UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

Poetry and Posies: the Poetics of the Family Magazine 1840-1860

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This thesis is wholly the result of work undertaken while in registered postgraduate candidature.

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ABSTRACT

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POETRY AND POSIES: THE POETICS OF THE FAMILY MAGAZINE 1840-1860

by Ian Rossiter

This thesis examines how the poetry published by family magazines of the early Victorian period demonstrates both the conservative influence of contemporary poetics upon popular verse and the extent of resistance to such influence.

It argues that academic and domestic discourses of the first quarter of the nineteenth century exclude the social and political from their definitions of 'true poetry' and that this process of exclusion is evident in the poetics of magazines intended for a family readership. It also contends that the similarities between poems appearing in these magazines and overtly political poetry indicates both how political poetry is constrained by contemporary poetics and how apparently conventional poems may resist such constraint through limited social and political reference.

The first chapter discusses the frequent use of floral imagery in the poetry published in family magazines and locates such imagery in the context of domestic ideology and in relation to other forms of contemporary floral representation. It suggests how otherwise conventional poems may draw attention to the constraints of poetic convention obliquely, representing poetic conformity as incoherent.

Subsequent chapters explore the extent to which contemporary poetics modifies Romantic conceptions of the poet's role by excluding the expression of social or political ideas from its definitions of poetry. Firstly, academic writing is examined through the work of John Stuart Mill and John Keble. Here it is argued that despite their distinct Utilitarian and Christian philosophies their writings on poetry each establish a view of poetry as a closely regulated discourse that distances the poet from society and therefore precludes the possibility of a legitimate popular poetry. Secondly, Mary Ann Stodart is considered as an example of a writer on domestic matters. It is argued here that she identifies poetry as a particularly powerful and subversive genre antithetical to the maintenance of social stability. Thirdly, articles on poets and poetry taken from a selection of family magazines of the period are examined in order to demonstrate the extent to which the ideas discussed by Mill, Keble and Stodart are represented in the poetic of these periodicals.

The final chapter locates the poetry of the magazines in the context of the continuing development of communicative networks in the period in order to demonstrate how the poetic representation of incoherent and interrupted discourse can be seen as a limited form of social and political commentary.

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Introduction

Approaching Popular Periodicals: An Orderly Disorder

In this thesis I examine the extent to which the poetry published by family magazines of the early Victorian period demonstrates both the conservative influence of contemporary poetics upon popular verse and the extent to which such writing resists these influences.

The period 1840-1860 saw a burgeoning of periodical titles, in particular those addressing a domestic audience. Many, such as the *Family Friend* explicitly addressed families in their titles. These magazines also reflected a desire to promote social harmony by establishing a commonality of interest between different sections of society. The Preface to the first volume of the *Family Friend* boasts that 'already *The Family Friend* has been received as a welcome Visitor and Friend by FIFTY THOUSAND SUBSCRIBERS, and every day affords us increased evidence of the approval of all classes of the public'.[1] Earlier *Bradshaw's Manchester Journal* had taken a more earnest approach:

> The external appearance also of the work, we trust, will be of such a character as to render it acceptable to the opulent; whilst, by the lowness of the price, it will be placed within the reach of all classes, in the earnest hope that it may become at once the instrument of communicating, to those who move in other spheres, correct information as to the actual condition, wants, and feelings of the Operative, and be the means of inducing such habits of foresight and reflection, in this important portion of the community, as may tend to elevate their character and multiply their substantial comforts.[2]

The differing tones of these addresses to the reader suggest a variety of editorial style and motivation even between titles that seek to appeal to the same broad readership. Whilst

[1] In some cases, such as that of the *Family Friend*, the bound volumes do not indicate the date of publication of the constituent parts except in rare cases where endpapers are included. References to periodicals extant in volume form where the precise date of publication of the constituent parts is unclear in the original will be given showing the volume number and date. *Family Friend*, I, December 1849, p. iii.

[2] 'To Our Readers', *Bradshaw's Manchester Journal*, 1 May 1841, p. 1.

both these pieces characterize the magazine as an intermediary between social classes one appears primarily concerned with its popularity whilst the other gives equal weight to its social mission. Any attempt to scrutinize the poetics of these magazines must first establish a framework that is able to take account of this diversity.

In order to examine the poetics influencing the poetry within these magazines it is also necessary to examine both evidence from the magazines themselves and the influence of the more general cultural climate in which this poetry was selected for publication. In order to establish grounds for statements regarding the extent to which the poetry of popular family magazines may be influenced by, or resistant to, a conservative poetic I will begin by addressing the issue of the diversity of the object of study. I will proceed to introduce the major poetic and cultural issues at stake by means of a poetic example and then examine aspects of the poetic climate through an analysis of contemporary academic poetics, as exemplified by the writings of John Keble and John Stuart Mill and of the poetics of writing on domestic matters, through a study of Mary Ann Stodart. I will then move to a discussion of the poetics of the magazines themselves and of the communicative network of which they form a part.

I will focus particularly upon the *Family Friend* and *Bradshaw's Journal* as these magazines are explicit in addressing a broad popular readership. The *Family Friend* ran throughout the period under discussion (from 1849 to 1867 and then, revived in 1870, it continued until 1921) and *Bradshaw's Journal* was also sufficiently popular to continue for several years (between 1841 and 1843).

Isobel Armstrong's comments on Victorian publishing in *Victorian Scrutinies* connect an increasing volume of poetry with an increasing readership and a developing interest in literature:

> The volume of poetry published [between 1830 and 1870] might lead one to expect this to be a time of particularly active discussion [on the subject of poetry]; it was also a time when the number of publications of all kinds increased with the expanding reading public and when there was a growing popular interest in literature.[3]

Although she discusses poetry from the perspective of the periodical review, her focus upon major poets provides a useful method of delimiting her object of study. A shift of emphasis from the poet to the periodical presents additional difficulties of definition because the volume and variety of material raises significant methodological issues. As Lyn Pykett has observed: 'students of the Victorian periodical press have persistently confronted the double problem of defining the object of study, and devising an appropriate methodological framework within which to conduct that study'.[4]

It has often been pointed out that anyone commencing a study of periodical publishing in the nineteenth century cannot but be struck by the volume and variety of the material.[5] Some titles launched only ran to a handful of numbers, others amalgamated, still others changed their titles for convenience whilst continuing more or less unchanged. Some changed their frequency of publication. For example, having already altered its title from *Bradshaw's Manchester Journal* to *Bradshaw's Journal* the magazine later changed its

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[3] *Victorian Scrutinies: Reviews of Poetry 1830-1870*, ed. by Isobel Armstrong (London: Athlone, 1972), p. 2. Armstrong discusses some of the poets examined in this study, including Charles Swain, during her examination of major poets such as Arthur Hugh Clough in *Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Poetics and Politics* (London: Routledge, 1993). Here I focus upon the poetry in the context of a selection of popular magazines.

[4] Lyn Pykett, 'Reading the Periodical Press: Text and Context', *Victorian Periodicals Review* (hereafter *VPR*), 22 (1989), 100-108 (p. 100). Further references will be given in the text.

[5] See Michael Wolff, '*The British Controversialist and Impartial Inquirer*, 1850-1872: A Pearl from the Golden Stream' in *The Victorian Periodical Press: Samplings and Soundings*, ed. by Joanne Shattock and Michael Wolff, (Leicester: Leicester University Press; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), pp. 367-392 (first publ. in *Editing Nineteenth-Century Texts*, ed. by John M. Robson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961), pp. 37-59, repr. in *Victorian Periodicals Newsletter* (hereafter *VPN*), 13 (1971), 23-38) and 'Charting the Golden Stream: Thoughts on a Directory of Victorian Periodicals' *VPR*, 18 (1985), 48-51. See also Brian E. Maidment, 'Victorian Periodicals and Academic Discourse' in *Investigating Victorian Journalism*, ed. by Laurel Brake, Aled Jones and Lionel Madden, (London: Macmillan, 1990) pp. 142-154. Further references will be given in the text.

frequency from weekly to monthly publication altering its layout but retaining the latter title. Conversely, in the preface to its first volume the *Family Friend* announced:

> that *a more frequent issue of our work has been almost unanimously required*; hence, in the coming year, our numbers will be issued upon the FIRST and FIFTEENTH of each month, instead of upon the First only.[6]

Similarly, editorial staffs fluctuated and contributors changed, many contributing to a range of titles. Even quite minor figures such as John Bolton Rogerson contributed to a variety of periodicals including the *Manchester Guardian*, *Liverpool Kaleidoscope*, the *Phoenix, or Manchester Literary Journal*, the *People's Journal*, *Bradshaw's Journal* and edited the short-lived *Phoenix* (1828) and *Falcon* (1831) (the former with John Hewitt). Brian Maidment includes Rogerson alongside the poets John Critchley Prince and Charles Swain 'whose work appears across a wide range of periodicals in a variety of contexts'.[7]

The ephemeral nature of the periodical, usually produced using inks and papers of a quality inferior to those in many areas of book publishing, means that such publications are particularly susceptible to the passage of time.[8] Some titles may have disappeared without trace. Wolff refers to 'some [titles] completely forgotten and perhaps even irretrievable' (Wolff, '*The British Controversialist*', p. 367). Others, like the *Family Newspaper*, whilst surviving beyond their immediate period of publication are, apparently, now lost.[9]

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[6] 'Preface', *Family Friend*, I, December 1849, p. iv.

[7] Brian E. Maidment, 'Magazines of Popular Progress and the Artisans', *VPR*, 17 (1984), 83-94 (p. 89). Further references will be given in the text. The range of contribution and syndication of more successful writers can be seen in Graham Law, 'The Serial Publication in Britain of the Novels of Wilkie Collins' *Humanitas*, 33 (1995), 1-29 and 'Wilkie in the Weeklies: the Serialization and Syndication of Collins's Late Novels' in *VPR*, 30 (1997), 243-269. Contributions by Rogerson not mentioned by Maidment include the poem 'The Outcast', *Pictorial Times*, 16 December 1843, p. 267.

[8] See Margaret Beetham, 'Towards a Theory of the Periodical as a Publishing Genre' in *Investigating Victorian Journalism*, pp. 19-32.

[9] The copies of the *Family Newspaper* originally preserved by the British Library were in that part of the collection destroyed by bombing in the Second World War. See also John Stock Clarke, '*Home*, a lost Victorian Periodical', *VPR*, 25 (1992), 85-88.

Those attempting to define the periodical as a publishing genre or to distinguish periodical sub-genres are therefore confronted with the textual fragments of a putative whole. Such fragments, even where they correspond to the entire run of a particular title, do not present a readily definable or complete object of study. The common practice of publication in multiple forms, such as the weekly numbers, monthly parts, and quarterly or half-yearly volumes of many popular magazines involved the use of different bindings and thus altered the materiality and mode of presentation of such titles. It also influenced the provision of contextual material such as the additional editorial of volume prefaces and the commercial matter forming the endpaper advertisements of weekly numbers.[10] Such a title is arguably several distinct publications containing a substantial amount of common material marketed to separate groups of readers with differing requirements and purchasing patterns. Attempts to define the popular periodical text are thus complicated by the very materials and production methods that constitute it, whether this takes the form of an incomplete record (through the loss of particular titles, numbers or peripheral material) or the diversified marketing strategy employed by its producers.

Frequency of publication is a convenient point of reference for periodical scholarship and would appear a strong ground for the establishment of generic distinctions. Not only does it describe the periodicity that defines such publications but may often correlate with other aspects of a title such as price, style, quality of presentation, content and likely readership. However, frequency is not an appropriate basis for generic distinction: if the material differences noted above are ignored a weekly magazine may also be regarded as a monthly and a biannual. Conversely, if these differences are accepted it cannot be regarded as one magazine, as continuity of title might suggest, but several. The amalgamation of two titles might result in the 'disappearance' of one whilst its editorial policies continue to influence

[10] Margaret Beetham, 'Open and Closed: the Periodical as a Publishing Genre', *VPR*, 22 (1989), 96-100. Further references will be given in the text.

the content of the other. Alternatively, merger of titles could even result in 'one magazine published under three separate names'.[11]

It is therefore not surprising that much scholarship has focused upon periodical bibliography or has taken routes through periodical textuality which are less concerned with a close examination of the text *per se* than of its producers. When changes in a periodical title are read through a succession of editors or the influence of an editor is examined in detail across several publications particular titles become readily associated with the biographies and personalities of those who shape them. This focus upon literary careers and supporting textual 'evidence' has been challenged, notably in a special issue of *Victorian Periodicals Review*:

> Our work in the two decades since the founding of RSVP [Research Society for Victorian Periodicals] has focused on the monumental and apparently impossible effort to gain total access to the textual base [...] and an increasing number of articles and books describing the careers of individual editors, authors, and periodicals.[12]

Beyond archival study periodicals have been invested with something of a personal character in scholarly description and develop a 'career' of their own alongside those of their editors and authors. Margaret Beetham, for example, refers to the 'recognizable persona or identity' of a periodical's layout (Beetham, 'Open and Closed', p. 99).[13] Although this focus upon literary careers and personal influence has been challenged it remains common in the area of periodical research to an extent that is no longer current in other fields of literary studies. For example, whilst Ann Parry has drawn attention to the

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[11] Jeffrey A. Auerbach, 'What They Read: Mid-Nineteenth Century English Women's Magazines and the Emergence of a Consumer Culture', *VPR*, 30 (1997), 121-140 (p. 121). Further references will be given in the text.

[12] Laurel Brake and Anne Humpherys, 'Critical Theory and Periodical Research', *VPR* , 22 (1989), 94-95 (p. 94). Further references will be given in the text.

[13] Similar language is used in statistical approaches to the analysis of content. See Scott Bennett, 'The Editorial Character and Readership of *The Penny Magazine*: An Analysis', *VPR*, 17 (1984), 127-141. Further references will be given in the text.

