rather than cause of its own

redemption.

Jesus's neutralizing of organic life's promissory orientation accounts for the

defaced interim in Los's invocation of "holy Generation! [Image] of Regeneration! / O

point of mutual forgiveness between Enemies! / Birthplace of the Lamb of God

incomprehensible!" (*J* 7.65–67; E150). In the fully coloured copy E of *Jerusalem*, the

word "Image" on this plate is almost entirely cancelled and rendered nearly illegible.

Though it is unclear as to what or where the "point of mutual forgiveness" or "Birthplace

of the Lamb" are, we might regard the antecedent of these messianic loci as the erased

"[Image]" itself (especially since the syntax of this line quietly remembers the

incarnational thrust of Jesus's "image" in *Milton*'s "Jesus, the image of the Invisible

God" [2.12; E96]). Archaeologically couched within this elision, Jesus's advent as a

mediator does not elicit a projection of the organic world's reconciliation with spirit. Instead, Blake's Jesus heralds an interstice that crystallizes the non-relation between time and eternity– a (de)mediator that less opens a gulf between nature and spirit than collapses the distance between them by erasing the "to-come" that would render the former a hopeful token of the latter. Jesus as a mediatory "[Image]" under erasure preemptively claims the regenerative outcome of "Generation[al]" history's ascent toward spirit *and* marks the foreclosure of the intermediate work of the negative that would be the sign of this outcome. Jesus's marred "[image]" heralds an erased, though marked-off, mediator that facilitates the reversal of one pole into the other and produces the truncated formula: "Generation … of Regeneration."[164]

The Blakean Jesus's incarnation—the "messianic event"—*is* this intervening short-circuit between terms, between history's transcendent telos and that telos's immanence within history. The "[Image]"'s awkward interpolation maintains the two poles' asymmetry while demonstrably eliding it, thereby both preserving their difference and dissolving them into indifference. Thus, Blake's Jesus hypostatizes citation generally understood in this study as that which both retroactively creates a relation between entities *and* intervenes abyssally in that relation. Jesus's immanent supervision of the poem's events points to a heterogeneity of means and ends that was characteristic of the theologically-inflected political economy of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The suspicion of an immanent determinism guiding the quasi-providential disconnect between intentions and outcomes is figured famously by Adam Smith's "invisible hand" and

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[164] Ronald Britton reads *Jerusalem*'s apocalypse psychoanalytically to find a similar kind of shortcut, whereby the "route to salvation" is paved by a "infantile megalomania" that propounds the total alignment of what we are and "what we imagine we are" (125–6).

recalled by Blake's "Divine hand," another corollary of his Jesus.[165] These "invisible

hand[s]" trope the "hidden laws" behind contingent events as an overriding, ghostly

agency felt only in the interstice between history and its blindness to, and ironic

fulfillment of, its immanent ends.[166] Yet here Jesus's intervention is not hidden (it is a

gouge on the page), and the relation he effects is less a gap than an abbreviation, whereby

the peremptory feedback between nature and spirit obtains as an abridgement, a cheat

code inherent in the incarnation's functioning.

The depression with which Jesus's interpolation irreversibly marks the plate

points to the "messianic event" as a performative (non)event, one that by occurring is

"always already going on." So, although *Jerusalem*'s plot seems to trace the *saeculum*

between fall and regeneration, it does not imagine that transition as a straightforwardly

temporal movement. The irreversibility of the poem's recession into a primordial

redemption yields a contemporaneous, non-temporal anteriority that still occurs

irreversibly insofar as it never stops occurring. To that end, the insistence of the present

tense across Blake's oeuvre creates an algorithmic "eternal present" out of what Nicholas

Williams calls Blake's oft-used "tone of normative explanation" (2). The "eternal

present" unleashed by Blake's matter of fact, present tense narration becomes the formal

correlative of the monadic structure of Blake's minute particulars. Because for Blake

every singularity is "capable of repetition beyond itself eternally" and is thus "a repetition

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[165] Therefore, in *The Four Zoas* Urizen's nefarious journey through his fallen world to confront and subdue Orc is invisibly "led" by the Divine Hand, a journey which would otherwise have been "endless" (72.2; E349). For an analysis of Blake's tendency toward theodicy, see P. M. S. Dawson's "Blake and Providence," 134–143.

[166] Stefan Andriopoulos points out that the natural supernaturalism of the invisible hand also inflects aspects of the historical thought of Kant, Hegel, and Marx, and becomes the gothic modus operandi of materialist history as allegory.

of eternity" (Colebrook, *Blake* 76), we might say that every action takes place in an

eternal present insofar as every event, upon occurring, is always already happening and

has retroactively always already happened.[167] *Jerusalem*'s Christian program of "the

Continual Forgiveness of Sins" (61.22; E212) pertains to this "eternal" structure of

events. The text's forgiveness of sins, a citational movement insofar as it presupposes and

ebbs back to a virtual, "fallen" anteriority continually absolved, cites the primordial

template of Jesus's ongoing self-sacrifice, figured variously in the grammatically "eternal

present" as: Jesus's "forgiving [of] trespasses and sins" (27.21; E172), the destruction of

the "Infernal Veil" separating humanity from God which "Jesus rends and the whole

Druid Law removes away" (69.38–39; E223), and Jesus's "put[ting] off Eternally" of the

"Maternal Humanity" through his "Maternal Birth" (90.34–35; E250).

The perpetual present of Jesus's destruction of the "Druid Law" combines the

precipitateness of an intervention with the stasis of a pure immanence, a state of affairs

actively posited as always already "given." Thus Jesus's "frozen promise" pictures us

amid an indefinite delivering motion, as always-already *being saved*. In a poem contained

in the "Address to the Jews," Blake sketches the "organized innocence" from which

Albion and Jerusalem have fallen:

> [Jerusalem] walks upon our meadows green:
> The Lamb of God walks by her side:
>   And every English Child is seen,
> Children of Jesus & his Bride,
>
>   Forgiving trespasses and sins
> Lest Babylon with cruel Og,
>   With Moral & Self-righteous Law

[167] As interpreters from Bloom and Hazard Adams to David Collings have observed, Blake's late prophecies signal an atemporal, interminable present that "emanates forth as acts, immeasurable and eternal in the sense that their ethical implications do not go away," such that "[t]he past is constantly created in the present moment" (Adams 636, 629).

       Should Crucify in Satans Synagogue! (27.17–24; E172)

This poem's ballad form and citation of the *Songs of Innocence*'s "echoing green"

spatializes this paradisical anteriority and renders the pre-fallen world a static cottage

country sheltered from temporal flux. Yet the intrusion of "Babylon with cruel Og" is not

so much a product of the poet's retrospection of an aboriginal state from the tainted

perspective of a fallen history. Instead, it is a pre-defused fixture of that aboriginal stasis.

In other words, the long history of ressentiment summoned here by "Satans Synagogue,"

a short-hand of the poem's conflict between druid sacrifice and Christian self-sacrifice,

recalls a pre-aboriginal "energy" already being bound by the "forgiv[eness] [of]

trespasses."

      On the one hand, the conjunction "Lest" converts *Jerusalem*'s fallen history and

its plot into a foreknown possibility that could again afflict this utopian space of perpetual

forgiveness. On the other hand, the "Lest" and the nightmare of history it prefaces proves

internal to this tableau of Christian forgiveness. The "Lest" and its conditional mood both

unleashes and subsumes the aftermath of forgiveness's apparent failure into the *récit* of

forgiveness's active, perpetually consumed prehistory; it delineates in advance the

disaster that might take place as what has already (not) taken place. Thus the "fall" from

the forgiveness of sins to the *saeculum* of accusation and vicarious sacrifice unfolds not

sequentially but synchronically. *Jerusalem*'s prehistorical "state" is not that of pure sin

nor unadulterated forgiveness, but an originary jump-cut from sin's disastrous history to

forgiveness that is internal to forgiveness itself. This means that for Blake, no matter how

far back we go, we are within the perpetual present of salvation's "normative

explanation." We cannot find a moment in which Jesus is not forgiving us, in which Jesus has not already incarnated and interceded on our behalf.

Jesus's "eternal act" indexes the trace of what Cohen, citing Benjamin's "tiger's leap into the past," calls a "*monadic* intervention," a citation of "*virtual*" pasts "to displace the foreclosure and predetermination by imposed trace-chains of accessible futures" (*Ideology* 13, 110). Blake's drama *The Ghost of Abel* (1822), written after *Jerusalem*, follows Byron's *Cain* in citing counterfactually the Cain and Abel story as a conjectural pre-history or "singular node" in history's prehistorical "mnemonic switchboard" (*Ideology* 13) out of which a social contract and its futures are generated or erased. Like the "grain of sand" in Godwin's "History and Romance" essay whose displacement could have "altered" the earth's "motion" and "diversified its events" (467), Blake seizes the Cain and Abel story as a mutable and hence citable anteriority whose mutation stands to unleash a butterfly-effect leaving none of the present's shibboleths untouched. Abel's murder appears poised to inaugurate the Old Testament's system of vicarious sacrifice, as Satan decrees that Abel's death requires "Human Blood & not the blood of Bulls or Goats / And no Atonement" (2.13–14; E272). But the already "Human" Jehovah's rejoinder of "Such is My Will" to Satan's demand that "Thou shalt Thyself be Sacrificed to Me thy God on Calvary" (18–19) produces a "Forgiveness of Sins" before the Christian letter. Jehovah's pre-emptively Christian "Will" intervenes into natural religion's history of ressentiment at its genesis by assenting to Satan and thereby speeding Satanic accusation and atonement to its self-canceling zenith—the (self-)sacrifice of Satan-as-Jehovah, the "Self Annihilation" (*Abel* 20) of the system of

atonement at the moment of its codification.[168] This fantasy of Jehovah-as-Satan-as-Jesus diagnoses the hysterically anachronistic force of *Jerusalem*'s Christian citationality, its pre-forgiveness. For Jehovah is already the self-annihilating Jesus who "puts off" the pre-Christian trappings of "Maternal Humanity," and thus effects an intercession prior to the fallen dispensation that calls for such an intervention.

Whereas the *Ghost of Abel*'s typology puts us amidst Christianity's retroactive suiciding of a social contract before the latter can logically exist, *Jerusalem* finds us in the epilogue of that monadic intervention. Again, as early as plate 12 Los claims to have witnessed God facilitating natural religion's fatal self-wounding: "I saw the finger of God go forth" and "Giv[e] a body to Falshood that it may be cast off forever. / With Demonstrative Science piercing Apollyon with his own bow!" (12.10, 13–14; E155). *Jerusalem* relegates to a pre-given future anterior what the *Ghost of Abel* plays out in real-time. *Jerusalem* follows *Abel* in disclosing a destroyed and re-wired "trace chain[]"––the preempted Babylon and Og—prefiguring the history of sin and its forgiveness. But if the above stanza's "Lest" casts the crucifixions of "Satans Synagogue" as a deactivated node, this does not necessarily grant this Satanic energy ontological priority. What comes before forgiveness is not sin but the poem's citational exigency itself, which necessitates the irreversibility of sin's becoming-salvation. This intractable imperative, predating even God, insists that disaster and salvation will have dovetailed into each other, that disaster

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[168] This interpretation partly follows McGann's reading of the text. For McGann, the "revelation of Jehovah as Satan" and the self-inflicted execution of Satanic law at the crucifixion proceeds by way of Jehovah's Will "echo[ing] and revers[ing]" Satan's will for human blood ("Blake and Byron" 623).

must have always-already been interrupted and recalibrated.[169] Jesus in Blake's poem

then becomes a kind of catachresis for the "Ancient" force of citation's intervention prior

to any temporal marker, and which enfolds the poem's terms into an accelerated aporia.

The forced imbrication of disaster and redemption, their accelerated passage, means that

there is no passage out of the indefinite present of their fixed reversibility. In the

following sections, we will turn to how the text's inescapable re-cyclings of disaster

through redemption effects a surplus of regurgitated positivity that becomes an

acceleration, a positivity grown so distended that it implodes.

2.1: "forgotten remembrances": Memory as Erasing-Machine

On the one hand, *Jerusalem*'s citational temporality renders the poem's action

post-apocalyptic and oddly superfluous. The poem's "ORDERD RACE" (*J* 26) toward

the moment when "Time was Finished" incurs a meandering loop back to the future of an

irrevocable redemption-event casually acknowledged yet epistemologically delayed.

Blake's poem recounts a tarrying with apocalyptic knowledge which, one would think,

would not lend itself to titanic length. For the knowledge of the poem's crossed

eschatological tipping-point becomes diluted and deferred in the text's plotting of a

history whose complicity in, or even relevance to, its salvationist logics proves unclear.

Albion—whose role in Blake's mythos as the "universal man" casts him as the

concretization of the history of the species—acts out a recessive evolution that traces the

species' errant wandering through a jumble of historical and ideological cycles: from the

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[169] We see something of this primordial exigency in *Ghost of Abel* as well, where the inexorability of sacrifice antedates and precipitates Satan's call for blood and Jehovah's suicidal intervention, even if the consequences of that sacrificial demand sacrifices sacrifice itself.

pre-Judaic druidism to eighteenth-century deism and the Napoleonic wars, and through

the historical "Twenty-seven Heavens, numberd from Adam to Luther" (13.32; E157),

back to the future of an archaic Jesus. Again, the poem forwards a geology of history

rather than a universal history, as historical cycles are not narrativized but confusedly

piled up out of order without any sense of logical progression. By comparison, the *Ghost*

of Abel races through the gamut of *Jerusalem*'s narrative arc, the ascendence and self-

destruction of natural religion, in two plates. And as Los claims, if we know what will

happen, "why despair!" (12.10; E155). On the other hand, Blake's substitution of the

word "Finishd" for "no longer" in the poem's partial citation of Revelation 10:6 ("that

there should be time no longer") suggests that the delays and tangents that postpone the

poem's foregone conclusion prove endemic to it. The "Finishd" implies not a passive

full-stop but the achieved outcome of a process. This chapter's remaining sections will

thereby examine how the poem's premeditated entropy toward plate 100 occasions less a

killing of time before the known end, and more a ciphered accomplishment of that end—

a process encrypting the confessed yet undigested knowledge of what has already come.