'false concordances' that can result from this approach, it still forms a significant strand in the scholarship.[14] Whilst Beetham has more recently turned to a 'case study' approach closer to Parry's on the grounds that 'it is impossible to decide what constitutes single text when one is dealing with a serial which came out weekly for years' her close-reading has been used to 'construct an argument about periodisation' to chronicle developments within an area of periodical publication rather than to interrogate the details of periodical (inter)textuality.[15]

Brian Maidment, amongst others, has looked to reader-response theory in order to ground generic distinctions between otherwise similar magazines and to avoid the 'series of elisions [that] characteristically does take place, turning "penny magazine" from a convenient formal comment into something approaching an evaluative and descriptive assumption' (Maidment, 'Magazines of Popular Progress', p. 85). However, his attempts to define an 'implied reader' are themselves problematic and recall the difficulties discussed above in relation to periodical textuality. He acknowledges the difficulty of deducing readership noting that 'assumptions about readership are at best risky' because of the variety of possible (and perhaps contradictory) indicators, such as the cost or politics of a periodical or the social position of its contributors, which inform the analysis of its content and address through which the 'implied reader' is determined (Maidment, 'Magazines of Popular Progress', p. 85).

He does not address directly the issue of what constitutes the definition of a particular periodical. If the definition of the reading audience for a periodical is problematic before

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[14] Ann Parry, 'Theories of Formation: *Macmillan's Magazine*: Vol. 1, November 1859 Monthly. 1|0', *VPR*, 26 (1993), 100-104 (p. 101). Two out of four articles in the 1997 Summer volume of *VPR* take this approach, one being the winner of the previous year's VanArsdel Prize. See Anya Clayworth, '*The Woman's World*: Oscar Wilde as Editor', and Stephanie Green, 'Oscar Wilde's *The Woman's World*', *VPR*, 30 (1997), 84-101 and 102-120 respectively.

[15] Margaret Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own?: Domesticity and Desire in the Woman's Magazine, 1800-1914* (London: Routledge, 1986), p. 5 and p. 6 respectively. Beetham prefers the notion of intertext given the complex nature of periodical publication. Further references will be given in the text.

considerations of the diverse forms in which it appears are taken into account then attempts to theorize 'its' reception are even more hazardous. Notwithstanding these issues, there is, nevertheless

> [a] gap between an "implied reader" predicated by the tone and address of the magazine itself and the evidence of the actual effect of the magazine in the comments of readers, circulation figures, and other historical evidence of social influence (Maidment, 'Magazines of Popular Progress', 85).

More generally, according to Anne Humpherys, there is a

> critical shift of focus from author to reader [which] poses certain difficulties [...] When the basis of meaning making is the reader, a large gap opens up between modern critic and Victorian popular text.[16]

Any examination of Victorian popular periodical texts is therefore confronted not only with a textuality that is inherently discontinuous, a serial publication to which many and varied hands contribute, but one in which questions of genre oscillate between the incomplete textual body and the insubstantial body of the 'implied' readership both of which are not only distanced from each but from the 'modern critic'.

In her article 'Reading the Periodical Press: Text and Context' Lyn Pykett refers Maidment's methodology back to articles by James Mill and John Stuart Mill in the *Westminster Review* of 1824. Like Maidment, James Mill, in particular, attempts to identify a periodical genre and to reconstruct its readership through analysis of its mode of address. Mill considers that the apparently mutually antagonistic *Edinburgh Review* and *Quarterly Review* actually serve the same conservative political interest:

[16] Anne Humpherys, 'Locating the Popular Text', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 19 (1991), 351-359 (p. 352). Humpherys defines the 'Victorian popular text' in terms of periodical articles: 'the mass of pseudonymously and anonymously written texts that were published in journals like *Lloyd's* and *Reynolds's Miscellanies* and which formed the basis of Louis James's [...] *Fiction for the Workingman* (1963)' p. 353.

> The two publications which we have already pointed out as destined to be the principal objects of our attention in this department, are addressed to the aristocratical classes. From the circumstances belonging to them it will appear that they may be regarded as almost exclusively addressed to those classes.[17]

The common approach suggests that the difficulties encountered by the analytical or academic reader wishing to define the periodical through its readership are not only a matter of historical distance. This is not merely a matter of the problem of material 'evidence', or of 'a degree of conceptual possession of a "documentary" culture' that Pykett notes with reference to Raymond Williams (Pykett, 'Reading the Periodical Press', p. 101). Even recent studies examining the relationship between magazines and readers using methodologies from the social sciences demonstrate that neither magazines nor their readers are susceptible to generic categorisation. One such study of twentieth-century readers considers that:

> Readers' reading and their reported experience are no more nor less authentic than that of the critic or writer.
>
> This does not mean, however, that reader research should be discounted altogether. Talking to readers has proved invaluable [...] not least in revealing that no reader can nor does occupy the imaginary position of 'naive' or 'ideal' reader, produced in and by the ideology of a single text.[18]

This research into the assumed category of 'woman's magazine' demonstrates the problematic nature of the classification. Not only is there a range of magazines marketed to different groups of women but any particular reading of one of these is influenced by the physical and cultural context in which it is read. 'Talking to readers' rather than

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[17] James Mill, 'Periodical Literature', *Westminster Review*, I, January 1824, pp. 206-249 (p. 210). Mill defines 'aristocracy' as the 'comparatively small number possessing political power' (p. 211). For a discussion of the sectarianism of the reviews Mill examines and that in which his article appears see Walter E. Houghton, 'Periodical Literature and the Articulate Classes', in *The Victorian Periodical Press*, pp. 3-27 (pp. 10-13).

[18] Ros Ballaster and others, *Women's Worlds: Ideology, Femininity and the Woman's Magazine* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991), p. 40. Further references will be given in the text. For a more detailed account of 'talking to readers' see Joke Hermes, *Reading Women's Magazines: An Analysis of Everyday Media Use* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995).

providing evidence for some form of composite readerly identity or correspondence with an 'implied' readership demonstrates its difference from such constructions. The editors or publishers of a 'woman's magazine' may construct a stereotype of a target readership and style their product accordingly but this reader remains imaginary. Consequently attempts to reconstruct her by textual analysis must necessarily be futile.

Moreover, casual consumption of these magazines is shown to cut across both class and gender (Ballaster, p. 113). Popular periodicals and their readers exhibit a complex, perhaps complementary, elusiveness: they appear to collapse any distance between the 'critical' and the 'ordinary' reader and also between the 'historical' and 'modern' reader. Maidment like Mill before him is sufficiently removed from his object of study to necessitate the construction of an 'implied' readership in order to determine a category for (or within) periodical publishing. Such detachment problematizes his opening assertion that:

> The existence of a distinct genre of 'journals of popular progress' in the 1840s was widely acknowledged by contemporary commentators. Indeed, the genre was so obvious that detailed definition was not felt to be necessary (Maidment, 'Magazines of Popular Progress', p. 83).[19]

The lack of a precise definition suggests that whilst 'contemporary commentators' may believe they have identified a 'distinct genre', they have instead introduced an expedient and accommodating category which discourages further examination. Like the urban experience discussed by Raymond Williams, periodicals, and particularly the miscellaneous magazines, are part of a world of 'presentation, appearance, a lively but typically disconnected flow'.[20] Moreover, in common with Williams' urban 'crowd of

[19] Maidment uses the 'reflective' model, questioned by Pykett, citing *Alton Locke* 'a novel which amounted to a Baedeker guide to artisan culture' (Maidment, 'Magazines of Popular Progress', p. 83) as evidence to ground his argument much as others have cited periodicals in support of arguments about 'literary' texts.

[20] Raymond Williams, *Country and City in the Modern Novel*, W. D. Thomas Memorial Lecture (University College of Swansea, 1987), p. 2. Further references are given after quotations in the text.

strangers' (*Country and City*, p. 6) they show only a portion of themselves at a time and an observer is able to make distinctions only superficially: to note fleeting stereotypes as they pass.

As Brake and Humpherys suggest, the complex diversity of popular periodical textuality invites analysis in terms of Bakhtinian *heteroglossia* (Brake and Humpherys, p. 94). From this perspective formal characteristics of the periodical such as the conventions of layout, editorial policies and modes of production are seen to facilitate the juxtaposition of competing discourses within the publication (the presentation of items of foreign and domestic news, commodity prices, literature, advertising and so forth). Beetham reads this diversity in a similar way as a 'balance of closure against openness' a dialectic of readerly with editorial control of the text rather than as discursive juxtaposition. Here it is the reader's autonomy that is at issue in a text that creates 'a dominant position from which to read' and may even seek to regulate reading patterns by sequential publication (Beetham, 'Open and Closed', p. 99). In this analysis Maidment's 'implied reader' shades into a constructed or interpellated reader.[21]

The protean complexity of periodical publishing, its elusive readership and the consequent limitations of the approaches outlined above suggest the need for a paradigm for periodical study which addresses the uncertainty pervading attempts to formulate generic or sub-generic categories such as that which is demonstrated by Maidment's caveats. Such an approach would establish a conceptual framework within which more detailed study of the complex inter-relationships involving periodical texts and those participating in their production and consumption could be undertaken. For the purposes of this study it will be necessary to identify a framework that accommodates the uncertainty of what

[21] Louis Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation)' in *Essays on Ideology* (London: Verso, 1993), pp. 1-60 (pp. 44-51). Further references will be given in the text.

Beetham refers to as the 'heterogeneity and blurred boundaries of the [periodical] genre' and the relationships within it (Beetham, 'Open and Closed', p. 97).

The 'fuzzy set', a concept from mathematical set theory addresses the problem of uncertainty that underlies attempts to classify complexity in any precisely-defined way. In *Fuzzy Sets and Fuzzy Logic: Theory and Applications* George J. Klir and Bo Yuan note the distinction between problems with a small number of related variables and those with a large number of variables and a high degree of randomness.[22] The former they see as the domain of calculus, the latter of statistics. They also identify another set of problems which, after Warren Weaver, they designate those 'of *organised* [*sic*] *complexity*; [which] are typical in life, cognitive, social, and environmental sciences, as well as in applied fields such as modern technology or medicine'(p .2). Such problems are those to which fuzzy set theory addresses itself. In Klir and Bo Yuan's definition fuzzy sets are sets with boundaries that are not precise: 'the membership in [*sic*] a fuzzy set is not a matter of affirmation or denial, but rather a matter of *degree*' (p. 3). Whilst conventional set theory required absolute distinctions, locating all possible members within or without the set boundary, this more recent theory allows for a sliding scale of partial membership from exclusion to inclusion.[23]

Periodical publishing, driven by a range of political, financial and personal motives cannot be regarded as a random phenomenon. However, neither is it one that presents the analyst with a straightforward set of variables. The notion of the 'fuzzy set' is potentially useful in the analysis of periodical texts as it avoids the need to define such materials crisply. Rather than defining a periodical text as 'a weekly' or as a 'literary' title it would be possible to define it in terms of the extent to which it was circulated in a weekly form or to which it contained literature. However, this would suggest a statistical rather than

[22] George J. Klir and Bo Yuan, *Fuzzy Sets and Fuzzy Logic: Theory and Applications* (Upper Saddle River, N. J.: Prentice Hall, 1995), p. 2. Further references will be given in the text.
[23] Such membership is expressed as a fraction, e.g. 0.8, 0.1, where 0 and 1 are exclusion and inclusion respectively.

discursive analysis and whilst the idea of fractional membership of a set is appropriate for the analysis of periodical texts it is problematic to assign numerical values to such objects as is the practice of set theory.

Alternatively, Linda Hughes has suggested chaos theory as a paradigm for the study of periodicals.[24] The theory was developed in response to methodological difficulties encountered in the study of phenomena such as weather patterns in which relationships between variables are highly complex. The variety of contributors, editors and readers involved in the production and consumption of periodicals suggests a complexity of interdependent relationships analogous to that driving weather systems. Hughes' suggestion that chaos theory might complement existing methodologies therefore deserves consideration.

In *Chaos: Making a New Science* James Gleick traces the development of chaos theory from the 1960s to the 1980s noting its application to the study of both nature and culture from clouds and waterfalls to the 'theory of business cycles [and] the propagation of rumours'.[25] Although unwilling to assert that periodical publication is a chaotic system Hughes uses Gleick to discuss similarities between the study of physical flows (such as that undertaken by Mitchell Feigenbaum) and research into the 'golden stream' of periodical publication discussed by Michael Wolff. Hughes' discussion demonstrates that whilst perhaps resisting classification as a chaotic system, periodical publishing nevertheless exhibits many 'chaotic' features.

Chaotic systems are 'self-similar', that is, they demonstrate similarity across different scales: 'the first chaos theorists [...] had an eye for pattern, especially pattern that appeared on different scales at the same time' (Gleick, p. 5). Moreover, these patterns are

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[24] Linda Hughes, 'Turbulence in the "Golden Stream": Chaos Theory and the Study of Periodicals', *VPR*, 22 (1989), 117-125. Further references will be given in the text.

[25] James Gleick, *Chaos: Making a New Science* (London: Cardinal, 1988), p. 80. Further references will be given in the text.

not mere repetition: 'the repetitions were never quite exact. There was pattern, with disturbances. An orderly disorder' (p.15). As Hughes notes, periodicals demonstrate such 'scaling' in their layout and organization (Hughes, pp. 119-120) and she uses this idea of a system that is 'locally unpredictable, globally stable' (Gleick, p. 48) to suggest that at one level the periodical form asserts 'randomness of information combined with conformity to an overriding editorial policy and style' and at another 'the articulation of individual voices and stories without insisting that they merge into a coherent, hence dominating and hegemonic whole' (Hughes, p. 121).

Gleick sees chaos theory developing through the study of 'a side of nature that the mainstream of physics had passed by, a side that was at once fuzzy and detailed, structured and unpredictable' (Gleick, p. 3). The analogy of textual with natural phenomena suggests that if the theory can assist in the analysis of natural ephemera then it may, as Hughes claims, contribute to the understanding of their cultural analogues.

It might be argued that as a mathematical paradigm, chaos theory, like set theory, requires a quantitative approach similar to the statistical analyses sometimes used in periodical scholarship to trace changes in contents over time or investigate circulation and profitability.[26] However, it can also form the basis for an examination of periodical textuality considered qualitatively, as discourse.

One connection with serial publication that Hughes does not pursue in her article is that 'there is always a feedback loop within a chaotic system, one which magnifies initial differences at various scales' (Hughes, p. 124).[27] She makes the connection between scaling in a chaotic system and the 'various scales' of weekly numbers, monthly parts and

[26] See Louis James, 'The Trouble with Betsy: Periodicals and the Common Reader in Mid-Nineteenth-Century England', and Scott Bennett, 'Revolutions in Thought: Serial Publication and the Mass Market for Reading', in *The Victorian Periodical Press*, pp. 349-366 and pp. 225-255 respectively.
[27] The texture of rock formations which appears the same whether viewed from a distance or at very close range is a common example of such scaling.

quarterly volumes, seeing circulation or profitability figures as the appropriate mechanism for such a loop. She also notes that 'there is an analogous self-similarity operating among column, section and issue of a given periodical' (Hughes, p. 124n).

Periodicals form other kinds of 'feedback loop' than the repetition of columns, departmental structures, and other details of format that she discusses, for example, discursively, through internal references, reprinted material and similarities between items. Her understandable focus upon circulation figures as the pertinent data for mathematical analysis avoids discussion of the discursivity of the object of study. Furthermore, as Beetham notes, feedback also includes readers within its loop: 'Reader response is fed back to the producers by sales figures, but in addition many periodicals invited readers to intervene directly—by writing letters, comments, and other contributions' (Beetham, 'Open and Closed', p. 98).

This model of periodical textuality is one in which readers may become writers on condition that they submit their writing to editorial scrutiny. It is arguable that periodical titles may differ in the rigour or formality with which they regulate the style and content of contributions. However, it is only published material that is fed back to the readership and all published material is scrutinized. The possibility of intervention relies, therefore, upon both the ability to pass through the processes of selection and editing whilst maintaining a critical distance from these processes and the ability for this distance to be recognized by the reader.

This model cuts across Barthesian notions of the writers and readers of literary texts and their relationships with those texts. Rather than the categories of 'readerly' and 'writerly' in which the reader's relationship with the text is, respectively, one of submission or participation, the idea of feedback suggests a process in which the reader is encouraged to participate in the production as well as consumption of a periodical but on the condition that their writing conforms to an established view of the world and language's relationship

to it. For Barthes, ideally, the process of reading is one of writing, the co-authorship of a new text, if only for oneself. For the Victorian periodical, the process of writing is akin to reading, the reproduction of an old one since the preferred text for the periodical would therefore be one which resembles previous ones as closely as possible in all important respects. As such, Victorian periodicals could be expected to exhibit a significant similarity in the form and content of their literary contributions, particularly where they include material contributed by readers.

The idea of the feedback loop becomes a useful framework within which to examine periodical textuality and in particular those periodicals intended to appeal to a broad readership in terms of class and gender. Given the capacity for a chaotic system to 'magnif[y] initial differences at various scales' in quantitative information, such as data pertaining to weather patterns and the circulation of rumours, it could be expected that similar features would be made explicit in qualitative information. If the analogy between periodical circulation and discourse is sustainable it would be possible to discern these magnified differences not only within the organizational structure of the magazine (as Hughes does) but at 'smaller' and 'larger' scales within periodical textuality.

As an analogical framework for the examination of periodicals these ideas offer an approach that facilitates discussion of intertextual relationships ranging from the level of the single word or phrase to that of the periodical series or group of series. Such a framework is helpful in distancing the process of textual analysis from the issues surrounding more traditional methods of periodical taxonomy and therefore allows for the possibility of a categorization based on different criteria. Given the distinction between quantitative and qualitative analysis noted above, this approach must remain a framework for analysis rather than a theoretical foundation. In later chapters I refer insights gained through this provisional methodology to a Foucauldian model of discourse in order to develop my discussion of the poetics of the magazines in the context of other changes in the communicative networks of Britain.

In his discussion of chaotic systems Gleick refers to the 'little spikes of order, ephemeral in their instability' that emerge when such systems are 'driven' (Gleick, p. 77), that is, when whatever comes out of them is fed back into the system in the manner of a feedback loop. In Hughes' analysis these 'window[s] of order' are generated by 'the pressure of events': news stories around which other material thematically coheres (Hughes, p. 121). An absence of news items would therefore be expected to result in a corresponding lack of coherence. However, a comparison between newsbearing and non-newsbearing publications such as weekly newspapers and weekly miscellanies indicates that this is rarely the case. Both types of periodical exhibit broadly similar conventions of organization and while both carry a wide variety of material neither give the impression of significantly greater or lesser thematic coherence. Often the most arresting textual 'window[s] of order' are provided by the literary content and, in particular, the poetry. The latter is a feature common to both newspapers and non-newsbearing magazines. Furthermore, these 'windows' are frequently distinguished by their separation from prose text and illustration by their form and by the use of white space to frame them and thereby set them apart from the main text. This also foregrounds their discursive difference.

It is these poetic windows that form the focus of this study. The intention is not to look through these as 'windows on to the Victorian world' (Wolff, '*The British Controversialist*', p. 368) or 'transparent records' (Pykett, p. 102) but to approach them as Pykett suggests (after Raymond Williams) as writing with a dialectic relationship to culture (Pykett, p. 107), as formative as well as informed. By considering the poetic content as a point of coherence in the 'orderly disorder' of periodical publishing in the mid-nineteenth century, my intention is to look at these 'windows' and examine them as representations of the discursive tensions, social, and literary pressures that bear upon them.

Chapter 1

1. Patterns and Disturbances: Looking at Flowers

> In the 1850s flowers embellished everything: wallpaper, carpets, windows, ceiling ornaments, fireplaces, picture frames, mirrors, cabinets, silverware, inkstands, pistol handles, lace, textiles, painted blinds, pottery and, on show at the Great Exhibition of 1851, an essential to real gentility, 'The Fairy Summoner' which was a silver bell.[28]

The Victorian domestic scene, at least that of the middle classes, was replete with flowers, both real and in a variety of representations according to Nicolette Scourse. She locates the height of popular interest in flowers in the first half of the nineteenth century and it is therefore not surprising that floral images and references occur in a broad range of periodicals in this period. Even the *Penny Magazine* with its institutional emphasis on *useful* knowledge includes items about flowers, reprinting part of Wordsworth's 'To the Daisy' in its second number.[29] Later numbers continue into the 1840s with sporadic pieces on cemetery flowers, gardening advice and information about floral preservation. Although floral illustration is infrequent, it is not absent. For example, Scott Bennett notes that 'in the first and last volumes of *The Penny Magazine*, there was an inordinately large number of illustrations of animals, birds and plants' (Bennett, 'Editorial Character', 141n).

Floral representation is, however, far more frequent in magazines of the kind Margaret Beetham associates with the'"family" journal [which] was the most significant development of the 1840s and [...] came to dominate Victorian popular publishing' and 'the woman-centred family which middle-class discourse had defined' by the 1830s (Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own?*, p. 46). Floral embellishment extends to the

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[28] Nicolette Scourse, *The Victorians and Their Flowers* (London and Canberra: Croom Helm; Portland, Oregon: Timber Press, 1983), p. 15. Further references will be given in the text.

[29] William Wordsworth, 'To a [*sic*] Daisy', *Penny Magazine*, 7 April 1832, p. 15. There are four poems by Wordsworth with the title 'To the Daisy'. The stanza quoted is the first of the poem beginning 'Bright flower, whose home is everywhere!'. The magazine prints only the first stanza.

frontispiece of the *Family Friend* that she uses as her example of this periodical genre although she does not discuss its particular role in the construction of the domestic scene.[30]

Scourse suggests an alternative approach to the 'woman-centred' domestic scene, noting of such writers of popular books and poems about flowers as Louisa Anne Twamley, that 'through their delightfully contrived verses and prose, one can still enter the flower-strewn world of the elegant gentlewoman of the nineteenth century' (Scourse, pp. 31-32). Despite an unsophisticated approach to textuality like that Pykett criticised in Wolff, Scourse's comment is relevant to this study because it highlights structural and discursive tensions within even a narrow range of floral representation. For Scourse the text of writers like Twamley, an author of books such as *Flora's Gems* and a contributor to periodicals, appears to offer an almost masochistic pleasure through its tortuous artifice. Her comments suggest that the pleasures of the domestic space are derived from intricacy of arrangement, whether of floral ornament or the 'flower-strewn' poems of popular writers such as Twamley.

One contemporary tension in floral representation is that between the scientific discourse exemplified by botany and the sentimental 'Language of Flowers', the former popularised by the books of John Lindley and the latter by various handbooks on the etiquette of flowers.[31] For the latter, flowers represent an exotic and ostensibly covert means of communication to be used when ordinary language proves inadequate, such as in the communication of feelings of sexual attraction and the expression of the heightened

[30] The flowers depicted in line illustration are ambiguous in that they may equally represent either arrangements of real flowers or plaster wall-mouldings.

[31] See John Lindley, *Ladies' Botany: Or, A Familiar Introduction to the Study of the Natural System of Botany*, 2 vols (London: Ridgway, 1835 and 1837). John Lindley, *The Language of Flowers [...]* (Edinburgh: Paton and Ritchie, 1849). Also *The Etiquette of Flowers: Their Language and Sentiments [...]* (London: Simpkin, 1852). The work of Robert Tyas focuses upon the cultivation rather than the symbolism of flowers. For example the illustrated periodical series *Popular Flowers* which commenced with 'The Geranium', 2 January 1843.

emotions associated with such attraction. The 'etiquette' allows the coded communication of sentiments between the sexes that would otherwise offend against established conventions of behaviour. This transgressive potential is, however, held in check by its own rigid conventions. It permits the frisson of apparently covert communication whilst ensuring that such intercourse is highly visible and easily interpreted by observers. It is a broken code. Published as a set of rules and tables of floral signification this code is wholly transparent. This 'language of flowers' permits the communication of affection (or its absence) to be continued beyond the normal rules of conversational etiquette but ensures that such communication is subject to strict regulation.

Although writing earlier than the author of *The Etiquette of Flowers*, Lindley distances himself from its interpretation of floral signification:

> The power and wisdom of the Deity are proclaimed by no part of the Creation in more impressive language than by the humblest weed that we tread beneath our feet; but we must learn the mysterious language in which we are addressed, and we find its symbols in the curious structure, and the wondrous fitness of all the minute parts of which a plant consists, for the several uses they are destined for. This, and this only, is the "language of flowers;" and it was of this that I hoped in my former letters to give you some idea (Lindley, *Ladies' Botany*, II p. 4).

Here the 'language of flowers' is represented as overt but mysterious. Rather than establishing private and secular lines of communication between individuals flowers stand as public statements verifying the 'power and wisdom of the Deity'.

Each of these floral languages represents itself as an agent of social cohesion. *The Etiquette of Flowers* fulfils this function by facilitating interpersonal relationships. It considers itself as 'recommending a practice which binds together the interests of society, by the interchange of kindly feelings and associations' (*The Etiquette of Flowers*, p. viii). *Ladies' Botany* extends this to a universal human trait:

> the love for flowers is a holy feeling, inseparable from our very nature; it exists alike in savage and civilised society; it speaks with the same powerful voice to the great and wealthy and to the poor and lowly; it grows up and flourishes with our innocence, and it only perishes with the best and truest feelings of humanity (*Ladies' Botany*, II pp. 2-3).

For Lindley, the 'language of flowers' is not artificial, a code, but a universal human attribute. It is an innate and common language and not one acquired through the purchase of a cipher. Moreover, as a 'holy feeling' it is a channel of communication between God and humanity rather than between human individuals. However, it is still capable of misinterpretation.

The concern with the regulation of the interpretation of detail which appears in *The Etiquette of Flowers* as a set of rules of physical arrangement surfaces in *Ladies' Botany* as an anxiety over nomenclature:

> You will some day know that the sepals of the calyx, and the petals of the corolla, and the stamens, and the carpels, are all leaves in different states; but you must not on that account cease to distinguish them carefully, and call them by their right names, when you find them fixed by nature in the form of sepals, petals, stamens and carpels (*Ladies' Botany*, I p. 65).

For *The Etiquette of Flowers* misinterpretation poses a threat to the establishment of appropriate relations between the sexes, and by implication 'the interests of society' at large in that the failure to abide by the regulations of floral orientation may result in an 'interchange of kindly feelings and associations' inappropriate either in terms of class or gender. For *Ladies' Botany* the dangers of misconception lie in the failure to recognize the divisions between named categories. Asserting the superiority of the modern 'Natural System' of classification over the complex Linnaean system, Lindley classifies by function and appearance rather than appearance alone. The threat of misinterpretation is one based upon an inability or reluctance for the observer to 'distinguish them carefully'. Lindley makes frequent reference to the visibility of the various parts of the flowers he discusses.

For example, he chooses to examine the pansy in detail rather than its smaller relative the violet because it is larger and therefore easier for his readers to see the various parts of their own specimens as distinct (*Ladies' Botany*, I, p. 64). *Ladies' Botany* demonstrates a similar concern with precise definition as does *The Etiquette of Flowers*. Both perceive misconception as a threat. In *Ladies' Botany* this takes the form of an inability to see the natural world, and by extension the human society for which it exists, as ordered and stable, 'fixed by nature' in its 'different states'.

The popular fashion for flowers and floral representation that Scourse discusses is underpinned by a discourse that emphasises careful observation and the maintenance of fine distinctions between categories. Firstly, there a tension between different ways of reading floral representation. On one hand flowers form a popular and secular discourse of affection. On the other hand they also demonstrate Divine purpose in popular scientific discourse in that they can be shown to have their separate uses for mankind. Secondly, the interpretation of floral representation requires a standard of competency with reference to a set of predetermined rules, in order that its intricate details may not be misconstrued.

Both these floral 'languages' share an interest in detail, whether this takes the form of 'the minute parts of which a plant consists' or the complex rules of placement and orientation that modify the meaning of a floral token.[32] They also demonstrate the strength of the popular connection between poetry and flowers. Lindley cites Thomas Campbell on the title page to the second volume of *Ladies' Botany*.[33] *The Etiquette of Flowers* cites Campbell on its title page, Burns and Milton in its introduction, and considers that 'there

[32] These 'Rules' take up the four pages following the 'Introductory Observations' of *The Etiquette of Flowers* (pp. xii-xv).