The poem's mounting contraction thus conforms to and deforms Agamben's

"messianic-event." Agamben's reading of Paul ascribes an Ouroborosian shape to

salvation history. The messianic-event effects a "recapitulative summary" of "all that has

transpired from creation to the messianic 'now,'" an accelerated totalizing of the past that

discloses every moment's ciphered relation to the coming "eschatological fulfillment"

(75–76). Agamben mobilizes the phrase "time that remains" to think history in the wake

of Christ as a protracted post-history, an addendum to secular history in which time

"implodes" into the *eschaton*. Here time "contracts itself and begins to end" (62–63).

Blake's late works suggest that he could have gleaned redemption's implosive compulsion to repeat from his readings of Paul's epistles. The Epistle to the Ephesians, a text evidently important to Blake,[170] declares that "in the dispensation of the fulness of times [God] might gather together in one all things in Christ" (Eph. 1:10). The verb used for "gather" in the original Greek text is *anakephalaioomai*, which can also mean "to recapitulate," suggesting that Christ's "fullness of times" kickstarts an accelerated replay and rewiring of all prior "dispensation[s]."

The late Blake's instances of "gathering" conceivably harbour Christ's citational tenour, as by 1803 Blake claimed proficiency in the New Testament's Greek.[171] *Jerusalem* enacts this recapitulative "time that remains" by way of its obsessive inventory of literary, mythical, theological, and political, histories. As Robert Essick and Joseph Viscomi write of *Milton*, *Jerusalem* appears "so digressive, self-interruptive, and wildly heterogeneous" on account of its "desire for unity and fear of leaving anything out" (17). Yet *Jerusalem*'s messianic imperative to remember and rescue "all that has existed in the space of six thousand years" (13.59; E157) runs into the "postmodern" predicament that Vincent Pecora sees as overwhelming the late Benjamin's redemptive citations of the past's "semantic energies": that "the diversity of the past yields an excess of these redemptive moments," that there is too much to recall and redeem (96). The poem's

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[170] In the *Four Zoas*, a text often considered a precursor to *Jerusalem*, Blake cites Ephesians twice. He cites Ephesians 6:12 in the original Greek as an epigraph to the poem (E300), and in the poem's Night the Ninth he flags the lines "Man subsists by Brotherhood & Universal Love / We fall on one anothers necks more closely we embrace" (*FZ* 133.22–23; E402) with a marginal note marking this passage as a paraphrase of Ephesians 3:10. He also alludes to Ephesians 4:25 ("for we are members of one another") near the beginning of *Jerusalem* with the Divine Vision's assertion to Albion that "I am a brother and friend; / Within your bosoms I reside, and you reside in me: / … / Ye are my members O ye sleepers of Beulah" (*J* 4.18–19, 21; E146).

[171] In a letter to his brother James from 1803, Blake writes that "I go on Merrily with my Greek and Latin … I read Greek as fluently as an Oxford scholar & the Testament is my chief master" (E727).

gargantuan length testifies to the overtime that Blake's salvationist program must work to accomplish a Pauline "summary judgment" upon the eclectic past that Blake surveys. Consequently, the "Giant form" that *Jerusalem* must become to cite and bind the excess of "all that has existed" within its "fit place" proves eminently suicidal. Blake's salvationist paradigm effects a totalization so unyielding that it devours the paradigm itself; it bites off more than it can chew. Blake's pushing of messianic recapitulation to its implosive extremity limns a crux already marking the Pauline "fulness of times." For Christ's gathering of "all things" within Himself that we observe in Ephesians takes a different turn in Corinthians. In the latter epistle Paul writes that once "all things have been subdued unto [Christ], then shall the Son also himself be subject unto [God] that put all things under him" (Cor. 15:28). *Jerusalem* perhaps inherits a Jesus who accumulates a volatile "fulness" that proffers salvation on the condition that the Christic dispensation itself be swallowed up by the redemption it cites out of its saved "things." Hence the poem's peripeteia hinging upon the redounding of sacrifice into "Self Annihilation" (which the text equates with Jesus's "Forgiveness of Sins") (*J* 98.23; E257), a self-extinction encompassing both God and humanity but without which, as Jesus asserts, "Man could not exist" (97.26; E256).

Thus the "wildly heterogeneous" track the poem follows points to a bug that is also a feature. On the one hand, *Jerusalem* does tell a "story" punctuated by key episodes that can more or less be plotted chronologically on the poem's track toward redemption, such as Albion uttering his "last words," collapsing, and then stealing the once rent "Veil of Vala" and calcifying it into the "Veil of Moral Virtue" (23:5, 23; E168); or, accentuating the numerous visions of modern warfare spliced with imagery of Druidic

sacrifice, the revelatory moment preparatory to the apocalypse when Rahab and "her Twenty-seven Heavens" "is reveald / Mystery Babylon the Great: the Abomination of Desolation / Religion hid in War" (75.2–5; E230). On the other hand, the teleological remoteness of such story beats from their narrative payoff disqualifies "plot," mimetically conceived, as the engine of the text's salvation. For in the case of Albion's "fall" and "last words" on plate twenty-three, the poem divides the immediate aftermath of this episode into two terse part-events that are only recounted seventeen and twenty-five plates later. The text begins to recount the sequel to this episode in an enumeration of the various catastrophes that would hypothetically unfold "had the Body of Albion fall'n down" and not been rescued by the "Merciful-One" (36[40].31, 43; E182). Yet Blake withholds what the "Merciful-One" actually does until eight plates later, when the narrative once again picks up the fragmented thread of Albion's "last words" and informs us that "These were his [Albion's] last words, and the merciful Saviour in his arms / Reciev'd him, in the arms of tender mercy" (48.1–2; E196). Similarly, the upshot of the revelation of Rahab and the erroneous historical paradigms she spurred on plate seventy-five does not obtain for fourteen more plates, when religious error finally consolidates into the "Covering Cherub reveald" or "Antichrist" (89.9–10; E248). Between these events and their delayed consequences lay sundry digressions in the form of long exhortations by Los, creedal propositions in the style of the *Marriage*, and recollections of Blakean mythemes that refer variously to extant or non-existent/lost poems (fragments of the abandoned *The Four Zoas* in the former case, and in the latter case the anecdote concerning "Africa in sleep" "bound[ing] down the Sun in Moon" [40[45].19–20; E187] not found in any surviving Blake text).

The ostensive "plot" that older critics like Frye and Bloom insist *Jerusalem* advances becomes little more than an alibi for the poem's redemptive though erratic mnemonics, its drive to say anything and everything. Yet the text's "digressive," over-inflated memory aims less at an uncomplicated "unity" than a kind of disunifying unity, or a totality contriving its own immolation. Its compulsion to save derails and forgets the poem's linear, mimetic dimension—its telling of the history of Albion's fall and regeneration—and writes memory's salvationist index as a Deleuzian "erasing-machine," much like the slate-wiping mnemonics of *St. Irvyne*'s revisions. Jay Lampert deploys the term "erasing-machine" to gloss Deleuze's account of Foucault's shift to "long-term" histories in the latter's late texts. For Deleuze's Foucault, the "long term" becomes "co-extensive with forgetting" (Deleuze 107), as memory "needs erasing-machines" to "pass over intermediaries" to reach the "distant past" (Lampert 110). But rather than galvanize a creative detachment from the structures of the past, the poem's "long term" textual and historical reach—its retrieval of Blake's earliest poetry and its returns to "Primeval" pasts via pre-Adamic revelries and catalogues of mythological and Hebraic proper nouns—induces formal and thematic delirium. *Jerusalem*'s citational maximalism not only atrophies the poem's attention-span, its capacity to signify thematically and to remember why it is remembering, but the reader's as well. The sheer volume of the poem's memory-banks triggers forgetfulness and repeatedly erases our cognition and retention of just what the hell is supposed to be going on.[172]

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[172] In his reading of *The Four Zoas*, Ault also identifies a process of self-erasure by which the "future of the text" will retroactively "make possible or cancel out the contours of the present narrative event," with the result being that the "retroactively dissolving events in the narrative proper [become] themselves the fantasy and not the common world that the characters inhabit" (115, 117).

Moreover, the poem will implicitly denounce not only the "remembrance of Sin" as a druidic artefact, but also write "remembrance" *tout court* as a dangerous supplement. Following Albion's collapse and the auto-generation of the "deadly Tree" of "Moral Virtue" (28.15; E174), the text jumps into a seeming non-sequitur and returns to Albion's initial moment of "Turning his back to the Divine Vision" (29[33].1; E175) that opened the poem.[173] Here Albion's "Spectrous Chaos" manifests as an "Unformed Memory" that accosts Albion in a bizarre monologue: "I am your Rational Power O Albion & that Human Form / You call Divine, is but a Worm seventy inches long / That creeps forth in a night & is dried in the morning sun / In fortuitous concourse of memorys accumulated and lost." The voice continues: "The ancient Cities of the Earth remove as a traveller / And shall Albions Cities remain when I pass over them / With my deluge of forgotten remembrances over the tablet" (29[33].5–16; E175). Blake re-casts the mythical deluge as an inscription, rather than fragmentation or subtraction of, an aboriginal mnemonic regime.[174] For Blake's parodic depiction of the Lockean *tabula rasa* as an already druidically-marked stone "tablet" re-writes the ancestral ground zero of consciousness and the senses as a disastrous memory implant. More important, catastrophe remembers as opposed to forgets. Its threatened inundation of "forgotten remembrances" unleashes a catastrophic anamnesis of lost recollections—a revelatory undoing of memory-loss oddly

[173] I say "non-sequitur" because there is no logical reason why Albion's re-turning of his back on Jesus should follow chronologically from Albion's codification of Moral Virtue on the previous plate, since in some copies of the poem Albion's (re)lapse follows a different plate altogether.
[174] Blake re-cites his earlier employment of the deluge in *Europe* to account for humanity's fall into a reductive materialism after "the five sense whelm'd / In deluge o'er the earth-born man" (*Europe* 10.10–11; E63). Blake's thinking in this odd passage from *Jerusalem* seems to run contrary to the conjectural histories forwarded by antiquarians and natural philosophers at the time that narrated the disaggregation of a primordial body of knowledge into modern atomized "disciplines" as a consequence of ancient natural disasters later allegorized as the mythic flood (Heringman 31–32).

portrayed as malevolent. This "Unformed Memory" proves mythic in Adorno's sense, in which recollection's collusion with natural necessity implicates memory itself as a function of natural history, or the process of history's ateleological attrition that this passage describes. Strangely, the eruption of this shadowy "Memory" promises de-extinction as extinction, recovery as deluge. It announces the return of "forgotten" recollections as a mode of catastrophism, of the terminal decay from which the promise of the dead's resurrection should save us.

That the poem conflates what would seem to be its own monumental capacity for recollection with the deluge reveals citation's archivalist tendencies—to not let "one hair pass away"—as a red herring. For *Jerusalem*'s Christian through line authorizes constant destruction of the "permanent Remembrance / of Sin" (92.24–25) by way of what we saw earlier as Jesus's ongoing yet pre-emptive "tak[ing] away [of] the remembrance of Sin" (51.30; E200) through forgiveness. That *Jerusalem*'s salvationist citationality marks "remembrance" for extinction whereas the Satanic specter of extinction seeks to de-obliterate the forgotten reveals a chiasmus at work in "remembrance." In *Jerusalem* the memory of the forgotten as a salvation index brings about natural history's slow extinction, whereas the erasure of memory becomes an index not of extinction but de-extinction (though achieved through a kind of extinction). The poem's dual drive toward remembrance without remainder and the annihilation of "remembrances" without reserve speaks to what Benjamin, in his reading of Kafka, regards as the centrality of "forgetting" to Jewish thought. Quoting Willy Nass, Benjamin writes that "the most profound quality of Jehovah [is] that he remembers, that he retains an infallible memory 'to the third and fourth, even to the hundredth generation.'" Thus the "most sacred" dimension of Judaic

rites entails "the erasing of sins from the book of memory" (Benjamin, *Illuminations* 131), thereby premising absolution on the self-cancelling of God's (in)fallible recollection. Likewise, the God-like memory of *Jerusalem*'s citation-compulsion becomes the foil to "forgetting" as the genuine force of the poem's salvation—a divine autoimmunity whereby the "permanence" of Golgonooza's hard drive proves homologous with "permanent" erasure.

2.2: Self-citation and the Last Judgment

Jerusalem advances the a-temporality of a kind of photo album or "scrap-book," as John Ellis and William Butler Yeats once put it (II.176). That is, the fantasy of settling all accounts by way of a formidable, if not neurotic, loading of the entirety of the past and future within the contemporaneity of a deeply sedimented, or "eternal," present.[175] Yet the poem's construction as a photo-reel of disconnected vignettes becomes symptomatic of an exigency to "gather together" systematically and exhaust and "forget" the past within such an eviscerating, "timeless" present. Blake figures citation's terminal exigency and the forgetting of "remembrance" as the "Judgment Day," in whose complicity *Jerusalem* implicates itself through the "SHEEP" and "GOATS" headings that mark the right and left margins of the opening address. "Judgment" is linked etymologically to citation, as the latter denotes a juridical summons within the ambit of a final sentencing

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[175] I have in mind here T. S. Eliot's musings on the contemporaneity of a photo album in a letter to his mother in 1917: "It gives one a strange feeling that Time is not before and after, but all at once, present and future and all the periods of the past, an album like this" (*Letters I* 215). And in *The Four Quartets*' "East Coker"—a poem that cites *Jerusalem* and during whose writing Eliot claims "Blake … kept getting into it" (*Poems* 884)—Eliot connects metonymically the "photograph album" (V.28) with a "now time" contemporaneous with an archaic past: "Not the intense moment / Isolated, with no before and after, / But a lifetime burning in every moment / And not the lifetime of one man only / But of old stones that cannot be deciphered" (V.21–25).

or decision. As Cooper observes, for Blake the "last judgment" tropes the monadic force through which every new event "*constitute*[s] time" and reshapes "the total shape of history … the particular structure of relations in which all events previously stood toward one another." Thus Blake's "Last" carries "the sense of being simultaneously latest and irrevocable" (Cooper 140).[176] However, this chapter suggests that *Jerusalem* strives toward an epic instantiation of "judgment" swelled to its breaking point. In *Jerusalem* the term does not trope one "irrevocable" moment among many but instead strains the term's irreversibility toward a judgment of judgment itself; the dramatic reach and size of the poem's Judgment "irrevocabl[y]" curtails or "forgets" the otherwise endlessly reconfigurable "shape of history" perhaps implied in Blake's earlier works. Hence the foreboding motto inscribed to the right side of the archway on certain copies of *Jerusalem*'s frontispiece: "The long sufferings of God are not for ever there is a Judgment" (1.10; E144). From the outset Blake would seem to reassure intimidated readers that his impenetrable poem "is not for ever," that via Judgment it will have run its ordered race. Thus "Judgment" for Blake perhaps retains another closely related etymological sense of "de-cision," a cutting or amputation registered in the verb "to judge," whose Latin *putare* can also mean "to prune" or "trim." As a massive settling of accounts by way of a settling of Blake's textual accounts, *Jerusalem*'s last judgment advances not one "timeless" and irreversible re-shaping of history's shape, but a self-

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[176] This reading of Blake's "last" as an irreversible "latest" would see Blake as anticipating Benjamin's invocation of the tenuous plenitude of a redeemed history in which "the past [has] become citable in all its moments. Each moment it has lived becomes a *citation à l'ordre du jour*—and that day is Judgment Day" (254). See also Ian Balfour's "Reversal, Quotation (Benjamin's History)" for a similar reading of Blake and Benjamin's shared re-writing "*the* last judgment" as "*a* last judgment" that is ongoing and always available (637–8).

consuming judgment and exhausting rundown of the history of Blake's "timeless moments" themselves.

As in many of his other texts, Blake claims an epochality for his poem when he writes that Los "Saw the finger of God go forth upon his seventh Furnace" (48.45; E197). But here the poem casts its asserted draining of history to the dregs as a uniquely "Blakean" event. Blake would count the poem as the end of an era when, in a letter to George Cumberland in 1827, he called *Jerusalem* "the Last Work I produced" for which he was "not likely [to] … get a Customer" (E784), as if acknowledging his Giant Form as both the culmination of his life's labour and a self-inflicted "Last" judgment upon his corpus that would forever cut his work off from futurity.[177] The account of Golgonooza's apocalyptic floodgates as "all clos'd up till the last day, when the graves shall yield their dead" (*J* 13.11; E156) cites Blake's juvenile Gothic ballad "Fair Elenor," thereby tethering the Judgment Day's resurrection of the dead to Blake's deep textual history.[178] *Jerusalem* thus deploys the Last Judgment to trope a kind of universal acceleration for which Blake's earlier texts are retrieved as apocalyptic propellants. Even at the beginning of his career Blake had megalomaniacally conceived of his novel production method as a convulsion in the history of print. In his first address "To the Public" (1793), Blake touts his method of combining letter-press and engraving as "exceed[ing] all former methods" and producing a style "more ornamental, uniform, and grand, than any before discovered." This expedient form of self-publication would grant writers the ownership

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[177] In a letter to a Mr. Linnell less than two weeks after his letter to Cumberland, Blake would write that the support of his benefactors meant that he could "go on without daring to count on futurity" (E784).

[178] The passage from "Elenor" reads, "The bell struck one, and shook the silent tower; / The graves give up their dead" (1–2; E411). Printed in Blake's "Poetical Sketches" in 1783 alongside poems based on largely Elizabethan and neo-classical models, this early text likely displays one of Blake's first brushes with Christian apocalypticism.

of the means of production denied to "Even Milton and Shakespeare" and would rectify

the perennial "poverty and obscurity" that has proverbially afflicted "The Labours of the

Artist, the Poet, the Musician" (E692). T. S. Eliot's characterization of Blake's auto-

didactic "philosophy" as "an ingenious piece of home-made furniture" made from "odds

and ends about the house" ("Blake" 321)—a gratuitous re-inventing of the wheel—

proves relevant here. Blake's work gathers biblical and mythical "odds and ends" within

an obscure "System" that strives to reinvent literary history as if *sui generis*, and in turn

re-builds the shored-up pieces of "tradition" as "home-made" pockets of self-referential

groundlessness. Likewise, Blake declares (deludedly) his idiosyncratic self-production as

a "Last" productive form—an archival mutation or an Archimedean point, from which

the literary tradition ("Milton and Shakespeare") could be re-conceived from zero as

anticipating the Blakean signature.[179]

 Jerusalem's re-collecting of Blake's history within its "fit place" irreversibly

absorbs that history into the last judgment's glutinous horizon. As such, *Jerusalem*

compels Blake's texts to be re-cited *as if* they were "toxic assets," or ciphered reckonings

of the "Last Work" and its salvational logics. The marked shift from the "grain of sand"

passage—originally from "Auguries of Innocence" and its "World in a Grain of Sand" (1;

E490)—in *Milton* to that same passage cited in *Jerusalem* reveals the latter as effecting a

short-cut between itself and the Lambeth books. In *Milton* the passage reads:

> There is a Moment in each Day that Satan cannot find
> Nor can his Watch Fiends find it, but the Industrious find
> This Moment & it multiply. & when it once is found
> It renovates every Moment of the Day if rightly placed[.] (35[39].42–45; E136)

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[179] Blake describes *Jerusalem* in similarly hyperbolic terms in a letter to Thomas Butts, calling his work "the Grandest Poem that This World Contains" (E730).

And in *Jerusalem*:

> There is a Grain of Sand in Lambeth that Satan cannot find
> Nor can his Watch Fiends find it: tis translucent & has many Angles
> But he who finds it will find Oothoons palace, for within
> Opening into Beulah every angle is a lovely heaven (37[41].15–18; E183)

In terms of plot, *Milton*'s "Moment," like *The Death of Abel*, affords an entrance into the monad and its re-arrangement *in medias res*. For "in this Moment" Ololon "descended to Los and Enitharmon / … in Milton's track" (46–47) and furthers the retroactive revision of Ololon's "Act / In Great Eternity" (37[41].2–3; E137) that will have (or will have not) implicated Milton's work in the history of religious reaction. But in *Jerusalem*, *Milton*'s "Moment," which named a vertiginous elision of temporal and spatial units, becomes a fully spatialized "Grain of Sand" already "rightly placed" within Lambeth, the site where Blake wrote the continental prophecies and the Urizen books (with "Lambeth" adorning these works' title pages). This re-citation bears a crudely substitutive logic: a "Grain" for a non-sensuous "Moment," and dense proper names (Lambeth, Oothoon, Beulah) for a pronominal multiplication ("it multiply") unlocalizable and undefinable. The affective and non-referential valence of *Milton*'s "Moment" is occluded, and its transformative open-endedness defused and abruptly settled within a crystallized "place" that annexes rather than "finds" it.

Furthermore, *Jerusalem* tells us that "Here [in Lambeth's Grain of Sand] Jerusalem and Vala were hid in soft slumberous repose" (21–22; E183), as if the Lambeth texts (and "Auguries") were already the unconscious bearers of Jerusalem/*Jerusalem*'s last judgment, held back before finding themselves "rightly placed" and unleashed within the present poem's salvationist rebus. *Jerusalem*'s citation of this passage seems forced and thematically redundant. Right before this "Grain of

Sand" citation, we are told that "[Jerusalem] fled to Lambeths mild Vale and hid herself

beneath / The Surrey Hills … her Sons are seiz'd / For victims of sacrifice; but Jerusalem

cannot be found! Hid / By the Daughters of Beulah" (11–14; E183). That the "Grain of

Sand" passage esoterically repeats material stated just a couple of lines earlier (that

Jerusalem hid herself away) suggests that Lambeth's backdated reception of *Jerusalem*'s

salvational unfolding proves detached from whatever apocalyptic labour the poem takes

itself to be narrating. The Lambeth texts appear messianically abridged as the purely

nominal "Lambeth" *for no other reason* than to be retro-implicated as the site of

citational process to which they are found to be giving (Blake's) history over.

The same is true of how *Jerusalem* deciphers one of Blake's notebook fragments,

the latter appearing on the same plate as the "Grain of Sand" citation. In an illustration

taking up half the page, there is pictured a crouched Albion with his head buried in his

knees, somewhat resembling the diminutive stance of Urizen as he appears on the

frontispiece to the *Book of Urizen* (Figure 5). On the left side of the figure, we see an

unfurling scroll on which is cited in mirror-writing a fragment from Blake's notebook

that reads: "Each Man is in / his spectres power / Untill the arrival / of that Hour, / When

his Humanity / awake / and cast his Spectre / Into the Lake" (*J* 37[41]; E184). This

illustration purports to retrieve an apocalyptic missive relayed through a distorted

recollection of an encrypted notebook draft, whose citation as reverse-script (de)ciphers

the fragment's scrambled disclosure of *Jerusalem*'s gathering judgment. Moreover, in the

image the scroll appears to be unfurling through the figure from the right side of the

plate. The notebook fragment, mangled into apocalyptic (il)legibility, appears within

Jerusalem's totalizing walls as if literally unravelling the corpus's deep salvationist conspiracy.

Jerusalem's retrofitting of Blake's past as unreadable engines of the former's "lastness" invites questions regarding the shape of Blake's corpus and its tendency toward constant self-judgment or self-summation. The poem's self-characterization as a kind of film-reel of the Last Judgment dovetails with the text's citational mode and liquidation of relationality. For as a citational structure, the Last Judgment "sums up" by interposing an incendiary relation between the parts it totalizes. From Bloom to Denise Gigante, critics have held that "Blake's work, his collected oeuvre, demands to be read organically as a whole" (Gigante 153). Yet as this chapter has suggested, *Jerusalem*'s "whole," or rather aggregate, alerts us to the specific form that that unity takes on. Consequently, the poem's massive "consolidat[ion]" effects less an "organic" form than

Figure 5 William Blake, *Jerusalem*, copy E, plate 37[41], detail (1804 [1820]). Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection.

an accumulating totalization, which compels a re-reading of Blake's texts as (un)knowing co-conspirators in that totalization.

Much like Percy Shelley's self-citing corpus, Blake's constant recycling of his texts both foregrounds and occludes the relation between texts and how and why the re-cited texts "fit" together. *Jerusalem* exacerbates this difficulty by insisting that its formal arrangement is purposeful and not arbitrary, despite affording the reader few resources to understand why this might be so. The poem stages the nonrelation governing the "ordered" arrangement of its salvaged constituents during a dialogue between Los and his Spectre. To drive the former into despair, the Spectre recites a passage in part lifted directly from *The Four Zoas* to "tell [Los] what is done in moments to thee unknown" (*J* 7.29; E149). The Spectre relates that

> Luvah was cast into the Furnaces of affliction and sealed,
> And Vala fed in cruel delight, the Furnaces with fire:
> Stern Urizen beheld; urgd by necessity to keep
> The evil day afar, and if perchance with iron power
> He might avert his own despair: in woe & fear he saw
> Vala incircle round the Furnaces where Luvah was clos'd:
> With joy she heard his howlings, & forgot he was her Luvah,
> With whom she liv'd in bliss in times of innocence & youth! (*J* 7.30–37; E150) (*FZ* 25.40–26.1–3; E317)

To which Los replies evasively: "Altho' I know not this! I know far worse than this" (*J* 7.51; E150). Los's non-knowledge of *The Four Zoas* encrypts the metatextual question of to what extent prior knowledge (Los's or the reader's) of *The Four Zoas* might lend intelligibility to *Jerusalem*, as well as what it would mean for Los to "know" or not know of his precursor texts. This "knowing" or "not knowing" of an intertext encodes a structural rather than thematic relation between *The Four Zoas* and its redemptive truncation within *Jerusalem*—the relation being the effaced or "unknown" interstice

whereby *The Four Zoas* is folded and re-read into what *Jerusalem* (as opposed to Los or the "plot") already "know[s]" about it. And as with *St. Irvyne*'s nonrelation to the erased *Zastrozzi*, *Jerusalem* will again dis(re)member *The Four Zoas* as a *memorie involuntaire* premised on an illegible transmission between the two texts. Having "escaped" from Albion's "interiors," the Spectre and Enitharmon recount one of Albion's "falls," in which Albion, in a large swath of text cited near verbatim from *The Four Zoas*, becomes "Idolatrous" toward the objectified "Shadow" of his natural reason (*J* 43[29].33–82; E191–2) (*FZ* 39.15–41.17; E327–8). However, *Jerusalem*'s citation of *The Four Zoas* retains Albion's cry, "Whence is this voice crying Enion! that soundeth in my ears? / O cruel pity! O dark deceit! Can love seek for dominion?" (*J* 43[29].59–60; E192) (*FZ* 41.11–12; E328). Significantly, these lines lose all context and sense when translated into *Jerusalem*'s redemption arc. In *The Four Zoas*, Albion's aural registering of the future of his fall via his premonition of Enion's alienation from Tharmas creates a relay within *The Four Zoas* between this ghostly "voice" and the poem's earlier scene of Tharmas calling out plaintively "Enion O Enion" (*FZ* 1.7; E301). But in *Jerusalem* there are no such episodes detailing the separation of Tharmas and Enion. These two figures barely feature in *Jerusalem* except in name only, or as short hands of "Giant Forms" compressed into soundbites. Put simply, these two lines do not need to be in *Jerusalem*, and Blake could have easily not included them when copy-and-pasting this episode from *The Four Zoas*. What Albion hears is a text literally unread because unpublished and unassimilably foreign to any of *Jerusalem*'s surface-level contexts.[180]

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[180] The plight of Enion in *The Four Zoas* is alluded to tersely in *Jerusalem* in the form of the "Enion blind and age-bent [in] the fourfold / Deserts" (*J* 87.1–2; E246). Yet this iteration of Enion seems intended as the ciphered recollection of the "blind & age-bent" wanderer and the "Woman Old" from "The Mental Traveller" (55, 10; E484–5).