[33] Tyas is more profuse in his poetical references. 'The Pansy', *Popular Flowers*, 31 January 1843, cites Spenser, Milton and Joanna Baillie and notes that 'poets have delighted to place it [the pansy] with other floral favourites in their poetic posies' (p. 14). The reprinted collection of the series includes additional quotations from John Keble and Louisa Twamley in its 'Prefatory Remarks'. Robert Tyas, *Popular Flowers* (London: Houlston & Stoneman; Edinburgh: J Menzies; Dublin: S J Machen, 1847) p. viii and p. v respectively.

has never been a poet, simple or sublime, who has not adorned his verse with these specimens of nature's cunning workmanship' (*The Etiquette of Flowers*, p. vi).

Scourse's examination of the uses of flowers and floral representation in the Victorian period demonstrates both its variety and its strong associations with contemporary ideas of domesticity. Flowers also appear as decoration in the frontispiece illustration from the *Family Friend* that Beetham uses in her discussion of 'the woman-centred family' and developments in periodical publishing in the 1840s. Here I will use an example of the poetry of the *Family Friend* to introduce the issues raised by tensions in the poetry of popular magazines which, whilst not necessarily falling within Beetham's definition of the '"family" journal', address themselves to a family readership.

The *Family Friend* for 1859 carries the poem 'I Saw A Flower'. For ease of reference it will be quoted in full:

I SAW A FLOWER

I saw a flower, a lovely flower, blooming in the spring,
Modest was its sweet attire! a lovely little thing;
'Twas a little violet! sparkling with the dew,
Smiling at the azure sky, from its face of blue!
Dancing in the zephyr breeze, nodding to the bowers,
Pretty little violet, sweetest of all flowers!
* * * * * *
Alas! I gazed once more, and lo upon the ground it lay!
Trodden by some ruthless foot, fading fast away;
Life had passed from its face, and the dew-drops too,
Pretty little violet, with its face of blue.
Ah! I thought, so with the fair, "now quite blithe and gay;"
Look again! where have they gone? faded far away!
Faded! "lo, in death they sleep!" taken to their rest -"
Leaving us behind to weep — "They are with the blest!"

CHARLES E. Mackley[34]

[34] Charles E. Mackley, 'I Saw A Flower', *Family Friend*, XVII, n.s. September 1859, p. 150.

The floral subject is a familiar one to the readers of the popular periodicals. If the writer's name were not appended, it would be impossible to attribute authorship from internal evidence. In this sense the poem is generic, its authorship not individual but collective. This 'anonymity' allows it to be seen as universal, a simple narrative of loss available to any reader. Its use of the first person reinforces this. Such writing is located at a point of cleavage between true anonymity and collective authorship. The poem has a name appended but, given the practice of pseudonymity in periodical journalism, this is itself problematic. Its subjective origin is obscured yet persistently suggested by the 'I' and the name. In one sense the poem can be seen to give the name a voice, an individual personality, through its poetic expression. However, this 'expression' is far from original: the subject it describes is highly conventional.[35] Quotation, itself a practice conventional to the point of being hackneyed, occurs within a part of the poem specifically noted as the personal thoughts of the poet and this associates him with the impersonal mindlessness of the destructive 'ruthless foot'. The use of quotation and the conventionality of the subject locate the poetic persona of 'Charles E. Mackley' within a discourse that, whilst ostensibly personal and expressive, empties itself of personal reference and creates a vacancy for its readers to occupy.[36]

The juxtaposition of the masculine persona with the flower suggests a gendering of this subject. Scourse discusses the association of flowers with femininity citing the conventional comments of Twamley and Charlotte M. Yonge. For the former the moss rose is 'not positive enough to seem the colour of a flower, but [is] like a blush or reflected glow, [...] as is a soft voice to the lovely and fairy-like form of a young and gentle maiden'. For the latter the wood anemone 'may put us in mind of some quiet, shy,

[35] The poem's narrative structure follows the liminal model of rites of passage used to explain Victorian ideas concerning death and dying in Michael Wheeler, *Death and the Future Life in Victorian Literature and Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 69-72.

[36] The poem, like the landscaping techniques of the previous century, positions its readers in relation to a particular view.

modest girl, who makes all sunny and happy round her in her own safe, shaded home'. (cited in Scourse, p. 31).[37]

Mackley's anthropomorphic violet is similarly feminised through its 'modest' and 'sweet attire', its acquiescent and 'nodding' deference to the surrounding 'bowers'. These bowers provide a decorative context rather than one of sublime obscurity. They complement the shade-loving violet with a 'safe, shaded home' without interrupting the gaze of the observer. The poem's orientation on the flower and its immediate periphery represents the act of observation as one of fixation rather than circumspection. In this they borrow more from the paintings of William Powell Frith than, for example, Thomas Gray's popular 'Elegy Written in a Country Church-Yard'.[38] The distinction between Gray's poem and the conventions followed by Mackley are best illustrated by the contrast between the line of asterisks that divides 'I Saw a Flower' and Gray's initial insistence that his poem be printed without divisions.[39] Gray's poem is one of connection, Mackley's one of disjunction.

Neither is the flower 'positive enough' to appear in its distinctive colour 'violet'. Instead its 'blue' is a pale imitation of the 'azure' sky it contemplates and this is reminiscent of Twamley's 'reflected glow'.[40] Similarly, like a blush, the flower responds to its environment rather than initiating action: its 'dancing' movements are dependent upon the

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[37] The association of flowers with feminine attributes is more metonymical than metaphorical. Scourse notes the practice of men raising hats to flowers (p. 12) and also the Victorian tendency to anthropomorphise plants as 'altruistic flowers, vegetable criminals and moral messengers' (p. 1). However, as the *Family Friend* makes clear, such associations have their limits and should not be taken literally: 'A very eccentric, horticultural whimsy of our forefathers, was their method of laying out a flower garden to resemble the form of a lady in full dress' ('Poesy and Posies, Chapter III', *Family Friend*, IX, n.s. August 1854, p. 121).

[38] With reference to Frith, Lynda Nead notes that 'the pleasure of these domestic genre paintings is thus defined as the *recognition* for the viewer of a universal domestic ideal and a *confirmation* of his/her individual placing within this unified and non-contradictory world'. Lynda Nead, *Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), p. 18.

[39] See *The Poems of Gray, Collins and Goldsmith*, ed. by Roger Lonsdale (London: Longman, 1969), p. 110. Lonsdale also notes Gray's incorporation of 'remembered phrases' (p. 109).

[40] The blue violet signifies faithfulness in the sentimental 'language of flowers'. See *The Etiquette of Flowers*, p. 43.

'zephyr breeze' and its iridescence the dew. As the poem shows itself to be part of an existing discourse through its quotation and conventionality, so flowers are shown to be similarly incorporated, as symbols. For Twamley flowers are always already poetic: '"I love flowers, as forming one of the sweetest lines in the GOD-WRITTEN Poetry of Nature; as one of the universal blessings accessible to all nations, climes and classes."'.[41] This idea is also expressed in her poetry:

> All Flowers are stanzas of Earth's poetry
> Writ in the pleasant and exhaustless Book
> Of grand, harmonious Nature.
>
> ('The Rose', ll.43-45)[42]

For Twamley, the violet, like the anemone, symbolises feminine modesty but has more sensual overtones: 'It's sweet retiring modesty, so like thy gentle mien, | And its mild, delightful odour that we feel before 'tis seen'.[43] Regarded in isolation 'Earth's poetry' may appear harmonious. In a social context, its feminine virtues together with its hint of sensual pleasure are represented as a liability, and it is 'sought, and cherished, and culled by all'.[44] This vulnerability is emphasised by the epigraph to 'Emblem Flowers':

> There's rosemary,—that's for remembrance; pray you, love, remember: and there's pansies,—that's for thoughts
> * * * * * * * * *
> I would give you some violets.
>
> SHAKESPEARE.
>
> (Twamley, *Poems*, p. 128)

[41] Louisa Anne Twamley, 'Preface', *The Romance of Nature: Or, the Flower Seasons Illustrated* (London: Tilt, 1836), p. vii (cited in Scourse, p. 23).
[42] Louisa Anne Twamley, *Flora's Gems: Or, the Treasures of the Parterre* (London: Tilt, 1837), unpaginated.
[43] Louisa Anne Twamley, 'Emblem Flowers, to Eliza M.', *Poems* (London: Tilt, 1835), pp.128-130 (p. 130, ll. 23-24). Further quotations will be given in the text.
[44] Louisa Anne Twamley, 'The Violet's Spring Song', *Our Wild Flowers, Familiarly Described and Illustrated* (London: Tilt, 1839), pp. 28-30 (p. 29, l. 25).

The epigraph to this affectionate poem suggests tensions between the social and literary context in which it is located and the feminine ideal it celebrates, tensions which are made explicit through its structure.

Twamley plucks lines from Shakespeare to embellish her poem with the selective eye of a gatherer of blooms for domestic decoration. She avoids reference to the blighted relationships that underpin the play and all traces of the anxiety pervading Shakespeare's 'document in madness' (*Hamlet*, IV.5.174) are excised.[45] In particular, Twamley's quotation ends before Shakespeare's reference to the cause for Ophelia's mental distraction: 'I would give you some violets, *but they wither'd all when my father died*' (*Hamlet*, IV.5.181, my italics). Twamley's attempt to render Shakespeare's prose into the shape of verse and to make it appear appropriate to the subject of her own poem problematises the idea of floral poetry as celebration that she proposes in her prefatory material. References to Ophelia's mental disturbance are cut from her own speech and the short interposing speech of Laertes, in which he reads her state of mind from the apparent incoherence of her words, is removed completely. The epigraph connects literary and feminine discourse with floral representation through Shakespeare's Ophelia, but in doing so it identifies literature and femininity with processes of exclusion and disintegration rather the stable order of a 'natural' harmony. Under Mackley's poetic gaze, the violet becomes a similar symbol of the vulnerability associated with the feminine virtues of modesty, beauty and passivity.[46]

Although, as Scourse discusses, non-flowering plants such as ferns were also highly popular for their delicacy of form, there is also evidence that some flowers had associations which placed them beyond the pale of poetical enthusiasm. The *Illustrated*

[45] References to Shakespeare are taken from *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, new edn., ed. by Peter Alexander (London: Collins, 1989).
[46] For a discussion of the historical construction of femininity see *The Ideology of Conduct: Essays on Literature and the History of Sexuality*, ed. by Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse (London: Methuen, 1987).

Family Journal includes the bladder campion amongst other flowers illustrated and discussed, noting (after some botanical detail) that:

> So little known is this plant generally that we know not of one poetical allusion to it.
>
> It is a pity that people give ugly names to such beautiful things as flowers. What is the lover of nature, who goes out into the fields to enjoy the most charming sights and associations, to do with such things as scorpion-grass, scurvy-grass, sow-thistle, loose-strife, toad-flax, herb-twopence, and brandy-bottles? What poet could begin a song with enthusiasm commencing, 'Oh! bladder campion!'[47]

This demonstrates how the poetical view of flowers is both selective and concerned primarily with 'charming sights and associations'.[48] The association of flowers with the attributes of the feminine ideal precludes the poetic use of blooms with names that suggest money or unpleasant scenes of malnutrition, drunkenness or animalistic behaviour. The *Family Friend* takes a similar view referring to the acanthus as 'a somewhat coarse, rough-leaved, though stately-looking plant, known commonly by the unpoetical name of bear's breech' in one article on floral symbolism.[49] After this qualified introduction the acanthus requires considerably greater space than the other flowers discussed 'to justify [its] admission into the list of floral symbols' ('The Bladder Campion, *Illustrated Family Journal*, 5 July 1845, p. 283).

From this perspective the Victorian enthusiasm that Scourse examines is less for flowers in general than for those that symbolise the 'woman-centred' scene which Beetham associates with the domestic space to which the magazine is directed and in which it is consumed.

Dorothy Mermin has suggested:

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[47] 'The Bladder Campion; Or, Bladder Catchfly', *Illustrated Family Journal*, 5 July 1845, p. 288. Lindley also refers to 'a mean-looking weed, called *Shepherd's Purse*' (*Ladies' Botany*, I, p. 59).

[48] This does does not prevent some problematic ambiguity as demonstrated by A. J. Watson's 'The Song of the Flowers' which begins, perhaps unpromisingly, 'We come, we come, with odorous breath', (*Bradshaw's Journal*, 16 April 1842, p. 384).

[49] 'The Poetical Language of Flowers, Chapter III' *Family Friend*, VIII, n.s. July 1854, pp. 282-283.

> On a formal level, the conventional gendering of the speaking subject as male and the object as female, with the wide-ranging polarization it imposed, was problematic for both men and women. But outside conventional gender structures—assuming one could escape them—lurked the threat of undifferentiated sameness [...] and the loss of the essential structures that defined both poetry and the self.[50]

'I Saw a Flower' replicates this polarization through the poetic persona of 'Charles E. Mackley' and his observation of the feminised flower. However, precisely because of its conventionality, the poem of could just as easily have been written by a woman.[51] Moreover, judged by the criteria of 'first-person lyrics about relationships, about love and loss, about nature, God and humanity' which Kathleen Hickok uses to characterize women's poetry of the period a female writer would appear likely.[52] Of the poems Hickok discusses two are explicitly 'woman-centred' in their focus on mother-daughter relationships. Although her example from the second quarter of the nineteenth century shares the exclamatory emphasis of Mackley's verse neither of the examples use floral imagery and neither do they exhibit the tensions of the gendered model of power relations that concern Mermin.[53] In conforming to both the thematic conventions that Hickok illustrates and in using floral imagery, Mackley's poem leaves its 'I' open, inviting the reader to share its point of view, yet demonstrates how poetic conventionality may also blur gender distinctions and threaten the structures which support the 'woman-centred' domestic ideal.

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[50] Dorothy Mermin, '"The Fruitful Feud of Hers and His": Sameness, Difference, and Gender in Victorian Poetry', *Victorian Poetry* (hereafter *VP*) 33 (1995) 149-168 (p. 149).

[51] Such ambiguity is sometimes exacerbated by uneven attribution. For example *Bradshaw's Journal* has both 'E. S. Craven Green' and 'Mrs E. S. Craven Green (Authoress of "*A Legend of Mona*" &c.)' (*Bradshaw's Journal*, 26 March 1842, p. 336 and 1 October 1842, p. 352).

[52] Kathleen Hickok, '"Intimate Egoism": Reading and Evaluating Noncanonical Poetry by Women', *VP*, 33 (1995), 13-30 (p. 13).