Again, *Jerusalem*'s insistence on its building blocks' fit place casts the relations between Blake's texts as at once impossible and inescapable, as arbitrary and yet inconceivable to do without.[181] Fragments from Blake's manuscripts offer clues as to how *Jerusalem*'s jumbled assemblage of Blakean forms triggers a short-circuit between those forms' unreadability and their suicidal legibility within *Jerusalem*'s Judgment. Toward the conclusion of Night the Fourth in *The Four Zoas* manuscript, there can be seen the mostly erased trace of a note that Blake had made to himself. Amid a block of text recapitulating the aftermath of the binding of Urizen from the *Book of Urizen*, a faint scrawl reads: "Bring in here the Globe of Blood as in the B of Urizen." Another marking of self-citation appears on an engraving Blake had originally titled *Our End is Come* (1793) but later named *The Accusers of Theft Adultery Murder* as he revised it years later. In the second state of the engraving (1793–96) there appears an inscription that reads "When the senses are shaken / and the soul is driven to madness. Page 56" (E672). This is a cryptic reference to lines from "Prologue, Intended for a Dramatic Piece of King Edward the Fourth" on page 56 of Blake's earliest publication *Poetical Sketches* (1783). Blake would bring the cross-referencing *Accusers* within the soteriological ambit of his later works by adding inscriptions to the piece that identify the three figures as "Accuser The Judge & The Executioner," and framed the illustration as "A Scene in the Last Judgment." Such additions coordinate this illustration's end-time memo with the three

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[181] This mobilizing of deadlinks between prior Blake texts reflects the poem's tendency to tie its plates together through conjunctional and prepositional signposts that overtly fail to make sense. Words such as "then" and "and" often begin new plates to apply direction and continuity to what would otherwise seem like discrete textual units. However, where the prepositions and conjunctions lead and where they come from—the connections they draw between plates and paragraphs within the plates—often prove arbitrary and interchangeable. Yet the proliferation of these grammatical wormholes means that we cannot simply disregard them. *Jerusalem* forces us to inhabit these normative grammatical markers of relationality, as well as relation itself, as self-erasing prostheses.

accusatory figures huddled together on plate 93 of *Jerusalem*, whose bodies unknowingly

bear the intertextual cipher of a self-destructing, apocalyptic matrix.[182] These examples

suggest that Blake began to perceive his work as the chaos of a cyclic poem underlain by

an almost geological, literally erased system of cross-references that perhaps, like the

erased "[Image]" of Jesus's intercession, invisibly interlineate many of Blake's texts.

Such citational signposts perhaps mark the manuscript deposits of Blake's other works

and relay "Blakean" lines and motifs—the "Globe of Blood," the paradigm of accusation

and atonement—as arcane codes that retroactively determine and synchronize Blake's

texts as if in ways that those texts could not see but unconsciously secreted all along.

Insofar as *Jerusalem* becomes a monumental concatenation of Blake's scattered

threads, the text's syncing-up of Blake's history as an entry point into the self-extincting

core of redemption history differs from Wordsworth's vexed recuperation of his

"properly arranged" "minor Pieces" within the form of a "gothic church" (*Collected

Poems* 898). For Blake's magnum opus, "unity" does not herald the key to all Blake's

mythologies but instead enables the synchronic detonation of "properly arranged"

timebombs. Returning to the "cut" of Judgment's gathering de-cision, *Jerusalem*'s

citational cross-referencing of Blakean extracts entails the extinction of the contexts that

might have anchored those citations to their respective texts. As we saw in *The Last

Man*'s coupling of human extinction and citation's decontextualizing bent, context

"draws and spaces the possibilities for a thinking that is referential for humanity" and that

"necessarily englobes the human within a world that is probably for it, that is lived"

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[182] The three figures' bodies contain a piecemeal inscription which points to the unraveling of the paradigm
of accusation and vicarious atonement: "Anytus Melitus & Lycon thought Socrates a Very Pernicious Man.
So Caiphus thought Jesus" (*J* 93).

(Khalip and Pyle 4). Indeed, the normative opacity of Blake's work arguably exposes "context" as a "Human Illusion" (*Book of Los* 5.56; E94). That many of Blake's texts advance plots that prove obscure and difficult to follow, and that certain lines and episodes recur sporadically across texts as if at random, implies that such Blakean commonplaces never had any conventional context from which they could be pulled. What these commonplaces' arrangements within *Jerusalem*'s "event" are made to decipher is an all-englobing *inhuman* context methodically accumulated, unread(able) until now, by Blake's cross-referenced "Giant forms." *Jerusalem*'s arbitrary yet "rightly plac[ing]" of Blake's mythemes proves tantamount to a (un)scrambled and augmented replaying of these citations, such that their intermittent infrasound could finally be strung together to transmit their collectively stored-up "Finish[ing]" of time.

That *Jerusalem*'s re-reading of the Blake corpus overdetermines time's sudden exhaustion is suggested by *Jerusalem*'s odd placement of Los's separation from Enitharmon, an episode exported from *Urizen*, *Milton*, and *The Four Zoas*. Whereas in the latter texts this episode occurs chronologically near the beginning of these poems, here this mytheme and its hallmark "Globe of Blood" surfaces toward the end of Blake's mythological timeline on plate eighty-seven, as if somehow preparatory to the revelation of the Covering Cherub two plates later. On the one hand, *Jerusalem*'s relocation of this moment from the beginning of history to history's putative end implies that this episode possesses no substantive content nor stable function within a mythic chronology; it serves as a citable set-piece that can be deployed anywhere. On the other hand, this episode's arbitrary connection to the poem's apocalyptic conclusion is belied by its contiguity with the abrupt reconciliation of "the Canaanite" with the "fugitive Hebrew" and the sudden

"amalgamation" of "The Briton Saxon Roman Norman" into "One Nation" (92.1–4; E252). Thus *Jerusalem*'s "Judgment" enacts a radical liquidation of content by way of pure positionality: the mechanisms of recapitulation and formal arrangement mobilize recurring episodes as detached Blakean codes as if to genetically sequence, rather than mimetically cause, the poem's terminus. Even Los's "What do I see?" expresses surprise that the long-awaited reconciliation of the poem's disaggregated factions perhaps proceeds less from his voluntary activity and more from the formal inevitability of the "Poets Song draw[ing] to its period" (92.1, 8; E252).

2.3: Recapitulation/Acceleration

In an inversion of Shelley's self-citation corpus, Blake's oeuvre, recollected by *Jerusalem*, seeks its salvational burnout via the force "of its own rushing splendour." For *Jerusalem*'s manic retrieval and sequencing of its redemptive predestiny from Blake's textual past enacts a consolidation tantamount to a massive erasure, detonation, or "forgetting." *Jerusalem*'s self-citations, both of Blake's past and itself, occupy a "fit place" marked as an incendiary catalyst for the whole's self-destruction. Thus, the cited and re-arranged "Grain[s] of Sand" become akin to combustibles.

As noted earlier, *Jerusalem* recycles many recurring Blakean episodes.[183] Yet the poem pushes Blake's citation compulsion to a critical mass by both re-citing itself and *re-citing itself citing Blake's other texts*. The poem's declaration on plate seventy that "The

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[183] Such recurring episodes include: the separation of Los and Enitharmon, the explosion of prophetic "honest indignation," the sinking of the "Atlantic Continent" from *America* (*J* 32[36].39–40; E179), the contraction and ossifying of the fallen senses, and the statement of the so-called "doctrine of contraries" first put forward in *The Marriage* (*J* 10.8–16, 17.33–39; E153, 162).

Starry Heavens all were fled from the mighty limbs of Albion" cites not only an earlier

scene in which "Albion frownd in anger / … ere yet the Starry Heavens were fled away /

From his awful members" (30[34].19–22; E176), but also an iteration of this "Starry

Heavens" refrain marked by quotation marks in the earlier address "To the Jews" (27;

E171), whose explicitly recited status points back to the line's appearance in *Milton* (*M*

6.26; E100); Los's "Naming [of] the Limit of Opakeness Satan & the Limit of

Contraction / Adam" (*J* 73.27–28; E228) repeats as an interventive measure what was

earlier in the poem Los's normative statement of how "There is a limit of Opakeness, and

a limit of Contraction; / In every Individual Man, and the limit of Opakeness, / is named

Satan: and the limit of Contraction is named Adam" (42.29–31; E189), which itself

recalls the poem's peremptory citation of *The Four Zoas*'s and *Milton*'s "Divine hand

found[ing] the Two Limits, Satan and Adam, / In Albions bosom."[184] Furthermore, the

poem will regurgitate lines and scenes with sometimes little more than one plate between

the "original" and its copy. The episode in which Albion "fell into the Furrow, and / The

Plow went over him" (*J* 57.13–14; E207) re-enacts Los's proleptic lamenting just one

plate earlier of the "Eternal Man" having already "f[allen] beneath his instruments of

husbandry & became / Subservient to the clods of the furrow" (56.33–36; E206); Los's

declaration that "I must Create a System, or be enslav'd by another Mans" (10.20; E153)

is doubled one plate later by the narrator's report of Los "Striving with Systems to deliver

Individuals from those Systems" (11.5; E154); and the lines "As the Sun & Moon lead

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[184] (*J* 31[35].1–2; E177) (*M* 13[14].20–21; E107) (*FZ* 56.19–21; E338). *Jerusalem*'s multiple stagings of
the archetypal shrinking of the senses also pulls from various texts such as "To Tirzah," *Tiriel*, *Europe*, *The
Song of Los*, *Urizen*, *Milton*, and *The Four Zoas*. The shrinking of the senses episode is usually signified by
the "Eye of Man, a little narrow orb, closd up and dark," and "The Nostrils, bent down to the earth" (*J*
49.34–41; E198) (*J* 66.31–34, 43[29].67–70, 32[26].1–6, 30[34].47–53; E218, 192, 178, 177).

forward the Visions of Heaven & Earth / England who is Britannia entered Albions bosom rejoicing" at the end of plate 95 (ll. 21–22; E255) are repeated verbatim at the top of plate 96.

There is of course the possibility that such repetitions are revisionary in a substantive way, insofar as they could multiply perspectives upon individual episodes to relativize any one position's claims to narrative authority. Yet Blake does not seem to care about such passages' substantive relations. These citations prove recklessly cumulative, a sign of desperation to reach the inflated hundred-plate quota, which signals the threshold of the self-exhaustion of Blake's resources. Indeed, Morton D. Paley observes that "a certain amount of scrambling about was evidently necessary to bring the work up to four chapters of twenty-five plates each. Evidence for this is everywhere in *Jerusalem* in deleted catchwords … and some sloppily executed plates showing signs of great haste or of the near-exhaustion of Blake's supply of copper" (13–14). Blake's accretive recycling deliberately yields quantity over quality and seems designed to incur "near-exhaustion," whether of the poem's textual and physical materials, the reader, and/or Blake himself. *Jerusalem*'s "Finish[ing]" of time depends upon a recursive exacerbation and burning-through of finite stores.

Like *Prometheus Unbound* and its fourth act's liberatory consumption of fossil fuels, Blake's unengraved *The French Revolution* (1789) tropes revolutionary upheaval as the prodigious consumption of civilization's "ancient" holdings. In the latter text the Duke of Burgundy worries that the revolutionaries will "mow down all this great starry harvest of six thousand years," and that "the ancient forests of chivalry [will be] hewn, and the joys of combat burnt for fuel" (90, 93; E290), thereby predicating political

liberation on what would become the Anthropocene combustion of "forests" for "beacons" in Byron's "Darkness" (19, 13). Blake's terminal "Judgment" of his texts in *Jerusalem* formally reproduces and accelerates this earlier work's idiom of apocalyptic resource depletion. For instance, Erin's appeal in *Jerusalem* for the Divine to "remove from Albion these terrible Surfaces" (49.76; E199) re-cites *The Marriage*'s "infernal method" of deploying "corrosives" to dissolve "apparent surfaces away" and reveal "the infinite which was hid" (14; E39). Yet *Jerusalem* recycles *The Marriage*'s corrosion of textual "surfaces" without the latter's appeal to revelatory depths, as if *Jerusalem*'s corrosion of Blake's past discloses not a buried "infinite" but a self-accelerating "heat but not light" (*A* 4.11; E53) fuelling the end-time. Thomas Burnet's *Sacred Theory of the Earth* (1684), which Blake admired, also depicts the apocalyptic "Last Fire" as a global ignition of flammable "surfaces." Burnet's account of the conflagration proposes that nature "hath fitted" itself for self-destruction, insofar as it offers up its "vegetable productions upon the *Surface* of the Earth," as well as "Every thing that grows out of the ground, [as] *fewel* for the fire" (327–8, emphases added). That Blake hectically piles up his corpus as "fuel" for *Jerusalem*'s perhaps literal burnout is implied visually via the stylized flames that flicker from the lit-up frames of certain plates. (Not to mention the many plates enframed by vegetable overgrowth, as if marking the plates' predestined kindling.) Moreover, on plate forty-six, what looks like a branch extends from the border and gradually turns a shade of red, the same colour as the poem's text; the branch stops as it becomes level with the word "Judgment" (Paley 14), as if to index the accounting of Blake's literary past as a mass burning whose enflamed words drive the poem toward a point of maximum entropy.