[53] Hickok's example is Eliza Cook's 'I Miss Thee My Mother'. Hickok notes the contemporary view of Cook as a popular poet and her association with domestic themes and popular journalism (Hickok, p. 14).

Like the figure of the 'domestic woman' that Nancy Armstrong places at the ideological centre of Victorian life, the subject of Mackley's poem, for all the exclamatory emphasis of its first-person narrative, is insubstantial. The poem provides constant 'evidence' of emotion (for example in the prevalence of exclamation) yet undermines any indication of individual expression. As suggested above, the poem is manifestly derivative. It displays superficial marks that might be taken to indicate its origin but is original neither in conception, content, nor organization. Far from exhibiting expressive originality, it would appear to be a mechanical construction, an impersonal exercise of the kind associated with technological developments in mechanical reproduction.[54]

In form and theme Mackley's poem resembles one of the 'Three Extracts from "*Lyra Innocentium*."' that appear in William Thorn Warren's early twentieth-century overview of Keble's life, *Kebleland*.[55] Selected as one of the 'keynotes' of Keble's poetry, the verses are entitled 'In Memory of a Little Child' and are divided by a line of asterisks as Mackley's is. In this extract, floral reference is used to emphasise the innocent pleasure of a child and this pleasure is subsequently contrasted with the poet's sorrow at her loss. These verses are not, however, an extract as such but a reworking of verses from other poems and include the following stanza from Keble's 'Bereavement':[56]

> A basket on one tender arm
> Contained her precious store
> Of spring-flowers in their freshest charm,
> Told proudly o'er and o'er.
>
> (Warren, *Kebleland*, p. 35)

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[54] See Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' in *Illuminations* ed. by Hannah Arendt, trans. by Harry Zohn (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968; repr. London: Fontana, 1992), pp. 219-253

[55] *Kebleland: Keble's Home at Hursley [...]*, ed. by William Thorn Warren (London: Simpkins; Winchester: Warren, 1900).

[56] John Keble, 'Bereavement', *Lyra Innocentium: Thoughts in Verse on Christian Children, Their Ways and Privileges* (Oxford: Parker; London: Rivington, 1846) pp.149-151, p. 149 ll. 5-8.

Removed from its original context, the new verse serves as a reflection upon Thorn Warren's own method of anthologising.[57] Rather than represent a choice of Keble's poems in their entirety he prefers to pick and rearrange material to suit his rural image of Keble as the local Hampshire celebrity.[58] Like the flower-picking child he creates a 'precious store', in his case by choosing only verses that, in common with the flowers 'in their freshest charm', will prove sufficiently attractive and durable to withstand reiteration. The version of Keble's poetry represented by Warren returns to floral and domestic themes with even greater frequency than Keble.

The close of Mackley's poem is reminiscent of another of Warren's 'extracts', this time selected as a 'keynote' from *The Christian Year*, the stanza Warren entitles 'Bereavement' (Warren, *Kebleland*, p. 30).[59] 'I Saw a Flower' selectively revives the sentiments of Keble's stanzas in a similar way to Warren. It introduces the conventional spiritual compensation found at the end of the latter's chosen extract 'Bereavement' which ends with the lines 'ye to Christ's embrace, | We to the lonesome world again' at the point at which 'In Memory of a Little Child' closes with an expression of personal loss.

However, this development of a traditional theme, like the Mackley's internal repetition of 'flowers', 'pretty little violet' and so forth, is itself like the 'pattern, with disturbances' or 'orderly disorder' of a chaotic system. As Keble's child 'told proudly o'er and o'er' the

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[57] The similarity of Mackley's and Warren's poetic constructions suggest that the popular conception of poetic value in 1900 may not have changed significantly despite developments in academic thought. The similarity also suggests that as Warren represents Keble's poetry through fragments of verse, so Mackley's poem may also represent an assemblage of parts gleaned from another poet or poets.

[58] Keble's living at Hursley was a few miles south of Winchester, one of the places of publication of Thorn Warren's book. The title page to *Kebleland* ensures the reader is aware of its usefulness as a local guide by noting the addition of 'Notes on the Neighbouring Villages', 'A Short Life of Richard Cromwell' (another local celebrity) and 'Fifty Illustrations and a Map of the District' to its more detailed profile of Keble.

[59] John Keble, 'Visitation and Communion of the Sick', *The Christian Year: Thoughts in Verse for the Sundays and Holydays Throughout the Year* (London: Parker and Rivington, 1827) pp. 349-351, p. 351, ll. 49-53.

flowers she carried, and will again, subject to the editorial intervention of Warren, so Mackley's poem approximates to the repetition of a formula as opposed to personal expression.[60] It is itself part of a discursive feedback loop facilitated by the magazine in which a store of poetic fragments are recycled and commonplace sentiments re-presented with minor variations.

In addition to this intertextuality the poem also represents disturbance. Its asterisks fragment it across a temporal boundary, that is, between the first and second gazes. It is at this juncture that an anonymous act of violence is perpetrated by 'some ruthless foot'.[61] The poetic eye is implicated in this act against nature: it is in its moment of inattention that the action takes place. The poetic subject is not so much a Romantic participant, inspired and empowered by personal involvement with nature as a detached observer whose sensibilities require that he occasionally turn a blind eye to the activities surrounding him. The vision of the poet is not idealistic but pragmatic.

In Mackley's poem the shift into the present tense comes with the imperative 'Look again!' and the immediacy of this instruction would be more evident in performance than it might to an individual reader.[62] Similarly, the personification of the violet and the implicit metaphor of the loss and mourning of a 'little Violet' in that of the 'little violet', might be accentuated or diminished depending upon the reader's performance.[63] The combination of the first person narrative and the present imperative reinforces the authority of the reader in respect of his or her listeners at the point at which the moral and

[60] Such verses, like the floral decoration of the home, also have a ritualistic aspect in which tensions between secular and religious authority are manifested. Like the weekly magazines in which they appear, the poems offer a secular alternative to the Bible as a recreational and instructive text for Sunday reading.
[61] This fracture occurs in the transitional phase between fixed states discussed by Wheeler (p. 70). Mackley's narrative of loss elides the process of transition.
[62] The poetry appearing in the magazines frequently exhibits lyrical qualities such as brevity and the use of the first person. Titles sometimes identify poems as 'Song'.
[63] Articles 'Stories for the Young', 'Birth of the Snowdrop' (pp. 309-311) and 'Fate of the Violet' (pp. 352-353) and the poem 'There's Hope When We Behold a Wither'd Flower' (p. 357) are included amongst other material on floral themes (*Family Friend*, II, n.s. December 1852). The poem also uses the theme of resurrection.

religious lesson is delivered. In her discussion of the *Family Friend* Beetham suggests that such magazines construct the scene of reading as familial rather than individual. However, as her example of the frontispiece to the periodical's second volume demonstrates, such scenes are not necessarily 'woman-centred' but show groups or individuals deferring to a central figure in whom authority and literacy are associated irrespective of gender.

Like the magazines themselves, poems and flowers have an instructive function. The floral idiom brings this instruction within the domestic boundary; it functions both as decoration and as a reminder of the way in which power relations are structured.[64] In a Christian context, floral reference provides an opportunity to introduce a discourse of patriarchal authority. This is explicit in poems such as Keble's 'Fifteenth Sunday After Trinity' and Felicia Hemans' 'The Lilies of the Field' which are based on Matthew 6. 28, 'Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow'.[65] It is also found in the verse of less well-known writers:

> Ah, me! the fallen leaves are all scattered around,
> So moistened and wet with the shower,
> I feel that a lesson instructive I've found,
> From this fragrant and beautiful flower[66]

Mackley's poem translates the Christian virtue of humility into the floral idiom of the domestic scene of reading. Like the frontispiece of the *Family Friend* that Beetham sees as the magazine's construction of that scene, Mackley's poem, particularly when read within the confines of that construction, places the reader in a discursive chain that refers

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[64] The *Family Friend* cites Shakespeare to this effect in its 'Sacred Quotations' III, March 1853, p. 237.

[65] Hemans' poem is reprinted in the *Family Friend* with another poem, 'To a Family Bible', which emphasises Christian influence in domestic life (*Family Friend*, I, n.s. September 1852, p. 164).

[66] Rosina Amelia Noah, 'Impromptu, written on seeing a favourite rose-tree exposed to a heavy storm' *Henry and Rosa: A Pathetic Poetical Tale: with a few Miscellaneous Poems* (London: George Stuart, 1846) pp. 55-56 (p. 56, ll. 12-15).

back to a divine authority.[67] Its similarity to a section of another of Keble's poems suggests the strength of this connection:

> Your Lord is listening: peace, be still.
> Christ watches by a Christian's hearth,
> Be silent, 'vain deluding mirth,'
> Till in thine alter'd voice be known
> Somewhat of Resignation's tone.
>
> But chiefly ye should lift your gaze
> Above the world's uncertain haze,
> And look with calm unwavering eye
> On the bright fields beyond the sky,
> Ye, who your Lord's commission bear,
> His way of mercy to prepare:
> Angels He calls ye: be your strife
> To lead on earth an Angel's life.[68]

Like Keble's *The Christian Year* Mackley advocates 'quietness and confidence' but in so doing divides these virtues between the genders.[69] In 'I Saw a Flower' amusement also turns to resignation and the gaze of authority turns down upon its object rather than in the direction indicated by its example. However, the poem's use of convention also suggests a tension between the 'woman-centred' domestic ideology and that of Christianity: rather than looking beyond 'the world's uncertain haze' attention turns inwards to the sanctuary of the domestic scene. The poem represents a movement from the 'Angel's life' offered in Keble's poem towards the 'Angel in the House' represented by Coventry Patmore.[70] Similar shifts occur in other poems, for example in John Bolton Rogerson's 'Song':

> If in sleep appear an angel,

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67 The passage in which the quotation from Matthew comes represents a scene of instruction in which Christ uses the flowers (and birds and animals - which also feature prominently in the poetry of the magazines) to illustrate God's providence. Twamley's idea of the 'GOD-WRITTEN Poetry of Nature' moves beyond this instructive analogy in its reference to the world as *Liber Naturae*.

68 John Keble, 'Second Sunday in Advent: Signs of the Times', *The Christian Year*, pp. 12-14 (p. 14, ll. 28-40).

69 Keble's title page cites Isaiah 30. 15 'In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength'.

70 For a discussion of Patmore's view of womanhood see Elaine Hartnell, '"Nothing but Sweet and Womanly": A Hagiography of Patmore's Angel', *VP*, 34 (1996), 457-776.

It doth wear thy face;
When it fadeth with the vision
Thou has [*sic*] ta'en its place.[71]

In popular periodical poetry, as in domestic decoration, flowers and their representations are carefully selected and arranged so as to provide selective reference to the world from which they come. This reflects the view put forward by the gardening writer Shirley Hibberd that:

> in one direction the earnest workers are probing the secrets of nature, and unravelling one by one the mystic threads that run through all her fabrications; and in another, poet minds are arranging and diffusing the facts [...] that all the world may become inheritors of the new possession.[72]

The activities of collection and arrangement (whether of the real flowers to which Hibberd refers or the intertextual gathering of Mackley's poem) serve to reinforce conventional gender structures which polarize home and work, authority and its absence, the physical endeavours of 'earnest workers' and the instructive discourse of 'poet minds'. However, they also indicate the extent to which coherence is maintained by a process of selection. From the evidence of Mackley's poem the 'new possession' is a popular discourse that embodies the tensions within domestic ideology, but is unable to provide mechanisms and structures through which these might be coherently expressed and resolved. Instead this discourse diverts attention to the complex details of non-discursive structures or to lines which, like a censor's pencil, obliterate unauthorised communications leaving only a pattern, with disturbances, behind. This is the discourse of the popular periodical.

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71 John Bolton Rogerson, 'Song', *Bradshaw's Journal*, 18 December 1841, p. 112.

72 Shirley Hibberd, *Brambles and Bay Leaves: Essays on the Homely and the Beautiful* (London: n.pub., 1855) (cited in Scourse, p. 45).

2. Flower-Strewn Worlds: Flowers and Poetry in the Magazines

> A sudden glow comes on them, naught they see
> In water, earth and air, but poesy.[73]

Poetry in the magazines is in two distinct ways. Firstly, it occurs in truncated form: as epigraphs, illustrative quotation or fillers.[74] In this form it is either subordinate to the prose text in which it appears or to the other articles that make up the body of the magazine. Secondly, it appears as complete poems in poetry columns and designated departments. There is both a poetics of practical utility (poetry in the service of 'instruction') and a poetics of entertainment (poetry as 'amusement').

Indeed, some titles are explicit in identifying their poetic content as a respite from the seriousness of other articles. The preface to the eleventh volume of the *Family Friend* declares: '*Poetry* has lent its charm to relieve the matter-of-fact departments of The FAMILY FRIEND, in several pieces of original and striking merit'.[75] The function of poetry in the magazines is not exhausted in decoration. In its distinction from the 'matter-of-fact' it complements instructive articles in ways that are both entertaining and productive:

> The great aim of The FAMILY FRIEND has been to "raise the standard of comfort," to inculcate a knowledge of useful things; and to combine with truthful facts those higher features which recreate the mind and encourage home amusements, as well as occupations (*Family Friend*, XI, December 1855, p. iii)

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[73] John Keats, 'To My Brother George', *The Poems of John Keats*, ed. by Jack Stillinger (London: Heinemann, 1978) pp. 56-60 (p. 57, ll. 21-22). Keats's poetry was republished in several forms during the mid nineteenth century, for example in Monckton Milnes *Life, Letters, and Literary Remains of John Keats*, 2 vols, (London: Moxon, 1848). In his introduction to the *Poetical Works* H. W. Garrod notes that this bore 'the same severe floral-scroll design that appears on the fourth edition of Tennyson's Poems [*sic*] (two volumes, 1846), *The Princess* (1847), *In Memoriam* (1850), Landor's *Hellenics* (1847), and many others'. *Keats: Poetical Works*, ed. by H.W. Garrod (Oxford: Oxford Univeristy Press, 1956; repr. 1982), p. xvi.