Jerusalem's obsessive cycling through previous Blakean forms effects a reckless forward propulsion, a nauseating mixture of circuitousness and suicidal haste. We might conceive of the poem as a death-driven "recapitulation" in the most conservative sense of the phrase: *Jerusalem* as Blake's "late" compulsion to repeat and exhaust all the "home-made" mythemes he had accrued and cast into the expanse throughout his career, so as to be done with his "System" once and for all. On this note, *Jerusalem*'s citational structure incorporates bits and pieces of contemporary embryology, particularly the recapitulation theories of J. F. Meckel and Lorenz Oken.[185] Recapitulation theory affords a materialist version of typology, as it also models the repetition of the past as part of a teleological movement toward the emergent future. We might say that *Jerusalem* (ontogeny) repeats or accelerates Blake's textual history (phylogeny). But *Jerusalem*'s recapitulation drives Blake's phylogeny along a more circuitous and regressive course. Blake's recapitulation anticipates aspects of Freud's employment of Ernst Haeckel's recapitulation theory in his thinking of the death drive, particularly Freud's notion that an organism's drive toward "nonliving" counterintuitively incurs the "detours" of the organism's evolution. The organism must thereby run the gamut of phylogenetic history's growing storehouse of "imposed modifications" if the organism is to reach its receding goal (Freud 77). *Jerusalem*'s revisionism re-reads Blake's phylogeny as a long parenthesis whose mutations both hasten and delay the poem's Judgment, as the latter races to unfold the past traumas that "fuel" the evolution of *Jerusalem*'s mounting totalization and dissolution.

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[185] Frye first pointed out Blake's connection to the embryology of the day in his reading of *Urizen*, where Orc is "brought forth" out of Enitharmon's womb by "fish, bird & beast" (19.34–35). Frye would call these lines "a remarkable piece of embryology" (*Fearful* 258).

Thus, from *Jerusalem*'s totalizing vantage point, the citational relays between Blake's earlier texts betray piecemeal attempts to cross and re-cross the tipping-point on the other side of which *Jerusalem* finds itself. The sequence of early texts from *The Marriage* and *America* to *The Song of Los* sketches a loose trajectory of empire in reverse (from *America* to "Asia") and formally mirrors the expanding circumference of Orc's globalizing fires by way of each text's accumulative citations of its predecessors. But despite these earlier texts' dilating scope and their forward regression through the revolutionary fuel of the corpus's cumulative stores, each text begins from an increasingly anterior point of origin and breaks off at the edge of the same transformative threshold—*America*'s deferral of apocalypse to the future anterior of "when France receiv'd the Demons light" (16.15; E57), *Europe*'s call for the "strife of blood" to come (15.11; E66), and *The Song of Los*'s curtailed resurrection of the dead figured by "The Grave shriek[ing] with delight" and "swell[ing] with wild desire" (7.35, 37; E69). That these texts shrink in size as they expand geographically and diachronically indicates their status as provocations to the transformative violence they index, a hastening of and retreat from their point of no return.[186] Their citational temporality serves not to exhaust but to retrace again and again the limit of the (end of) history they re-gather and re-disperse. These earlier texts' repeated retracing of Blake's history from scratch indicates not just the impossibility of beginning, as Bundock writes of the Lambeth books (171–6), but the impossibility of ending.

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[186] The *Song of Los* moves from the origins of civilization in ancient "Africa" to contemporary "Asia" in only seven plates.

If Blake's earlier citationality survives productively via the deferred revolution, then the late Blake's citationality doubles down on the all-out disaster that lies beyond the earlier prophecies' tipping points. *Jerusalem* will assimilate the Urizen figure as a formal structure to stage the difference between its own megalomaniacal engorging on the ends of history and its predecessors' piecemeal re-tracing of those ends. Though Urizen is largely absent in *Jerusalem*, he appears briefly in the Spectre's aforementioned citation from *The Four Zoas*. In that cited passage we are told that "Stern Urizen beheld; urgd by necessity to keep / The evil day afar, and if perchance with iron power / He might avert his own despair" (*J* 7.32–34; E150) (*FZ* 25.42–44; E317). Urizen plays many roles in *The Four Zoas*, but he primarily attempts to forestall and immunize himself against the coming of what he misperceives as a "dark futurity" (*FZ* 121.19; E390) generative of Orc, not realizing until near the poem's conclusion that his flight from futurity perpetuates the disastrous present he would defer. In the passage incorporated by *Jerusalem*, Urizen's retreat from futurity is cast in eschatological terms. The deferred "evil day" cites Amos 6:2 ("Ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near"), which treats denialism of the "Day of Reckoning" as complicit with that Day's hastening. Urizen's role as a self-defeating *Katechon*, the "restrainer" that maintains the permanence of terrestrial life by holding back both the cataclysmic Antichrist and the final *Parousia* that would result from the former's destruction by Christ, reveals a more nuanced function for the figure in Blake's corpus than is often supposed. For Urizen—a "horizon" or limit to be crossed or pushed obsessively to the brink in the early texts—concatenates the secret agreement between delay and disaster by

which *Jerusalem*'s circuitous citations accelerate the poem's redemptive "Finish" by

ostensibly prolonging it.

By "acceleration," I mean the deliberate intensifying or "speeding-up" of

destructive forces to exhaust and dialectically explode beyond them.[187] Blake anticipates

this line of thought by way of *Jerusalem*'s fidelity to the Pauline Antichrist framework, in

which only the Antichrist's catastrophic ascendency and unveiling redemptively paves

the way for, or at least signposts, Christ's second coming. Evidence of this framework

abounds in *Jerusalem*, namely Los's portrayal of the "Druid Dragon" as the "Signal of

the Morning," the Divine Vision's dictate that Albion "must Sleep / The Sleep of Death"

until his "reactor" or "the Man of Sin and Repentance" "must have a Place prepard" and

"be reveald" (43[29].11–12; E191),[188] and the Covering Cherub being revealed as the

"Antichrist accursed" near the poem's conclusion (89.9–10; E248). Critics have long

acknowledged the presence of the Antichrist dynamic in *Jerusalem*.[189] But like

Jerusalem's salvationism, I contend that this dynamic is undertheorized, and that we are

less disturbed by Blake's deployment of this paradigm than we ought to be. The poem's

extended run-time does not simply depict a thorough demystification of the Druidic

Covering Cherub and its natural religion, but formally enacts a massive consolidation and

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[187] Modern accelerationism generally proposes that "the only way out is through," that overcoming capitalism's excesses requires "drain[ing] it to the dregs, push[ing] it to its most extreme point" (Shaviro).

[188] Thessalonians 2, the text that identifies the signs that point to Christ's second coming, claims that Jesus will not return until "that man of sin be revealed" (2:3), a figure that Revelation would flesh out and name as the Antichrist.

[189] For example, Frye conceives of the relation between Blake's Christ and antichrist on the basis of "analogy," whereby the antichrist names a distorted inversion of Christ and whose obscured messianic chips are released via a reinversion of the initial inversion (*Symmetry* 394–401). See also Williams's situating of Frye's analysis within the context of ideology critique as it was being articulated in the work of contemporary thinkers like Robert Owen. For Williams, Blake's and Los's efforts "invert the potentials of the ideological city for utopian purposes" (182).

expending of the catastrophes that Blake's corpus ramifies. *Jerusalem*'s citing of

redemption from the ashes of disaster perversely expedites the logic of Friedrich

Hölderlin's proverbial assertion that "where the danger is, also grows the saving power."

Citation as an accelerative force yields what Žižek calls the "closed loop" of "perversion"

(*Tarrying* 195), wherein redemption, which ought to proceed from a working-through of

disaster, or which ought to emerge as disaster's contingent by-product, becomes a

positive and exploitable feature of disaster *known too well in advance*. Redemption

unfolds as a heedless extrapolation of the poem's most destructive tendencies.

    Jerusalem affords many instances of how it does not work through the negative

but manipulates and accelerates it. One notable example from Chapter 1 is when the

supposed "dialogue" between Los and his Spectre devolves into hysterical monologues

that fall on deaf ears, an episode which concludes with Los's "compell[ing]" (10.65;

E154) of his Spectre into forced prophetic labour. And although the poem partly exacts

its salvational energies from sins always already forgotten, such an "always already"

proves accelerative in its casting of sin as a short-cut to redemption. The interpolated

vision of Joseph and Mary maps this perverse short-cut, as Mary asserts that "if I were

pure, never could I taste the sweets / Of the Forgive[ne]ss of Sins," and that God's mercy

expresses itself "in the midst of his anger in furnace of fire" (*J* 61.11–13; E211). Blake

will also cite disastrous structures from his early texts as (de)toxifying assets that press

the inexorability of the corpus's impasses as the cumulative release of the Good.[190]

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[190] Some examples are the divine "voice from the Furnaces" claiming that "No individual can keep these Laws [of moral virtue]" (*J* 31.11; E177), which cites Urizen's complaint that "no flesh nor spirit could keep / His iron laws one moment" (*BU* 23.25–26; E81), and the aforementioned "forgiveness of sins" thriving on the collusion between suffering and mercy that the *Songs of Experience* had already exposed ("And Mercy no more could be, / If all were as happy as we" [E27]). In both cases, *Jerusalem* does not so much

Most notable is the placement of Los's eruption of "honest indignation" at the top

of plate ninety-one. This monologue, as Bloom once noted, threads specific lines and

ideologemes from "A Poison Tree," *Milton*, *The Marriage*, and *The French Revolution*

(*Apocalypse* 428). But it also condenses into a flashpoint the world-ending diatribes of

figures such as Tiriel from *Tiriel*, Oothoon from *Visions*, the voice from the "hollow pit"

in *Thel*, and the speaker of the notebook draft of "Infant Sorrow." These earlier texts'

"honest indignation" bespeaks what Collings reads in Godwin's *Caleb Williams* as the

fantasy of an "absolute denunciation of … society," sustained by the concomitant fantasy

of a world engulfed by the "sway of total falsehood" that might be annihilated to "save

the truth" (*Disastrous Subjectivities* 125, 67–68). That such "absolute denunciation"

culminates with Tiriel "outstretchd … in awful death" (*T* 8.29; E285), Oothoon "every

morning wail[ing]" into an "eccho" chamber with the Daughters of Albion (*VDA* 8.11–

13; E51), or the world-weary speaker of the early "Infant Sorrow" draft declaring that

"the time of youth is fled / And grey hairs are on my head" (ll. 38), cedes prophetic

indignation to what Rajan and Faflak call, quoting Blanchot, an "impossible future" that

we "would not know how to live" (8). Los's intertexual outburst is less a correction of its

predecessors' explosive critiques and the dead ends they encounter than a frenzied

accumulation of their incendiary potentials. To spur the moment that "The Poets Song

draws to its period" (92.8; E252), as Enitharmon states on the very next plate, Los's vatic

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accomplish a corrective "negation of the negation" but instead dives headlong into the earlier texts'
deadlocks that, in their recapitulation without amendment, are found already to be the positive condition of
the Good. Even *Jerusalem*'s call for the destruction of "Surfaces" without revelation sheds light on the
accelerationism perhaps always at work in *The Marriage*'s "infernal method." For Blake could have had in
mind William Tyndale's similar invocation of "medicinal" corrosives (*MHH* 14; E39) in his reading of the
Mosaic law as a caustic that reveals sin by way of exacerbation, wherein "a corrosive is laid unto an old
sore, not to heal it, but to stir it up and make the disease alive … and to make a way unto the healing
plaister" (87).

speech does not ward off but repeats and hastens the older poems' hysteria and their

entailed no futures.[191] For Los's two-part speech concludes with the stark and

unpromising lines "So cried Los at his Anvil in the horrible darkness weeping!" and "So

Los terrified cries: trembling & weeping & howling! Beholding" (91: 31, 58; E251–2),

followed on the next plate by a seeming jump-cut to Los witnessing English and Jewish

history beginning to reunify.

Blake's Christian accelerationism motivates the inflation of the early Blake's

"Contraries" into *Jerusalem*'s overloading judgment of the "Sheep" and the "Goats" that

figures the explosive tallying of Blake's past and arrests the mobile categories of Good

and Evil explored in the *Marriage*'s genealogy of morals. Beyond the intensifying

antitheses that critics have traditionally seen as structuring the poem,[192] *Jerusalem* re-

cites the *Marriage*'s maintained tension between contraries as a space "Beneath the

bottoms of the Graves, which is Earths central joint, / … where Contrarieties are equally

true" (48.13–14; E196). The collusion of the clashing "Contrarieties" at this "central" or

Archimedean hinge travesties what Blanchot saw in *The Marriage* as Blake's tendency

toward "violent unity" and "synthesis" as a "destroying light" (30–31).[193] For

Jerusalem's consolidation of the eternal struggle between contraries into the division

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[191] Even Los's final smashing of the Spectre's pagan monuments into the *urgrund* of "grains / Of sand & …
dust" proves complicit with the pent-up fury of his tirade:

> Los beheld undaunted furious
> His heavd hammer; he swung it round & at one blow
> In unpitying ruin driving down the pyramids of pride
> Smiting the Spectre on his anvil & the integuments of his Eye
> And Ear unbinding in dire pain, with many blows (*J* 91.41–45; E252)

Here Los's redemptive labours to "alter[] his Spectre & every Ratio of his Reason" approximates a
destructive tantrum.

[192] For example, see Bloom, *Apocalypse* 366.

[193] Blanchot reads the rigorously maintained tensions of the *Marriage* as a synecdoche for Blake's work
and thought as a whole.

between monumental polarities aims not at reconciliation or *The Marriage*'s "progression" (pl. 3), but the sclerotic totalization of a field of warring data. The overdetermined sheep and goats' "violent unity" rivets the *Marriage*'s dialectical progression into a bloating dualism between "equally true" and thus *faux* oppositions that do not so much advance as "extend[]" and involutedly "consolidate[]," as Blake says of his poem. Blake's apocatastasis of all things "equally true" through the pretense of "infinite" dialectical struggle condenses into the accelerated form of the reductive war that re-collects the entire past. *Jerusalem*'s championed "mental war" names the culmination of "corporeal strife" and its searching damages rather than its redemptive transmutation. If Blake's judgment melts down all things into a disastrously "finished" present, such an apocatastasis submits Blake's history and its redemption to the image of the universalizing arms race that strategically brought it there. The hackneyed "sheep and goats" gathers the poem into what Neil Hertz designates as a "blockage," in which "an indefinite and disarrayed sequence is resolved … into a one-to-one confrontation, when numerical excess can be converted into that supererogatory identification with the blocking agent that is the guarantor of the self's own integrity as an agent" (53). *Jerusalem*, however, *is* the "too big not to fail" blockage gathered for premeditated collapse in the absence of an unscathed "blocking agent." The "equally true" sides of the poem's universalizing "confrontation" point to a Hegelian "ruse of reason" that orchestrates the "confrontation" itself as a blockage without outside that finds salvation not just *through* but *as* implosion, as a disastrous inwardizing that pulls any apocalyptic transcendence into itself.