[74] Eileen M. Curran notes both that 'many poems seem to comment on the preceding or following prose, if only by playing on words' and that if 'verse was a filler, it was a filler with a purpose' from the evidence of the space left at the bottom of the page. 'Verse in *Bentley's Miscellany* vols. 1-36', *VPR*, 32 (1999), 103-159 (p. 103 and p. 104).

[75] *Family Friend*, XI, December 1855, p. iii.

The magazine leavens its solid and improving diet of science, history and household management with integral morsels of verse and provides a separate course of poetic pleasure in the form of a section devoted to poetry.

As the poems of Keble and Mackley demonstrate, floral imagery is a useful device through which to position readers in relation to both the 'truthful facts' of mortality which are the object of worldly knowledge, and the 'higher features' of Christian religious knowledge which offer comfort through the prospect of a literal re-creation in bodily resurrection. As the *Family Friend*'s commentary suggests, such positioning gives readers an opportunity to participate in their own discursive recreation, not merely in reading the words of others but, like Mackley, in re-working a familiar poetic theme. As Mackley's injunction to 'Look Again!' emphasises, floral imagery in the poetry of the popular magazines is not only a mechanism by which the wandering attention of readers may be redirected, but a device which demonstrates how poetic meaning is generated by a series of revisions.

This perspective is not restricted to the *Family Friend*. *Bradshaw's Journal* applies the epithet 'original' to poems that conform to a particular idiom rather than to those of idiosyncratic interest. Its review, 'John Gibson, the Sherwood Poet' exemplifies this:

> Mr Gibson, we believe, is prepearing for the press a metrical volume, under the promising title of 'Autumn Pictures,' [...] Several specimens of the Sherwood bard's forthcoming work have been submitted to us, and in all of them we perceive that he is a close observer and a graphic delineator of Nature. Amongst the number, are some Spencerian stanzas of exquisite and touching beauty, called 'Woodlands.' The descriptive imagery, the originality of thought, and the melodious arrangement of the entire poem, are beyond praise. [...] The concluding verse presents so splendid a galaxy of images that we give it entire:—
>
> Beautiful woodland! childhood's sweetest hours,
>   Morning and noon, to evening's starry time,
> Have I beguil'd amongst its shadowy bowers,
>   Humming my dreamy thoughts in careless rhyme,

Blythe as a wild bee booming round the flowers.[76]

From the perspective provided by the review, the poetry of John Gibson would appear largely restricted to simplistic juxtapositions such as the 'opposition of light and shade' which occur in the other four poems quoted in the article as 'further proofs of the freshness and vigour, and above all, of the originality of Mr Gibson's style' ('John Gibson, the Sherwood Poet', *Bradshaw's Journal*, IV, December 1842, p. 15).[77] Although avoiding the points of Christian reference used by Mackley and Keble, Gibson makes similar connections between flowers and childhood and focuses upon the idea of mortality. In comparison with these poets his 'originality' resides in his use of an astrological rather than Christian image of 'Heaven's down-looking face':

> The starry hosts in sunshine melt,
> Orïon of the lustrous belt
> Prostrate in beauty lies,
> And the moist-beam'd Pleiades
> Plunge in the stormy-bosom'd seas.[78]
>
> ('John Gibson, the Sherwood Poet', *Bradshaw's Journal*, IV, December 1842, p. 16)

Although this review is itself perhaps part of the established tradition of promotional writing in popular publishing, even such 'puffery' demonstrates the extent to which poetic value is associated with conformity. The selection of Gibson's verse highlights thematic consistency and the repetition of imagery. The 'Spencerian stanzas' and celestial imagery suggest Keats' influence and, although distinguishing Gibson from the 'vast [...] and worthless train of [Byron's] imitators', the article explicitly identifies him with 'the symptoms of a revival' in the Wordworthian mould ('John Gibson, the Sherwood Poet', *Bradshaw's Journal*, IV, December 1842, p. 16). His ideas and their 'melodious

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76 'John Gibson, the Sherwood Poet', *Bradshaw's Journal*, IV, December 1842, pp. 15-16 .

77 The line '*Where light and shadow battle in the trees*' is italicised in the verse cited and subsequently commented upon.

78 Extracts are cited from 'The Sky', 'Evening' and 'The Polar Star' ('John Gibson, the Sherwood Poet', *Bradshaw's Journal*, IV, December 1842, p. 16).

arrangement' are, like the use of floral imagery, symptomatic of a contemporary poetic trend rather than idiosyncrasy. 'Originality' is characterized by the structural coherence of repetition, by the regularity with which a poet returns to given forms of expression. Gibson's verse not only reworks its own ideas and 'descriptive imagery' but is represented as an extension of a Romantic canon which is itself defined in terms that recall Twamley's 'GOD-WRITTEN Poetry of Nature' and Mackley's 'I Saw a Flower':

> Endowed with every attribute of a true poet, he [Wordsworth] discerns the hand of Deity in all His works, and finds in His lowliest creations
>
> 'Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears'
> ('John Gibson, the Sherwood Poet', *Bradshaw's Journal*, IV, December 1842, p. 15)[79]

The consistency with which the poetry of popular magazines returns to conventional subjects is indicated by comments in earlier periodicals. In 'To Correspondents' the *Treasure* notes that: 'The poetical articles of R.W. shall appear in our next', 'J.B.B. should learn to *spell* before he attempts to *write*' and 'The lines of an OXONIAN are not original: they may be found in every periodical of the last twelve months'.[80] However, a perusal of R.W.'s poetry as it subsequently appears under the heading of 'Original Poetry' suggests that it too might have been mistaken for verses found in the pages of other periodicals, not only of the 'last twelve months' of 1829, but of more than the following twelve years.[81] *Bradshaw's Journal* provides evidence of a similar difficulty continuing into the 1840s: 'The verses by R. L. are nearly a literal transcript of an effusion published some months ago'.[82] The *Family Friend* draws the attention of readers to its rights over the material it publishes: 'There are some few features to which we will call special

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[79] The quotation from Wordsworth also appears in the list of 'Sacred Quotations' *Family Friend*, III, n.s. March 1853, p. 237

[80] *The Treasure of Knowledge, Literature and Amusement [...]*, II, 1830, p. 216. Further references will be given in the text.

[81] Poems by 'R.W.' include 'To the Fairies' (The *Treasure*, I, 1829,.p. 240) beginning 'When Summer leaves begin to fall, | And flowers smile no more', and 'Lines Written on Viewing an Early Violet' (p. 298).

[82] 'To Correspondents', *Bradshaw's Journal*, IV, December 1842, inside front cover.

attention. Nearly every line contained in the volume consists of *copyright matter, written expressly for the Work, by Contributors of much celebrity*'.[83]

The Preface to the second volume of the *Treasure* suggests that this editorial irritation with poetic contributors is neither new nor limited to the *Family Friend*:

> In our New Series it is our intention to insert nothing which we may receive *per post*, but what is STRICTLY ORIGINAL— we can make selections for ourselves— those Correspondents therefore, who *have* attempted, and probably *will* hereafter attempt to palm upon us the lucubrations of others for their own, will receive a lash from our *pen* (The *Treasure*, II, 1830, pp. iii-iv).

The denomination of 'Original Poetry' is thus established as an activity in which personal origins become obscured in questions of anonymity and pseudonymity which are themselves closely bound up in the history of journalism. Despite regular or staff contributions (such as those by John Bolton Rogerson and John Critchley Prince in *Bradshaw's Journal*) the mixture of attributed and unattributed poetry reveals the diverse origins of contributions without placing emphasis upon the importance of the specificity of the originator.[84] Moreover, many attributions give an impression of incompleteness by using initials or elisions such as 'M—y M'.[85] Whether such attributions are accurate, inaccurate or pseudonymous is of little relevance to the overall impression of variety of authorship given to the reader.

Poetic 'originality' is recognized and valued as the maintenance and renewal of particular forms of expression by a multiplicity of voices. 'Originality' connotes a common origin rather than literary novelty or experimentation. Such poetry is therefore similar to those instructive articles whose topics range from scientific experiments that can be conducted

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[83] 'Preface', *Family Friend*, II, June 1850, p. iv.

[84] This study will consequently focus upon periodical textuality as it appears upon the printed page rather than following the common scholarly practice of attribution.

[85] Two poems 'The Village Spires of England' and 'Verses: Addressed to Don Rodrigo Calderron, Secretary of the Duke of Lerma, Minister of Philip the Third. From the Spanish' *Bradshaw's Journal*, IV, April 1843, p. 275.

in the home to principles of personal conduct and needlework patterns in that it provides a model for emulation. Gibson's verse echoes Keats's early lyrics both in its classical and chivalric references and more directly, for example imitating Keats's 'Imitation of Spenser' (Stillinger, *The Poems of John Keats*, pp. 27-28). If Gibson bears what the reviewer calls 'the assay-mark of the mint of genius' ('John Gibson, the Sherwood Poet', *Bradshaw's Journal*, IV, December 1842, p. 15), the impression given by the poetry is not one of invention but of influence. Gibson's 'Morn from the dusk-brow'd orient steals | Tracking the new-wrought beams of light' from 'The Sky' is marked more by its similarity to Keats's 'Now Morning from her orient chamber came, | And her first footsteps touch'd a verdant hill' than by its novelty ('John Gibson, the Sherwood Poet', *Bradshaw's Journal*, IV, December 1842, p. 15 and 'Imitation of Spenser', and Stillinger, *The Poems of John Keats*, pp. 27-28 (p.27), l. 1 respectively).

The *Family Friend* defines poetry using the natural imagery of birds, bees and flowers familiar to its readers from its own poems and frontispiece illustrations, representing these definitions as a list of contributions from readers. These include 'Flowers of the imagination adorning the *prosy* pathway of life', 'The flower-garden of literature', 'A bouquet of choice flowers from the garden of imagination, tastefully arranged by the hand of genius' and 'Nature's harp, touched by skilful fingers'.[86] Such definitions emphasise the decorative function of poetry and its association with the 'woman-centred' domestic scene that Beetham considers the magazine's 'subject and destination' (Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own?*, p. 46). Like the 'Language of Flowers' and the practice of floral arrangement in the home, the words which the poet arranges in verse are themselves organised: the tuned strings of the harp, the 'garden', or the 'pathway of life'.

Not surprisingly magazines such as the *Family Friend*, which overtly position themselves in relation to a female readership, also participate in the fashionable enthusiasm for

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[86] 'Family Pastime: The Council of Friends', *Family Friend*, XII, n.s. March 1856, p. 87.

flowers discussed by Scourse.[87] However, the kind of extended discussions on floral symbolism represented by the *Family Friend*'s short series 'The Language of Flowers', 'The Poetical Language of Flowers' and 'Poesy and Posies' are rare. As the latter series explains, the language of flowers is not confined to the secular symbolism exemplified by the former pieces. Whereas the constituents of a posy may be read as an affective statement between individuals or as ornament, in poetry they have an additional function: 'Flowers, however, speak a still higher language, they tell us of the wonder-working powers and merciful consideration of the Almighty'.[88] It is this aspect that is most commonly represented in the poetry of the magazines. However, as Mackley's poem demonstrates, floral imagery in popular poetry locates such themes in a context that is more complex than the juxtaposition of worldly woe and heavenly bliss, even when such a juxtaposition structures the verse.[89]

Floral reference in the poetry of the magazines takes many forms. To take examples from the *Family Friend*, some poems directly address flowers: 'To a Primrose' (*Family Friend*, XVIII, n.s. March 1860, p. 155); some use seasonal themes to introduce floral imagery; 'Flowers of the Spring' and 'The Snowdrop' (*Family Friend*, XVIII, n.s. , March 1860 p. 181); others, like Mackley's 'I Saw A Flower', focus upon mortality through the use of floral imagery: 'Flowers for the Heart' and Thomas Hood's 'I Remember, I Remember' (*Family Friend* IV, n.s. June 1853, p. 134) 'A Lament for the Flowers' (*Family Friend*

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[87] This is not confined to the magazines' poetic content. For example, the *Family Friend*, II, n.s. December 1852 includes articles on 'Artificial Flowers and Feathers' (p. 80), 'Crochet Flowers - Heart's Ease' (p. 77), 'Flowers in Crochet - The Jessamine', (p. 167), 'Crochet Flowers. The Poppy', (p. 226), 'Crochet Flowers. The Ivy', (p. 286) and 'Parlour Flowers in Winter', (p. 204) amongst others.

[88] 'Poesy and Posies, Chapter II', *Family Friend*, IX, August 1854, pp. 58-61 (p. 60). An unusual exception to this is the 'Poetical Emblems' of 'Mrs Caulton', (*Bradshaw's Journal*, 11 December 1841, p. 96; 12 February 1842, p. 240; 23 April 1842, p. 400). The *Family Friend* includes one such poem 'Floral Emblems,—The Moss Rose' amongst those firmly 'DECLINED WITH THANKS' in its 'Answers to Correspondents', (*Family Friend*, I, December 1849, p. 25).

[89] Poems dealing with this theme without the use of floral metaphor often exhibit circularity. For example, E. S. Craven Green's 'A Child's Faith', which moves from the epigraph '"Mother, *this* is not our *home*; *our home is in Heaven!*"' to the conclusion: 'Keep but the *trusting faith* so early given, | And thou shalt find, indeed, thy *home in Heaven!*' (*Bradshaw's Journal*, 26 March 1842, p. 336).

XVIII, n.s. February 1860, p. 82), 'The Death of the Youngest' (*Family Friend*, II, n.s. December 1852, p. 225), or other forms of loss in poems such as 'Recollections' and L.E.L.s 'The Lute' (*Family Friend* I, n.s. September 1852, p. 315) and 'Days of my Youth' (*Family Friend* VI, n.s. December 1853, p. 272). Similar approaches to floral themes can be traced in many other publications.[90]

Despite their variety such poems emphasise processes of change although not necessarily so violently as Mackley. Although presenting the inevitablity of change less dramatically, 'To a Field Daisy', one of the many poems on floral themes in *Bradshaw's Journal*, uses the same anthropomorphic device:

> Low droops thy tiny head, my pretty flower,
>   As thou dost gather in thy globe-like form,
> Unable to resist the power
>   Of the approaching storm.
>
> (ll.1-4)[91]

Here, the flower is feminised by the activity of the 'approaching storm' which renders it 'droop[ing]', meekly passive. In this condition it is 'pretty' despite subsequently described as 'a fairy king' (l. 6). The poem blurs gender distinctions albeit drawing upon conventions such as the gendering of active and passive principles and the association of flowers with femininity. Later in the poem even sensual experience is barely differentiated as 'Our pleasures and our pains are mix'd together—' (l. 25). In Mackley's poem conventionality expresses itself in dualism: a structure split between visions of past and future, actuality and aspiration, encapsulated within the final line 'Leaving us behind to weep — "They are with the blest!"' (l. 14). In that of 'J.H.' change is not only a matter of

[90] Similar themes appear in other titles. *Bradshaw's Journal* includes 'The Past' (*Bradshaw's Journal*, 13 November 1841, p. 32) 'A Day in Spring' (*Bradshaw's Journal*, IV, May 1843, p. 358), 'Birds are Heard in Day's Bright Hours' (*Bradshaw's Journal*, IV, February 1843, p. 185), 'The Fatherless' (*Bradshaw's Journal*, IV, January 1843, p. 103).