Blake's perverse fascination with global(izing) violence or "Corporeal Strife" (*M* 31[34]: 25; E130) further demonstrates how *Jerusalem* saves the universe by confusing its regathering of Blake's corpus with the unifying of the world in a pile of catastrophic accelerants. *Jerusalem*'s exhaustive reach, its desire to find and salvage "all that has existed," piggybacks on *Milton*'s acceleration of what was an imperialistic program in the earlier *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*. For the Los of *Milton* declares that

> The Great Vintage & Harvest is now upon Earth
> The whole extent of the Globe is explored: Every scatterd Atom
> Of Human Intellect now is flocking to the sound of the Trumpet
> All the Wisdom which was hidden in caves & dens, from ancient
> Time; is now sought out from Animal & Vegetable & Mineral
> The Awakener is come. outstretchd over Europe! the Vision of God is fulfilled
> (25[27].17–22; E123–4)

Los's declaration repeats with apocalyptic pretense Bromion's secular fantasy in *The Visions* of an earth fully colonized by the Enlightenment impulse to know "every scatterd Atom":

> But knowest thou that trees and fruits flourish upon the earth
> To gratify senses unknown? trees beasts and birds unknown:
> Unknown, not unpercievd, spread in the infinite microscope,
> In places yet unvisited by the voyager. and in worlds
> Over another kind of seas, and in atmospheres unknown[.] (4.14–18; E48)

Los's "fulfilled" "Vision of God" capitalizes on the expansionist tendencies of Enlightenment universal histories, a fantasy of the earth ruthlessly tabulated as if the latter were a "ruse" by the Good or a fast track to the Judgment. Likewise, *Jerusalem* premises universal emancipation on the global triumph of what Blake calls "natural religion" and the viral proliferation of its sacrificial "Oak Groves of Albion which overspread all the Earth" (*J* 70.16; E224), a refrain the text repeats several times (pl. 27, 98.50; E171, 258). *Jerusalem*'s exhaustive textual scope runs parallel to its distended

historical and geographical breadth. The poem's repeated emphasis on its sweeping range from "Japan & China to Hesperia France & England" (*J* 24.47; E170), or from "Ireland to Japan" (63.14, 67.7; E214, 220), puts Albion's once paradisical "cover[ing] [of] the whole Earth" (24.44; E170) in league with the ruinous internationalism of the "Polypus" and its uncontrolled "Generation cover[ing] the Earth" (*J* 67.34; E220) that writes totality as mass extinction.

The collusion of *Jerusalem*'s "Great Vintage" with universal history's violent excesses becomes most apparent in Chapter 3's phantasmagoria of the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, which the poem depicts by way of various chunks of text pulled from *The Four Zoas* and fragments of pre-Christian mythology such as "Thor & Friga" (63.14; E214). The wars' ravages spread geographically "over Europe & Asia from Ireland to Japan" (67.7; E220) and temporally through biblical history. For the wars spur a retro-unfolding of a patchwork history of the Divine Vision's incarnations from Exodus to Ezekiel to Blake himself, becoming "First a burning flame, then a column / Of fire, then an awful fiery wheel," and then culminating in the Blakean "globe of blood wandering distant" (66.41–3; E219). Blake's portrait of modern warfare as destructively networking "every Atom" of space and time within a lethal totality rehearses the Clausewitzian "total war" ideology that emerges during the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars and instances an early mode of accelerationism that we observed in Byron's *Harold*. That *Jerusalem*'s total war entails both the revelation of the "Twelve Daughters of Albion unit[ing] in Rahab & Tirzah / A Double Female" (67.2–3; E220) and the consolidation of "all the Males … into One Male" (69.1; E223), as well as precedes the first revelation of Rahab as the Covering Cherub/Antichrist, again points to a "ruse of reason" pushing the war's

cosmopolitanism into a global settling of accounts that ticks a box on the apocalyptic checklist. Yet the coincidence of total war's universal destruction/salvation with the re-emergence of the "globe of blood" aligns the globalization of the earth with *Jerusalem*'s citing and objectifying of Blake's corpus into a "whole." The coadunation of war's violent synchronization of geographical markers and the Blakean citations' multiplication of pathways between Blake's texts shares the aims of Ray Brassier's "nemocentric self"; that is, the "subject of a hypothetically completed neuroscience in which all the possible neural correlates of representational states have been identified" (18). *Jerusalem*'s exhaustively "Finished" corpus, with all of Blake's texts fully "explored," as a form of total war pushes us toward an eviscerating "view from nowhere" that leaves us uncertain as to whether the poem's proffered redemption is the resulting waste land—a fully "identified," synchronized, and deracinated "nowhere"—or a last-minute escape from it to its "outside." Similarly, Albion's self-sacrificial leap *into* the "Furnaces of affliction" at the poem's climax could just as well signify a leap *away* from the consolidated Antichrist edging toward him (96.35; E256). Albion's saving gesture is at once the suicidal incorporation of the sacrificial paradigm's calculated acceleration and a final flight from it.

The Scarlet Thread: Escaping *Jerusalem*

Jerusalem's redemption leaves nothing behind in both senses of the phrase: its drive to save everything leaves nothing left standing in its wake. The poem simulates the unfailing memory of God yet predicates salvation upon the forgetting of remembrance. The difficulty of where or what *Jerusalem* leaves both us and Blake himself might be phrased as the question of what lies on the other side of citation. This difficulty is not

unlike the narrative dilemma Orrin Wang points to regarding the narration of "the impossible revolutionary day after" (*Sobriety* 234), the moment beyond revolutionary fervour or total ideological demystification, or in Blake's parlance, the time after "Time [is] Finished."

Blake compounds this narrative crux of "what comes after" by, as we have seen, constructing *Jerusalem* as a pre-emptive survival of the redemptive waste land it will have unleashed, thereby rendering the poem a long and painful receipt of an already finished salvation. Furthermore, if the poem does retrace the already saved world by consigning everything to the flames in an accelerated disaster, then the text's redemption yields an impossible survival in the form of a remnant (in the style of Ezekiel) that has survived redemption's disaster, or a surviving remnant that paradoxically includes everything and everyone (including Blake's antagonists Newton, Locke, and Bacon, whose inclusion in the poem's finale bespeaks the apocalypse's radical inclusivity). Blake conveys an interest in remnants enduring the aftermath of catastrophe throughout his corpus,[194] as we observe in *Jerusalem* with Enitharmon and Los's Spectre twice declaring "We alone are escaped" (43[29].29, 82; E191, 193) after witnessing Albion's fall. The latter instance of survival prompts praise of the Spectre for having "kept the Divine Vision in time of trouble" (44[30].15; E193), a line whose repetition after Albion's redemption casts the final Parousia as the minimal condition of a contingent few—those who "kept" the vision—having once again "escaped," of having survived

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[194] Other examples of remnants or survivors include: "Eno aged Mother" whose melancholic monologue on "times remote" frames the *Book of Los* (3.1, 7; E90), the image of Los(?) pulling two forlorn women away from a giant conflagration on the last plate of *Europe*, the similar image of a man apparently fleeing from and looking back fretfully at some catastrophe off-screen on plate 4 of *The Song of Los*, and the picture from Blake's Catalogue of the "*only Three Britons escaped*" following the "*last Battle of King Arthur*" (E542).

redemption itself. This contradiction between a remnant proper and a remnant leaving nothing out, the second of which yields a survival in the absence of loss, betrays a broader theological crux concerning Christian salvation's universalizing of Judaism's sectarian model of election and redemption. *Jerusalem*'s implosive citationality perhaps gestures toward an impossibly universal remnant. *Jerusalem*'s razing of the Blake corpus yields a saved remainder directly correlated with the magnitude of the poem's accelerated disaster. If everything is consumed, then everyone escapes.

But because *Jerusalem*'s fantasy of an all-inclusive remnant necessitates a monumental disaster leaving virtually nothing untouched, the poem keeps open the darker possibility that if everything is saved, then nothing is. For the apocalypse's universality is belied by the curious fact that Los, Enitharmon, and the Spectre (perhaps the most human characters and the ones the poem acquaints us with the most), are not mentioned as taking part in the final Parousia after Albion's leap into the furnace. That perhaps nothing, not even the reader, escapes the poem's re-gathering is implied by the full-page illustration on the last plate. The depiction of Los holding both his trademark hammer and Urizen's compass, Enitharmon performing her characteristic weaving, the spectre(?) carrying a solar disk, and druidic stones arranged in a serpentine pattern like the "temple serpent-form'd" in *Europe* (10.2; E63), fashions this final plate as a veritable "greatest hits" of Blake's iconography. Crucially, the bloody entrails or thread that Enitharmon stretches out perhaps cites visually the "line of blood that stretchd across the windows of the morning" from the last Night of *The Four Zoas*, a "line" that stresses the inclusivity of that poem's final redemption as "Sin Even Rahab is redeemd" (*FZ* 120.49–50; E390). But this line also "stretches" back to "To Spring," the first poem in Blake's

first published volume of poems, and its opening two lines: 'O thou, with dewy locks, who lookest down / *Thro' the clear windows of the morning*" (1–2; E408, emphasis added). If *Jerusalem*'s final plate does visualize the "line of blood" or the "golden string" that retroactively runs through all of Blake's texts and perhaps serves as a "guiding thread" through those texts' participation in *Jerusalem*'s involuted end, then what reader could be expected to follow this bloody trail through the entirety of the corpus (especially since it proceeds through unpublished texts that Blake could not have expected anyone to have read)?

Indeed, Blake proleptically marks his lack of customers for the work through the invocations to the "Reader" he gouges out of the address "To the Public." The glaring lacunae at the outset of the work "prepares a place" of oblivion for the reader in advance. But this erasure of the reader is also a process that *Jerusalem* enacts. Blake's assault on this plate and its "Reader" ex-post-facto means that this plate (and perhaps the whole poem) does not simply begin broken but *finishes* broken. The text does conclude ostensibly with a plenum. But considering the poem's punishing difficulty, how many readers make it that far?[195] Moreover, the final "line of blood" or "golden thread" re-binding Blake's texts together recalls the "scarlet thread" from the Book of Joshua that the Canaanite Rahab hangs from her window to mark her exemption from the Israelites slaughter of her city. As a trace of an ancient form of salvation-as-escape, *Jerusalem*'s thread and the subject who can(not) follow it incurs the corpus's salvational weight as either a total annihilation narrowly avoided, or the long sedation of her exhausted, rather

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[195] Karen Swann offers a salient account of the poem as an impossible "friend" (400), as well as details the challenges of teaching the poem to students.

than "roused," faculties. And again, Los, a surrogate for the reader, disappears from the poem after Albion's awakening, and is not present nor mentioned in the poem's final apocalyptic vision. And the credit for his labour—his "keeping of the Divine Vision"—is oddly given to "Urthona's Spectre" in a verse that repeats lines from fifty plates earlier. Like the missing Los, the erased and/or saved reader has either left the building or been crushed by it.

In addition to the reader, *Jerusalem* erases Blake himself. After all, the poem was indeed Blake's "Last Work," a self-conscious swan song. The work he produced following its completion consisted of some commissioned engravings and a few incomplete notebook sketches gathered under the title *The Everlasting Gospel*, as if *Jerusalem*'s desolating redemption left no future for Blake save for a few scattered textual remnants. Blake's production of the text also proved punishing and enervating. The intense and costly labour necessary to manufacture the poem's hundred plates consigned both the text and its author to planned scarcity and obsolescence. Not to mention *Jerusalem*'s inordinate production values meant that Blake could only print it at a financial loss (hence there being only five complete copies and only one fully coloured, which remained unsold at the time of Blake's death). *Jerusalem* thus ossifies Blake's signature into a literal toxic asset, a depreciated asset without a viable market. However, to suggest that *Jerusalem* envisions nothing beyond its totalizing citation of the Blakean archive is not to say that the text has definitively not had a future. It obviously has. It is to say that its citationality, like the citationality of other texts in this study, entails a self-reflexive dimension that presses beyond the destiny to which its cited pasts are consigned, and imagines a future in which *Jerusalem* itself would be cited, a future that

will have been accrued by the poem's predestining force. For *Jerusalem* solicits the (depleted) energies of the other by opening her to the interminable unfolding of the poem's concertedly "finished" horizon of which it is both the process and product. But if *Jerusalem*'s citational structure does gather an "apocalyptic power" within the terrain of its "future reception" and reflects on "the fate of those bodies that may come to be absorbed into the field" of that reception (Samolsky 4–5), it is not clear what that certain "fate" might be.