[91] 'J.H.', 'To a Field Daisy', *Bradshaw's Journal*, 18 December 1841, p. 112.

external influence but also internal tensions as 'Sorrow and joy o'er each exert their power' (l. 26). It is not only regarded with mixed feelings but as mixed feelings. The poem's conclusion exhibits a similar resignation to 'I Saw a Flower', but its certainty is one of secular pessimism rather than religious hope, and of detachment rather than involvement:

> Life has its changes—every plant that grows,
> Is sometimes tainted by the earth's dull breath;
> It springs, it flourishes, and grows,
> And like man meets with death.
>
> ('To a Field Daisy', *Bradshaw's Journal*, 18 December 1841, p. 112, ll. 29-32)

The poem is not disturbed by the overtly intrusive voices or actions found in Mackley. However, its discourse is fractured by elisions that suggest effusive breathlessness rather than the considered stages of argument. In the stanza quoted above, the punctuation serves a similar function to the inverted commas of 'I Saw a Flower'. The conclusion, although not explicitly represented as quotation, again encapsulates the analogical cliché. Reducing life's 'changes' to a mere botanical analogy appears inadequate. Although also using the analogy of human and floral transience, physical and discursive conflict remain nebulous, a 'storm' or 'the earth's dull breath', rather than a concrete 'ruthless foot'. The poem, unlike 'I Saw a Flower', excludes both the possibility of human intervention in the world and its divine corollary. Although these two poems differ in the way they treat flowers as a metaphor for ephemerality they exemplify many of the common features of the poetry of the magazines: the use of floral imagery, the theme of loss, and a perspective that feminizes and objectifies.

A review of *The Mind and other Poems* by Charles Swain in *Bradshaw's Journal* demonstrates both the close association of flowers with poetry and the discursive tensions between domestic and Christian ideology noted in the context of Mackley's poem.[92] The

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[92] 'New Books', *Bradshaw's Journal*, 8 January 1842, pp.158-159.

review represents *The Mind* as an argument which moves from the apostrophising of Felicia Hemans, 'Thine is the gifted page that can impart | A beauty born of immortality!' ('New Books', *Bradshaw's Journal*, 8 January 1842, pp.158-159, (p. 158)), to that of the Star of Bethlehem and finally the Mind itself, 'Oh, Mind immortal!—Mind ineffable!—' concluding that 'Again the Ark is saved BY CHRIST the DOVE, | And MIND redeemed through GOD'S almighty endless LOVE' ('New Books', *Bradshaw's Journal*, 8 January 1842, pp.158-159, (p. 159)). The poem not only shares Mackley's enthusiasm and hopeful confidence but its fractured structure. The extracts cited in the article introduce asterisks on the two occasions when flowers are mentioned. The first comes in the extract from the second part of the poem which praises 'The architects of intellectual worlds' through the scientific achievements of Newton, the second occurs in the third part of the poem in which:

> the writer sweetly discourses of the wondrous powers of the imagination, dilates upon the spiritual gracefulness and beauty of the fairy mythology, and expatiates on the delightful association awakened by the influence of flowers upon memory and fancy ('New Books', *Bradshaw's Journal*, 8 January 1842, pp.158-159, (p. 158)).

As an example of the poetical 'influence of flowers' the following extract has much in common with Mackley's poem and many others.

> Ye poetry of woods! romance of fields!
>   Nature's imagination bodied bright!
> Earth's floral page, that high instruction yields!
>   For not—oh, not alone to charm our sight
> Gave God your blooming forms—your looks of light:
>   Ye speak a language which *we* yet may learn
> A divination of mysterious might!
>   And glorious thoughts may angel eyes discern,
>   Flower-writ in mead and vale,—where'er man's footsteps turn.

*   *   *   *   *   *   *

Hearts—cold amidst the beautiful and grand
  When spring her leaves and dewy garland throws,
And hangs her rainbow banners o'er the land
  In triumph o'er her oft-defeated foes!
Yes, hearts—shut to the fragrance of the rose,
  To which the stars are silent from their dome;—
Still throb to bless—to poetry—with those
  Sweet *infant flowers*—from whom their thoughts ne'er roam
  The cherub kiss—the love—the *poetry of home*!

(Charles Swain, *The Mind*, cited in 'New Books', *Bradshaw's Journal*, 8 January 1842, pp.158-159 (p. 158)).

Flowers form the material of discourse, like Mackley's 'nodding' violet, a 'floral page' and not a floral subject: silent '*infant flowers*' (*in fans*), they become significant only when subjected to the vicissitudes of another's progress 'where'er man's footsteps turn'. As the impersonal 'ruthless foot' of Mackley's poem makes its impression upon the 'little violet', so the dictates of metre take precedence over coherence in the disturbed syntax of this poem.

The poetry appearing in magazines like the *Family Friend* and *Bradshaw's Journal* participates in both the contemporary fashion for floral ornament and a poetic discourse in which themes of loss recur. Although couched variously as forms of personal loss, often of children or of childhood itself, the loss is one of the ability to communicate publicly. Personal expression is identified with non-discursive forms of communication, 'love' and 'kiss[es]' which render the participants speechless. Like Mackley's 'little violet', public exposure, for example in the pages of popular periodicals, requires that expression is regulated through the 'ruthless foot' of metric verse, feminised and distinguished from logical communication through affective and decorative connotation. The blurring of gender distinctions in 'To a Field Daisy' are here extended to language, as syntax and conventional grammar break down. The 'throbs' of affective communication do not respect linguistic rules turning nouns into verbs: 'to poetry' is as acceptable as 'to bless'. In the fragmented view of *The Mind*, little, if any, distinction is discerned between

religious and poetic discourses. Its references to cherubs, child-like innocence and sanctuary from worldly concerns highlight the tension between Christian and domestic ideologies.[93]

The poetic language of flowers differs from the coded communications that Scourse discusses.[94] It is less a broken code and more a demonstration of a code in the process of being broken. As an affective discourse the poetic language of flowers facilitates the 'interchange of kindly feelings and associations' noted in the *Etiquette of Flowers* but also goes beyond poetic etiquette to expose the possibility of misconception. The poems of Swain and 'J.H.' are less overtly mechanical than Mackley's and illustrate the potential for contradiction and confusion in affective discourse. Mackley's poem shows the necessity and arbitrariness with which order is imposed. These poetic examples demonstrate that poems are able to suggest both the inadequacy of prescribed forms and the presence of conflicting discourses by resorting to the one mode of communication open to them: it is through patterns of silence and syntactic disjunction, the signs of infancy, of exclusion or marginalisation in language, that they attempt to communicate.

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[93] The *Family Friend* includes a column of floral poetry amongst its 'Sacred Quotations' (*Family Friend*, III, n.s. March 1853, p. 237).

[94] Scourse notes how the original practice of such object letters combined floral arrangement with verse but that the two forms were dissociated in European practice (Scourse, p. 37).

Chapter 2

1. 'Framed by Nature': Keble's Poetic Influence

In the previous chapter I have argued that in the context of magazines like the *Family Friend* and *Bradshaw's Journal* poetic value is predicated upon imitation and repetition: to be 'original' is to demonstrate that a poet is embedded in a poetic tradition. The article puffing John Gibson's 'tide of song' ('John Gibson, the Sherwood Poet', ('John Gibson, the Sherwood Poet', *Bradshaw's Journal*, IV, December 1842, (p. 16)) locates the poet in a continuing tradition exemplified by Wordsworth whilst Charles Swain is placed in relation to Felicia Hemans.

Constrained by this literary frame of reference, the poetry relies upon structural features and typography to disturb and rework otherwise familiar themes and images: like the 'Language of Flowers' its discourse is characterized more by variety of arrangement than originality of expression. As the discussion of Mackley and others has suggested, deviation may not therefore take the form of a poetical change of course but the exposure of 'patterns with disturbances', eddies and contradictory flows, within an otherwise predictable lyrical 'tide'. In order to explore these deviations in more detail let us examine the constraining influence, the poetical 'channel' through which such writing flows.

In these poems, Wordsworthian emphasis on the subject and its discursive relationship with the world is shifted away from personal intellectual development through the poetic use of ordinary language and towards poetry as a canon or litany for the regulation of collective experience. Like the child 'telling o'er and o'er' in Keble's 'Bereavement', contemporary writers are popularly established in the poetic tradition through selection from a prescribed stock of themes or images: by recourse to an inventory rather than by invention. Poetic discourse is thus established as both circumscribed and circumscribing:

whether as reader or writer, one enters a field of discourse from which personal expression is excluded and 'telling' is not a matter of interpersonal communication but a ritual activity.

The regulatory function of poetry and the distinction between ordinary and poetic language are significant strands in Keble's poetics. Both the diction and structure of his poetry are often discussed in terms of a labour of arrangement reminiscent of Scourse's opinion of the 'delightfully contrived' writing of Twamley. J.C. Shairp sees Keble's poetry as a mixture of 'spontaneous effusions' and poems 'of more laboured manufacture', the latter easily detected because 'imperfect in rhythm and language, defaced by the conventionalities of poetic diction, frequently obscure or artificial, the thread of thought broken or hard to catch'.[95] More recently Brian Martin has referred to Keble's 'archaic diction and often tortured syntax' and suggested that his 'language rather belonged to the stock of of poetic words whose repository lay in the eighteenth century'.[96] Similarly, Georgina Battiscombe regards him as a mechanical rather than inspired or inventive writer:

> Keble was a poet with a vast knowledge of the technical side of his art; he delighted in complicated verse-schemes based on the Spenserian stanza or on the metre of Milton's Nativity Ode [...] His poetry is like nothing so much as a piece of music written by someone who is master of the technical side of harmony but yet tone-deaf. It marches forward with a perfectly accurate and sickeningly regular beat.[97]

[95] J. C. Shairp, *John Keble: An Essay on the Author of the 'Christian Year'* (Edinburgh: Edmonston & Douglas, 1866), p. 92. Further references will be given in the text.

[96] Brian W. Martin, *John Keble: Priest, Professor and Poet* (London: Croom Helm, 1976), p. 75 and p. 85. Further references will be given in the text.

[97] Georgina Battiscombe, *John Keble: a Study in Limitations* (London: Constable, 1963), p. 107. Further references will be given in the text. Battiscombe attributes this to Keble's privileged education. However, the less-privileged background represented in the *Bradshaw's Journal* article also results in imitation of Spenser. In Keble's words, it is not only the 'English reader' who must 'revert' to Spenser but the English poet. John Keble, 'Sacred Poetry', *Quarterly Review*, XXXII, June 1825, pp. 211-232 (p. 231). Further references will be given in the text.

Like Mackley, Gibson and other poets published and discussed in popular periodicals, Keble draws on a range of familiar poetic conventions. Shairp notes that the poem 'Twentieth Sunday After Trinity' contains a description of mountains that could have been written by anyone who had read about them (Shairp, p. 108). Martin provides a variety of examples of these using 'To a Snowdrop' as a typical example of Keble's poetic diction (Martin, p. 150). He also notes that Keble:

> blended characteristics from many sources: it is easy to hear the ring of Milton, Spenser or Wordsworth in his poems; sometimes there is an imitation of Gray, sometimes a hint of the eighteenth-century gardener poets (Martin, p. 68).

The value that *Bradshaw's* reviewer identifies in the work of Gibson is couched in terms more appropriate to Keble's own poems and poetics than to that of Wordsworth to whom Gibson is compared as a 'true poet [who] discerns the hand of Deity in all His works' ('John Gibson the Sherwood Poet', ('John Gibson, the Sherwood Poet', *Bradshaw's Journal*, IV, December 1842, p. 15). For Keble the ultimate function of poetry is to unravel and illustrate the complexity of Creation: words unfold the Word.

> True: all perfection is implied in the name of GOD; and so all the beauties and luxuries of spring [*sic*] are comprised in one word. But is not the very office of poetry to develope [*sic*] and display the particulars of such complex ideas? ('Sacred Poetry', *Quarterly Review*, XXXII, June 1825, pp. 221-222).

Both Keble and the review rely upon a metonymical relation between God, the 'GOD-WRITTEN poetry of Nature' in Twamley's phrase, and poetry which focuses upon natural subjects in order to define poetic value. In establishing this logical connection 'Sacred Poetry' also establishes a secular corollary: a poetical convention in which words like 'Spring' are regarded as repositories of complex meaning. Whereas Keble's argument against the redundancy of devotional poetry relies upon a poetics of exegesis, his poetry exhibits the formulaic features he criticises. Martin highlights 'vernal' as a word 'used repeatedly' by Keble and 'belonging entirely to the stock of poetic vocabulary' (Martin, p.

151). Battiscombe extends Shairp's criticism of the combination of effusive and manufactured poems in *The Christian Year* to matters of internal reference by noting the 'occasional flash in an otherwise insipid poem' in contrast to the formulae of Classical trope and archaic diction (Battiscombe, p. 110). These comments on Keble's poetic language recall the criticism of Josiah Conder's 'The Star in the East' which forms the pretext for the argument of 'Sacred Poetry':

> Notwithstanding beauties scattered here and there, there is an effort and constrained stateliness in the poem, very different from the shorter lyrics, which follow under the title of Sacred and Domestic Poems ('Sacred Poetry', *Quarterly Review*, XXXII, June 1825, p. 212).