On the one hand, the poem accrues a completion so large that it facilitates the fantasy of a "remainderless destruction, without mourning" that Derrida associates with nuclear war ("No Apocalypse" 30). Because *Jerusalem* self-consciously closes the book on Blake, its terminal self-citation unleashes a different sort of exhaustion than Shelley's *St. Irvyne*. *Jerusalem*, in attempting to swallow whole its author, the reader, the corpus, and any possible corpus to come, suggests that there is no other side of citation. On the other hand, the poem's absent reader, its field of future reception, may not have been erased but might have gotten away. From this perspective, the poem's concentrative walls perform the Christic self-immolation that Blake valourizes: the poem's comprehensive retro-coding of Blake's texts within *their*, as opposed to *our*, apocalyptic horizon means that *Jerusalem* reads and contains the disastrous Blake corpus in private so that we do not have to. Its accelerative no future gives way to our future, just as *Jerusalem*'s intensifying disasters are always already becoming redemption. Yet we have seen that the poem's aporetic disaster-turned-redemption yields "forgetting," an obliteration that renders redemption as not the overcoming of disaster but the form that that accelerated disaster takes. Similarly, our nonreading or "escape" from *Jerusalem* might herald less an exodus

outside of the poem's totalization and more an accelerative form of that totalization. For

Jerusalem our "prepared" exodus from its crushing redemption perhaps signals a delay—

a delay that, like the poem's meandering, escalates rather than simply defers its end. If so,

Jerusalem's "frozen image" (Khalip), predestined by the poem to be abandoned by its

future reception, would not sit still like Agamben's petrified Judgment Day forever held

back in storage.[196] Instead it would accumulate and fester, building up the moment when

its reader's future becomes *Jerusalem*'s, and Blake's, no future.

[196] I refer here to Khalip's reading of Agamben's assertation of the photograph's "demand for redemption," its power to "rescue *eschatos* by promising that the last, as image, will endure as stored potentiality earmarked for release at a later date" (*Last Things* 93). See also Agamben's "Judgment Day" (23–28).

Conclusion

(Romantic) Victorian Citation

That *Jerusalem*'s redemption yields a waste land that has either lost the reader or exhausted her faculties, and which seems not to want a future for William Blake, raises an important question about citation. If Romanticism becomes an accelerating past that projects its destructive legibility onto a future moment, just like the accelerating pasts that Lord Byron, the Shelleys, and Blake grasp, then to what extent does Romanticism forward a *concerted* non-survival? If these authors solicit the future their texts will have wasted, then might their citationality harbour the possibility of a subterfuge or ruse to ensure a future for themselves in the guise of a no future? Is Blake's acceleration of his System's heat death—as Jacques Derrida questions of Hegel's ambiguous "death of God"—"accidental" and thus "never re-appropriable," or is it the "future anterior" of a *felix culpa* that would entail Blake's sublation of his System's suicide at a higher level ("Preface" xivii)?[197] Is citation intentionally accelerative, and if so, is it actually accelerative? Does what Romanticism projects as our no future re-essentialize Romanticism's future?

We might think Romantic citation's ambiguous intentionality in the terms put forth by Tom Cohen in the previous chapter's epigraph. Cohen suggests that "everything

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[197] The reference here is to Derrida's preface to Catherine Malabou's *Future of Hegel*. Derrida asks how Malabou's temporality of "To see (what is) coming" structures the negativity of Hegel's God and that God's future. Malabou's "plastic" temporality of "seeing (what is) coming" harnesses a "quasi-automatic alliance between chance and necessity" (xi). Specifically, Derrida wonders if this "future of God" as a "seeing (himself) coming" yields a God radically suicided by "some hopeless accident," or if the structure of Malabou's plasticity simply gives Hegel's God an out and allows God to have in advance sublated his accidental death into a higher necessity (xlvi–xlvii).

in [Paul de Man's] writing seems to devise its own immolation at a border," as if to ratify

that "immolation" as "*irreversible*, which also means to provoke *what comes beyond*

itself" ("Toxic Assets" 96). In other words, for Romanticism to "devise" its no future is

not strategically to mourn itself in advance and thus covertly write its own

monumentalizing epitaph. Rather, Romanticism's seemingly self-incurred no future

signals an "event" or tipping point that it singularly pursues but whose effects it cannot

control, an irreversible process not necessarily unrepeatable but after whose onset one

cannot turn back the clock without evasion or compromise. Therefore, we will conclude

with two sketches of how Romanticism's no future "provoke[s]" the (no) future of the

paradigm that follows it, that of the Victorians. Andrew Elfenbein demonstrates how

Victorian authors' purgative exorcism of Byron becomes "one of the nineteenth century's

master narratives" of transition from a "youthful, immature Byronic phrase [sic]" to a

"sober, adult 'Victorian' phase" (88–89). Joel Faflak and Julia M. Wright point to how

this Victorian "master narrative[]" indexes the extent to which "Romanticism" names a

"Victorian construct." For Faflak and Wright, the Victorians' retroactive construction of

a Romanticism they could expediently abject "calls into question traditional notions of

influence by attending to the ways in which literary debts are defined by those who owe

them" (3).

But if Romanticism and its peculiar attachments to the archive and the authorial

"signature" are already toxic assets in varying degrees for Byron, the Shelleys, and Blake,

then to what extent does this Victorian master narrative less overcome Romanticism than

virally reproduce its citational logic? This topos of the Victorian construction and

overcoming of Romanticism would then betray how the Victorians become imprinted and

pre-programmed by Romanticism's citational drive, and thus become the carriers rather than exorcisers of Romanticism's mutation and acceleration. De Man's essay "Wordsworth and the Victorians" gestures toward this toxic zone of reception in which the Victorians' domestication of Romanticism doubles as a disclosure of its "threat" (86) or toxic assets. Victorian recuperations of William Wordsworth's work as "*moral philosophy*" backfire by registering allusively "a certain enigmatic aspect of Wordsworth" from which "'Philosophy' is supposed to shelter us" but which "remains unnamed and undefined." Thus, for de Man the Victorianized Wordsworth's "philosophy" ciphers an obliterating "sheer language" that collapses and antedates the very distinction between "philosophy and poetry" (85–86). Such Victorian recollections of Wordsworth's Romanticism retro-determine a "Wordsworth" who is less a poet than a cipher for a radical intransitivity archaeologically lodged within the Victorian prosthesis of Wordsworthian "philosophy." If the Victorian citation of Romanticism repeats Romantic citation, then we might think of Romanticism as post-Victorian, and ask the question of what the Romantics made of the Victorians rather than the other way around.[198] What "black, unmalleable coal" or nuclear waste irradiates, for instance, in the Victorian recollections of Byron as immature, of Percy Shelley as an unapprehending resource of Christian humanism,[199] or of Blake as an idiot savant whose early "beautiful" lyrics prove retroactively promissory of the "terrible faults" out of which his "windy mythology" would grotesquely evolve (Swinburne 10–11, 196)?

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[198] See, for example, Mole's *What the Victorians Made of Romanticism*.
[199] See Mole (*Victorians* 100–16).

In what follows I propose two such toxic zones of Victorian reception. The first is the early Robert Browning's citations of Percy Shelley.[200] Browning rehearses the Victorian narrative of transition in his "Introductory Essay" on Shelley (1852) by casting Shelley's oeuvre as a "sublime fragmentary essay" (*Major Works* 589) of an unrealized Christianized idealism terminated before Shelley could reach the Victorian sobriety that Browning had evidently achieved. Browning thus subscribes to the Victorian view of Shelley as an "ineffectual angel," a de-politicizing epithet coined by Matthew Arnold but already prepared by Mary Shelley's idealizations of Shelley in her edited volumes of his poetry. However, Browning also figures Shelley's corpus enigmatically as "The 'Remains'" (580), an unidentified citation without preposition or antecedent to direct us to what Shelley's works are the remains *of*. Browning's figure of "Remains," a popular trope of the time for the posthumous gathering of classical authors' works, de-links Shelley's corpus from any sublime whole and deposits Shelley into the shadowy regions of antiquarianism and possibly geology. Shelley then becomes not a youthful enthusiasm to be sublimated but perhaps the organic remains of a former world, or "terrestrial preserves" from some prior extinction.

Shelley and his Gothic paradigm surface in Browning's early poetry as such "terrestrial preserves" whose capitalization releases rather than alchemizes what Shelley in the *Defence* calls the "poisonous waters which flow from death through life" (*SPP* 533). Shelley's compulsive citings of the dead impel Browning's citation of the dead poets "dropped down from heaven or cast up from hell" (33) in *Sordello* (1840) to gather the poem's "ghostly" (45) audience or tribunal in what is an image of the archive

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[200] For an account of the early Browning's extensive reading of Shelley, see John Maynard (193–238).

Gothically conversing with itself.[201] Browning, accelerating the violence of *Alastor*'s "forcing [of] some lone ghost" to "render up" the Poet's story (27–28), casts his selection of the thirteenth-century troubadour Sordello from history as a geological convulsion that "hurl[s] / In twain" the "hateful surge" of the "Abysmal past" and causes the poem's setting, Urizen-like, to "subsid[e] into shape" and appear "like a darkness rear[ing] / Its outline, kind[ling] at the core" (29-32). Browning's casting of his reckoning with the archive in an admixture of Gothic and geo-catastrophe idioms recalls how *Prometheus Unbound* mutates Act I's ghostly archive into the material substrate of what Comte de Buffon calls "earth's archives" in Act IV's cancelled cycles. Yet Browning interrupts his prestidigitation of thirteenth-century Verona to recall and eject Shelley's too "pure face" (18) from the poem's audience of archival ghosts. Browning thus revokes Shelley while unfolding the Shelleyan logics by which Browning is imprinted. Browning's programmatic exorcism of Shelley through the Shelleyan algorithm that programs Browning conveys not an anxiety of influence but the viscosity of "Shelley" as "intractable material." This intractable material that is Shelley irradiates from a "heaven" not etherealized but darkened into a "cloudy place" (17) that encrypts Shelley's ineffectual purity, an intransigent opacity whose banishment hangs over the poem.

Browning's prepossession by Shelley at the same time that Browning both abjects and mines Shelley's "Remains" for cultural capital looks back to Browning's first major poetic effort, *Pauline* (1833). This early poem stages the *ur*-scene of the Victorian *Bildung* from immaturity to sobriety but contorts this narrative into a drive that cannot

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[201] All references to *Sordello* come from *The Works of Browning* (1912), edited by Augustine Birrel. All references to Browning's other works are from *The Major Works* (2009), edited by Adam Roberts.

move past its own moment of transition. *Pauline* proves overdetermined by its

compulsion to "move on." The poem becomes a toxic asset for Browning after John

Stuart Mill famously remarked that the poem's author seems "possessed" by an "intense

and morbid self-consciousness" (qtd. in Roberts, "Notes" 731). Mill thus folds the early

Browning into a nervous Romanticism abjected in the topos of "self-consciousness." Like

Gustave Flaubert's *St. Anthony* and Shelley's *St. Irvyne*, *Pauline*'s morbid Romanticism

would subterraneously possess Browning's corpus. For Mill's charge compelled

Browning to purge "self-consciousness" via the dramatic monologue and thereby

dedicate the rest of his career to the conflagration of *Pauline*'s Romantic "primary

archive." Yet prior to Mill's criticism the poem is already a toxic asset that Browning and

the poem itself attempt to auto-erase from the library. The poem's epigraphs signal a

critical distance from the text and frame it retrospectively as both a crossed Rubicon and

an immature past left behind.[202] However, the poem's autobiographical account of

Browning's transition from his juvenile waywardness and "crisis of faith" toward his

resolution to embark on a poetic career also recounts a renunciation of the past doubled

twice over by the epigraphs and Browning's subsequent turn to what he would call

"objective" poetry ("Introductory Essay" 574). The text's progress becomes stalled by the

narrator's insistence on a coming "change" before which "the past was breaking"

(*Pauline* 394–5).[203] This erosion of the past after which the narrator is "no more a boy"

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[202] One epigraph comes from the French Renaissance poet Clement Marot, and reads: "I am no longer what I was / And I know I never shall be again." The other, longer epigraph is from Cornelius Agrippa and concludes with Agrippa's bid for the reader to excuse the "immaturity" of what he has written.
[203] For example, the poem's narrator will claim that "the Past is in its grave" (39); that his addressee Pauline should "forget [the past] as a sad sick dream" (244); that his "fancy" take him "far from the past" (477–8); that he has set himself to "live this life / Defying all past glory" (562–3); and that he will speak "No more of the past!" (937).

(395) recurs compulsively and casts the "dark past" as terrestrial preserves that the narrator takes a "secret pride" in "calling / … up to quell" (289–90) but whose repeated liquidation defers the moment beyond transition to a receding future.[204]

Part of the "dark past" that *Pauline* algorithmically "quell[s]" and discards without overcoming is Browning's early idolization of Shelley, whom Browning figures curiously as "Sun-treader" (151) in an epithet lifted from Aeschylus. Like *Sordello*'s "cloudy" Shelley, "Sun-treader" recalls Shelley as an "ineffectual angel" while simultaneously encoding this topos with a self-obliterating force. Similarly, Browning's invocation of "treading" ominously recalls the eviscerating movement of stamping and treading performed by *The Triumph*'s "shape all light." This Shelley becomes a *pharmakon*, a "treaded" or extinguished sun that the narrator entreats to "be ever with me" at *Pauline*'s conclusion (1024). Crucially, it is not simply Shelley himself but his afterlife that galvanizes and deforms Browning's *Bildung*. In a bizarre metaphor Browning images Shelley's posthumous recognition as both an emerging "sunlight" and a "lit torch" that "invades" the webs of a "dark spider," which still spins "new films for [the spider's] retreat" (145, 147–9). Shelley's legacy as an incinerating light that compels further "retreat" thereby drives the poem's archaeological recession into the dark, Romantic ground of its arrested development into a properly Victorian future. *Pauline* is not the transitional text it attempts to become but a tropic or en-tropic text, one that can only *turn* upon itself without any future to turn to. Thus Mill's remark that the author of *Pauline* "should not attempt to shew how a person may be *recovered* from this morbid

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[204] The poem will also claim preemptively the retrospective clarity of the poem's epigraphs. Early on the narrator looks back on his "rude songs" and "wild imaginings" which become "most distinct" following "the fever and the stir of after years" (138–40)

state—for *he* is hardly convalescent" ("Notes" 731)—appears in a new light. For the early Browning's intractable Romanticism germinates an incurable morbidity precluding a Victorian recovery as the poem fails to erase its own immaturity and leave its Romanticism in the "dark past." *Pauline* thus archives an un-recoverable, and thereby unrecoverably Romantic, Browning. It is this "black, unmalleable coal" of a "powerless to be born" Victorianism's unnarratable (im)maturity that, encumbered by Shelley's deadly light and black sun, foreshadows Browning's later works otherwise as a "retreat" from this scene of impossible transition.

Browning's citation of Shelley's signature as a cipher for the black hole of Romanticism does not rehearse the Victorian narrative of transition but repeats the shadows of self-extinction that Shelley's name and corpus had already accrued. Each time Browning attempts to cite Shelley hagiographically, what *Pauline* calls the "dim outline of [a] coming doom" (571) becomes tangible in Shelley's signature. Shelley's corpus is not only a "fragmentary essay" but "Remains"; the ethereal poet of the clouds becomes "cloudy" and impenetrable; and the Apollonian "Sun-treader" becomes what de Man calls a "deadly Apollo" ("Shelley Disfigured" 118), a destroyer of suns.[205] That Shelley for Browning heralds the receding dark ground that would overshadow the to-come in this study's primary texts signals not the vagaries of poetic influence but Romanticism's "irreversible," archaeological mutation of what David Collings calls "symbolic exchange." By this Collings means the intergenerational "sequence of symbolic acts" by which any historical moment inherits and is called by the past, as well

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[205] For Browning, Shelley's burnt-out sun is perhaps literally inscribed in his name. As Adam Roberts points out, the epithet "Sun-treader" potentially puns on the Greek roots of Shelley's name, as the Greek root *persi* signifies "destroyer," and *Hele(y)* means *sol*, or the sun ("Notes" 732).

as the violence and "loss of continuity between generations" attendant upon a generation's failed inheritance or repudiation of what came before ("Symbolic Exchange" 206, 208). The early Browning, then, is still Romantic insofar as he cannot properly disavow nor sublimate Romanticism's claim on the early Victorian present but can only accelerate it and re-pass through its no future.

How Matthew Arnold reckons with the Romantic archive's no future more forcefully limns the Victorians' Romantic temporal predicament and impossible inheritance of Romanticism's self-extinction. The later Arnold's partitioning of literary history into revolving epochs of (Romantic) creation and (Victorian) criticism reproduces his own turn from poetry to prose. Arnold's coinage of "ineffectual angel" serves as a synecdoche for the sedentary, morbidly self-conscious Romanticism Arnold would repudiate as a species of "suffering find[ing] no vent in action" ("Preface" 204). However, much like the early Browning's un-recoverable *Pauline*, the early Arnold's poetry betrays not a working through but a suicidal repetition of what he would see as Romanticism's (retracing of its) dead end, and thus intimates an alternate genealogy for the eventual termination of Arnold's epoch of creation.

Arnold's *Empedocles on Etna* (1852), which "plunges" into a Romanticism conceived as literally self-immolating, offers a pivotal "node in the mnemonic switchboard" (Cohen, *Ideology* 13) that sends archaeological tremors through Arnold's later works and casts his poetic and prosaic corpus as the "naïve" abandonment of Romanticism's toxic assets. *Empedocles*'s eponymous protagonist and his morbid self-consciousness is modelled partly on Hamlet but also on Byron's Manfred, since Empedocles also claims an interiority incommensurate with his epoch's sources of

identity and community. And like Manfred, Empedocles achieves a radically solipsistic death irrecuperable by religious convention. However, the poem's citation of Byron accelerates the Byron signature's "spell of desolation" and its no future. For in Arnold's drama Empedocles hypostatizes his radical singularity as a literal suicide—his leap into a volcano—a suicide that in *Manfred* remains coded in Manfred's (self)oblivion at the hands of the "Spirit" identifying as Manfred's "genius" (III.81). And whereas Manfred's death gives his name over to an uncertain afterlife summed up in the Abbot's concluding "Whither?" (153), Empedocles suicides himself into an extinct future preclusive of mourning or remembrance. For Empedocles's death goes completely unregistered by Callicles's lyrics, which blindly accompany Empedocles's demise and close the poem. That Empedocles's catatonic or "*motionless*" state of being "*plunged in thought*" coincides with his "*plung[ing] into the crater*" (II.275, 416) indexes "Byron" or Romanticism's "morbid self-consciousness" as the cipher or event of a radically inhibited and implosive modernity. As *Pauline*'s and *Empedocles*'s oblivious conclusions demonstrate, this modernity cannot be overcome or sublated but only retreated from or bathetically ignored.

Not only *Empedocles*'s ending, but Arnold's poetic process organizes itself on the forgetting of the former drama's Romantic no future enfolded into the text's suicidal, geo-thermal core. Arnold's *Poems* (1853) would not re-issue *Empedocles* in its entirety as he re-issued his other poems. The volume's "Preface" justifies Arnold's disavowal of the drama on the grounds that it indulges the "monoton[y]" of interminable "mental distress" symptomatic of situations in which there is "no vent in action" and "in which there is everything to be endured, nothing to be done" (204). Not incidentally, the latter

phrase aptly summarizes the ontological and affective condition of the citational

temporalities structuring the end of history in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, *The Last Man*,

and *Jerusalem*.[206] Arnold thus contrasts the dead end of "modern," Romantic poetry only

capable of the belated and involuted "expression" and "thought" of action, with the

plenitudinous simplicity of classical poetry focused on the unreflective immediacy of

"action in itself" (206). Arnold thus recycles Friedrich Schiller's dialectic between naïve

and sentimental poetry as a *dyad* between ancient and modern that, in his later lectures on

translating Homer, privileges the ancient's naïve capacity to mindlessly forget and leave

behind any and all negativity.[207] For in the first lecture Arnold singles out the movement

of Homer's verse as an ongoing "separation" from previous lines, a separation marked as

an unself-conscious "moving away" that Chapman's or Pope's translations have distorted

by re-writing the distance between a present line and its past as either a "pairing"

(Chapman) or an "antithesis" (Pope) (224–5). Arnold's Homer thereby advances a naïve

erasing-machine that forgets without reminder and without negativity. Thus, Arnold's

mobilization of an "ancient," plenitudinously evacuat*ed* consciousness blindly "leave[s]

behind" the past of Romanticism's self-evacuat*ing* consciousness. The ancient's

unreflective departure from the Romantic already shapes *Empedocles*'s dyadic non-

confrontation between a suicidal Empedocles and the blankly Apollonian Callicles, deaf

to the former's end of history. Indeed, Callicles's naïve lyrics leave behind the scorched

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[206] Arnold codes these indulgences of "modern" poetry as Romantic, as he asserts that texts such as "*Hermann and Dorothea*, *Childe Harold*, *Jocelyn*, and *The Excursion*" leave readers "cold" when compared to classical literature (206).

[207] For a brief sketch of Schiller's distinction between Naïve and Sentimental poetry, in which the Naïve poet "*is* nature" whereas the Sentimental poet is a belated "*seek[ing]* after nature," (110), see the Introduction.

Empedocles by being the only portions of the poem re-printed between 1852 and 1867.[208]

Callicles's lines re-appear as self-contained lyric segments under the heading "The Harp

Player on Etna" and thus erase Empedocles from the title.

Yet Arnold's forgetting of his Romantic no future via the blank future of the re-

cited "ancients" retreads the receding ground of Romanticism's ghosted future but in the

key of a naïve immanence. "The Scholar Gypsy" (1853), appearing in the same volume

as the "Preface" that leaves behind *Empedocles*, dramatizes Arnold's mode of a

prophylactically unself-conscious symbolic exchange between potentially toxic pasts and

presents. The poem's Scholar Gypsy figure becomes a locus of orientalized Romantic

tropes and thus forwards a Romanticism already immunized against its death-driven self-

consciousness. Though coded as "pastoral" and naïve via the figure's incommensurability

with the "disease of modern life" (216, 203), the Scholar Gypsy maintains an almost

Shelleyan "unconquerable hope" and pursues a Romantic epiphany or a Promethean

"spark from heaven" (171). But most important is the poem's concluding image of the

Grecian freight and its non-synchronous exchange with the Iberian "shy-traffickers"

(249). This conceit sketches allusively a process of citation that ostensibly shelters the

past and present from Romantic citation's trafficking of toxic assets (not to mention the

toxic asset of Romantic citation itself).[209] For the remotely conducted trade between the

socially-distanced Grecians and "dark Iberians" stages the immunizing (non)encounter

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[208] Arnold does reluctantly reprint the full *Empedocles* in *New Poems* (1867), apparently at the behest of Browning.

[209] The last two stanzas' elaborate conceit derives from an account from Herodotus's *History* of the trading method of the Carthaginians and the West Africans. The Carthaginians would leave goods on the shore and then retreat to their ships, and then the West Africans would come out of hiding to leave gold beside the items they wanted to buy. The West Africans would then go back into hiding while the Carthaginians returned to the shore to decide if the Africans had left sufficient payment.

between past and present necessary for Arnold's modernity to imbibe manageable doses of the Scholar Gypsy's "unconquerable hope" without "infect[ing]" the Gypsy's sanitized Romanticism with the present's "feverish contact" (221–2). Arnold's poem thus deploys citation as a non-contaminating "separation" and "leaving behind" that receives the past unconsciously without exposure to it. This shielding citationality, which already operates by way of the poem's reception of Romanticism as an atavistic idealism, is thereby constituted on the erasure of Romanticism's feedback loop between past and future as a toxic asset.

Arnold's naïve yet prophylactic mode of citation perhaps points to the sleight of hand by which the Victorians load the dice against a Romanticism they inherit either as a pre-sanitized "immaturity" (in the case of Byron and Shelley) or "moral philosophy" (in the case of Wordsworth). However, Arnold's naïve citationality relies upon a structural aloofness that will inadvertently let Romantic citationality slip in through the back door. Crucially, the poem's final conceit begins by foregrounding not the trading Grecians or Iberians but a detached "Tyrian trader" (232), who spies the non-exchange between "intruders on his ancient home" (240) but whose vantage point evaporates as the Tyrian figure drops out of the poem's lines. Thus, Arnoldian citation's non-toxifying of the past's and present's terrestrial preserves is framed and upheld by an anonymous, disappearing "third" that passively registers the non-exchange as an "intru[sion]" yet insouciantly permits it to operate. This anonymous third structures the naïve leaving behind of the past as admitting of a porousness. Unlike Callicles's lyrics, this porousness lets toxic assets re-enter the books as "intruders" mechanically recognized yet not internalized by the poem's narration. For Arnoldian citation's naïve immanence forfeits

its capacity to register its act of leaving behind as a leaving behind at all, and thus allows

the past's un-avowed contamination to irradiate as a kind of open secret.

Such contamination surfaces in *Sohrab and Rustum: An Episode*, which appears

in the same volume as "Scholar Gypsy" and puts into practice the latter poem's economy

of citation without citation. *Sohrab and Rustum* adapts the Persian writer Firdausi's tenth-

century epic *Shah Nameh*, and is composed according to the "ancient," Homeric style

that Arnold adumbrates in the volume's "Preface" and would develop in the *On*

Translating Homer lectures. However, the poem's dispassionate account of the

archetypal battle between an estranged father and son ends with an elaborate image of a

"majestic river" flowing through the "hush'd Chorasmian waste" and bursting out into

the "Aral sea" to become the reflective sea floor upon which the "new-bathed stars" are

reflected (875–92). This image's thematic relation to the poem's action is obscure and

would seem to function at an archaeological level that the poem's narrative economy

occludes. But an encrypted Romantic poetry emerges both in the "Chorasmian waste"

that oddly recalls *Alastor*'s "Carmanian waste" and "Chorasmian shore" of "melancholy

waste" (141, 272–3), and in the description of the river as a "foil'd circuitous wanderer"

(*Sohrab* 888) that imagistically abridges the *Alastor* Poet's circular and suicidal quest.[210]

Thus in *Sohrab*'s Homeric style the left behind "waste" of Romantic citation intrudes

blindly as intractable material doubly extinct because the very capacity to think and

reflect on negativity has been ingested and flattened by Arnold's unreflective poetic

ontology. That this waste's non-sequitur closes the poem does not derail nor interrupt the

text, as the poem's naivety entails a structural blindness to its own citationality and

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[210] Rajan points out this similarity between the two poems' wastes ("Unspacing" 810 n19).

cannot reflect on the reflexive "expression" of its "action in itself." Rather, Romanticism's "waste" is simply *there*. It irradiates in the text inertly as a fossil of a fossil, and thereby reveals Arnoldian naivety itself as a fossilized memory of Romanticism's own fossilized extinction.

The foregoing black holes in the Victorian narratives of transition and supersession reveal a different genealogy of the Victorian construction of Romanticism through which the latter comes down to us as an archaism "swept away by the floods of modernity it attempted to criticize" (Mitchell 186), or appearing on the losing end of a "contest of faculties" between Romantic poetry and the Victorian Novel.[211] Thomas H. Ford puts forward the most recent version of this Victorian supersession of the Romantic. Ford argues that the Victorian period names the lower boundary for Romanticism's definitive end and for the beginning of our "post-Romanticism," since the Victorian period witnesses "epistemological breaks" involving our contemporary horizons of "computers, communism, and climate change" that did not happen for the Romantics but *did* happen for the Victorians ("Atmospheric Late Romanticism" 187). Yet Browning and Arnold symptomatically model how the attempt to name oneself post-Romantic is to become *post*-Romantic—that is, to inhabit Romanticism's pre-prepared afterlife. For the Victorians' break with Romanticism finds itself repeating what Romanticism had already (un)done. The irreversible structure of Romantic citation retroactively solicits our post-Romanticisms not as breaks but accelerations of what Romanticism had already begun to accelerate. If we are the shadows—in the sense of *The Last Man*'s extinct yet coming

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[211] For a critique of the institutional *récit* in which Romanticism is subsumed within the "disciplinary field" of a Victorianized "nineteenth century," see Rajan (*Romantic Narrative* xiv–xv).

"SHADOWS"—of Romanticism's dark futurity, then we cannot stop citing the

Romantics.

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