For Battiscombe and Martin, Keble's poetry is constrained by both an all-pervading reserve and the effort to maintain metrical regularity. There is therefore a significant distinction between Keble's poetics as disseminated through the *Quarterly Review* of 1825 and that popularly circulated during the remainder of the century in the form of *The Christian Year*. The poetry of the popular magazines often combines the idea of poetic language as a repository of complex meaning with mechanical exegesis, simultaneously asserting that certain familiar words and phrases automatically communicate a variety of ideas and contradicting themselves by unpacking these for the reader:

> The Spring is here! and that brief sentence tells
> A wondrous tale of glory and delight,
> Of waring woodlands, and of mossy dells,
> Of birds, of flowers, of dewdrops, and of light;
> For every blessing Providence affords,
> Through each division of the changeful year,
> Seems sweetly blent in those delicious words
> Of matchless eloquence, "the Spring is here!"[98]

Although Martin considers that Keble's theory of poetry, like Wordsworth's poems, effectively restates the tenets of the Preface to the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads*

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[98] 'Flora', 'The Spring is Here', *Family Prize Magazine and Household Miscellany*, I, April 1854, p. 25.

(1800), Keble's poetry undermines this view. As Martin himself acknowledges, it is on the issue of poetic diction that the two differed most clearly, with Wordsworth openly critical of Keble's use of language (Martin, pp. 73-74). In comparison with Wordsworth's emphasis on ordinary language and the dictum of the poet as a 'man speaking to men' Keble's perspective reduces poetry almost to a private language.[99] 'The Spring is Here' provides a popular example of this both in its obscure usage, 'waring woodlands', and in its repeated attempts to unpack its 'brief sentence' by listing all that Spring entails.

Superficially similar to Wordsworth's notion of poetry as 'emotion recollected in tranquillity', Keble's description of expression distinguishes it from emotion.[100] In his view expression is not a vehicle in which feelings are communicated, but that which marks its conclusion: 'to begin with, then, we are all so framed by nature that we experience great relief, when carried away by any strong current of thought or feeling, if we are at last able, whether by speech or gesture or in any other way, to find an expression for it'.[101]

The emotive charge of 'any strong current of thought or feeling' is not preserved in its expression but transformed through the labour of closure into the 'relief' when one is 'at last' able to interrupt the intellectual or emotional flow. The *Family Friend* includes poetry as part of its desire to 'raise the standard of comfort'; similarly, Keble regards poetry as a divine gift, the 'amplest comfort' for those 'wrought upon' by the emotions (*Lectures*, I, p. 20 and p. 21). Although these perspectives differ in maintaining secular and religious foci respectively, they both regard poetry as an important form of recreation and refuge. John Stuart Mill also refers to the beneficial effects of poetry in his

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[99] Like Mackley's poetic subject, Keble's 'poetic language' is at once apparently accessible to the novice but ultimately regulated by the initiated.

[100] Battiscombe contrasts the poetics of Wordsworth and Keble as the distinction between seeing and observing (Battiscombe, p. 106).

[101] John Keble, *Lectures on Poetry 1832-1841*, 2 vols, trans. by Edward Kershaw Francis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912), I, p. 19. Further references will be given in the text.

Autobiography.[102] Wordsworth's poetry is 'a medicine for [Mill's depressed] state of mind' because it demonstrates a 'real permanent happiness in tranquil contemplation' that is not solipsistic but engaged with 'the common feelings and common destiny of human beings'.[103] Stephen Gill notes that others attributed relief from psychological suffering to the reading of Wordsworth's poetry. Moreover, Gill's example and wider discussion demonstrate the tension between Christian and secular forms of representation. In the 1830s and 1840s Wordsworth is not only 'high-priest of Nature and [...] domestic being at home amongst the Lakes' but his poems are regarded by some as 'akin to the Bible'.[104]

In Keble's view afflicted individuals fall into two categories both of which are excluded from the community of discourse in which they find themselves: either 'shrunk [from speech] through shame' or 'neither able nor willing [to express themselves] in the speech of daily life' (*Lectures*, I, p. 21). Poetry is shown to provide an alternative which is neither ordinary language nor silence but a discourse in which the world is represented as stable and ordered. Poetry is both 'closely associated with measure and a definite rhythm of sound' and functions so as 'to recall, to renew, and bring vividly before us pictures of absent objects' (ibid.). The structure and language of poetry re-integrate those temporarily 'carried away' by emphasising certain established relationships of sound and sense. Like the 'flower|bower' rhyme familiar poetic structures communicate a reassuring stability, guiding readers along a particular logical path by 'scansion and measure, simply in themselves' (*Lectures*, I, p. 22). As in the example of Mackley's 'I Saw a Flower', reading poetry is shown not only to provide a temporary diversion from the present by representing imagined pasts and futures—in poetry of recollection and salvation—but

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[102] In Janice Carlisle's discussion this effect is akin to homeopathy. Mill is troubled by the determinism of his associationist philosophy and is cured of his depressive illness, not by escaping the associations that have formed his character but by having them reinforced. Janice Carlisle, *John Stuart Mill and the Writing of Character* (Athens and London: University of Georgia, 1991), pp. 28-30.

[103] *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, 33 vols, ed. by F. E. L. Priestly and John M. Robson (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; Toronto: University of Toronto, 1963-1991), I: *Autobiography and Literary Essays*, ed. by John M. Robson and Jack Stillinger, (1981), p. 151 and p.153.

[104] Stephen Gill, *Wordsworth and the Victorians* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 10 and p. 16 respectively.

provides a discursive structure for readers to inhabit which is emptied of personal specificity:

> For while we linger over language and rhythm, it occupies our minds and diverts them from cares and troubles: when, further, it gives play to Imagination, summons before us the past, forecasts the future, in brief paints all things in the hues which the mind itself desires, we feel that it is sparing and merciful to the emotions that seethe within us, and, for a while, we enjoy at least that solace which Dido once fruitlessly craved, to her woe:
>
> a transient grace
> To give this madness breathing-space
>
> (*Lectures*, I, pp. 21-22)

This emphasis upon the visual and auditory aspects of poetry rather than its sense and the language used suggests a kind of poetic narcosis in which the critical faculties are suspended in favour of a languorous hiatus: the effort of analysis is replaced by the pleasurable interplay of 'hues which the mind itself desires'. Similarly, Battiscombe notes that:

> in the *Praelectiones* Keble defines poetry as 'a kind of medicine divinely bestowed upon man, which gives healing relief to mental emotion, yet without detriment to modest reserve, and while giving scope to enthusiasm yet rules it with order and due control' (Battiscombe, p. 139).

From this perspective poetry has a social role in providing temporary compensation for those in distress but none in establishing the cause of the distressing symptoms. Instead it re-emphasises the durability of the discursive structures within which such verses are read and composed. The poetic subject is 'framed by nature' in the act of expression by the popular poetic discourse in which the religious and secular contend.

Keble's poetic influence upon the poetry of popular magazines can be seen as a shift away from a 'Wordsworthian' conception of *poesis* towards a reliance upon a restricted vocabulary and peculiar 'poetic' diction reminiscent of eighteenth-century pastoral. Keble's diction has been seen as an attempt to 'blend on the one hand with conventional poetic language and on the other with the language of the Prayer Book and the Bible'.[105] Where Wordsworth sees the poet as a creator of taste, an aesthetic reformer who speaks to his fellow men in their own language, Keble locates himself within a tradition he recognizes as authoritative. Seen in this light, the stylistic and thematic limitations of the poetry of the magazines can also be regarded as an attempt to participate in a discourse associated with authority. Indeed, as *Bradshaw's* review demonstrates, some magazines seek to position Wordsworth and other contemporary poets within a unified tradition of 'nature poetry'. This is also the approach of the *Family Friend* in the series 'Poesy and Posies' which uses floral representation to connect classical culture with more recent European culture as represented by Jonson, Shakespeare, Cowper, Thomson, Clare, and Hemans.[106]

In these articles distinctions between eighteenth-century writers and earlier English pastoral are reduced to an interest in, and knowledge of, flowers. For example, Jonson is read as a practical guide rather than as literary representation:

> One passage, indeed, where he describes the shepherds directing the nymphs to strew flowers on 'Pan's Anniversary,' is well worthy the attention of the practical florist, of even the present day—the list of flowers which it enumerates being quite sufficient to gaily furnish a moderate-sized garden. ('Poesy and Posies', *Family Friend*, IX, n.s. September 1854, p. 58).

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[105] G. B. Tennyson, *Victorian Devotional Poetry: The Tractarian Mode* (London: Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 109.

[106] 'Poesy and Posies' subtitled 'A Garland of Poetry and Flowers', *Family Friend*, VIII, n.s. July 1854, pp. 332-335, and IX, n.s. August 1854, pp. 58-61 and pp. 121-125. The perceived practices of classical civilization described in one article recall the Victorian fascination with flowers that Scourse discusses: 'the nations of antiquity may be said to have revelled in flowers. With flowers they decorated the altars of their deities' (*Family Friend*, IX, n.s. August 1854, p. 59).

Jonson's poetry is not commented upon or valued of itself, no reference is made to the versification or meaning of the extract. Instead it serves as a demonstration of a historical body of knowledge. The article incorporates Jonson's poem into its list of 'nature poetry': poetry is a pretext for the presentation of a catalogue of flowers. Like the flowers in Keble's 'In Memory of a Little Child' poems become quantifiable objects: things to be enumerated, 'told', rather than explained. From this perspective the 'GOD-WRITTEN Poetry of Nature' requires no elaboration or modification merely mimetic reiteration.[107] In 'Poesy and Posies' Thomson's verse is not only valued for its 'greater fidelity to nature' but shown to be closely constrained by it: 'in his description of a garden [he] mentions the flowers in the regular succession in which they bloom' ('Poesy and Posies', *Family Friend*, IX, n.s. September 1854, p. 58).

Clare is also incorporated into this tradition even if 'after enumerating many interesting, but, to the unreflecting mind, common roadside flowers', he ventures beyond the familiar violets and daisies to mention 'dandelion', 'medicinal betony' and 'horehound' ('Poesy and Posies', *Family Friend*, IX, n.s. September 1854, p. 61), in a 'wild field catalogue of flowers' which includes entries which, like the bladder campion, expose the partiality of poetic convention.[108] However, the article represents contemporaneous writers as congruent with Keble's 'sacred' poetics rather than Clare's eccentric Romanticism:

> but in what noble verses, full of truth and beauty, our modern writers describe their [flowers'] attributes—Horace Smith, for example:—
>
> "Posthumous glories! Angel-like collection!
> Upraised from seed or bulb interred in earth,
> Ye are to me a type of resurrection,
> A second birth."
>
> ('Poesy and Posies', *Family Friend*, IX, n.s. September 1854, p. 59).

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[107] This emphasis on reiteration rather than explanation is also demonstrated by the series' sub-title 'A Garland of Poetry and Flowers'.

[108] John Clare, 'May', *The Shepherd's Calendar*, Revolution and Romanticism, 1789-1834 Series (London: for Taylor by Duncan, 1827; repr. Oxford: Woodstock Books, 1991), pp. 42-53.

For Smith there is no room for poetic debate. Flowers have a single symbolic referent: they are a 'type of resurrection' and not the locus of contending interpretations. Unlike Wordsworth's daffodils they are not transformed as part of an autonomous poet's personal vision 'flash[ing] upon the inward eye' but remain a quantity abstracted from the world and distanced from the poet, an 'Angel-like collection' rather than the quality of 'pleasure' that Wordsworth describes. In this respect Smith's verse closely follows Keble:

> When Wordsworth saw the daffodils in Gowbarrow Park he felt an overwhelming emotion and that emotion he afterwards transmuted into poetry. When Keble observed a snowdrop he reflected on the resemblance between this emblem of spring and the white angels who were the heralds of the Resurrection (Battiscombe, p. 106).

The revision of literary history that 'Poesy and Posies' undertakes elides the Romantic challenge to the pastoral aesthetic and (anachronistically) to the poetics of Keble, collapsing the sublime into the beautiful and reducing the wide-ranging writer of the Lakes to a 'gardener-poet' whose activity serves to catalogue the beneficent aspect of 'the Deity and all his works'.

However, as poems by Mackley and Keble indicate, attempts to reconcile secular and religious discourses by focusing on the representation of natural objects like flowers expose disjunctions in the unified perspective that Keble and the magazines present. Indeed, Keble is only able to maintain coherence within religious discourse, at the level of "'the intercourse between the human soul and its Maker'" cited in 'Sacred Poetry' (*Quarterly Review*, XXXII, June 1825, pp. 220-221) because he excludes doctrinal issues: 'it is not the religious doctrine itself, so much as the effect upon the human mind and heart, which the sacred poet has to describe' ('Sacred Poetry', *Quarterly Review*, XXXII, June 1825, p. 221). For him the benefits of poetry accrue precisely because such poetry is

distinguished from debate and abstracts its readers from it. Like telling the rosary, reading poetry is construed as a contemplative and ostensibly private activity.

In Keble's writing, therefore, we are presented with something of a contradiction. For example, he criticises the affectation of the Cockney School of Keats, Leigh Hunt and others, as 'the most vicious of all styles' ('Sacred Poetry', *Quarterly Review*, XXXII, June 1825, p. 216) yet as Martin and Battiscombe show, draws upon archaic and fanciful diction himself (Battiscombe, pp.108-109; Martin, p. 75, p. 85 and p. 150). In particular, in advocating the role of poetry as a means by which the effects of doctrine may be disseminated, he obscures the contradiction between this emphasis upon doctrine and the personal devotion he also advocates, 'the intercourse between the human soul and its Maker' ('Sacred Poetry', *Quarterly Review*, XXXII, June 1825, p. 216).[109]

A contradiction between poetic theory and practice are common to both Keble and the magazines. The restricted channel of poetic discourse they establish is nevertheless troubled by internal disturbances and contradictory flows that recall Gleick's chaotic 'pattern with disturbances' and Linda Hughes' analysis of the fractal features of periodical publishing (Hughes, 117-125). Such turbulence is not confined to a poetics informed by Christian doctrine: it is also present within primarily secular discourses. Having shown how Keble's poetics informs the poetry of the magazines I will now turn to secular currents in order to explore the limitations these impose upon poetical expression. The discussion will take the form of an examination of the poetics of two aspects of secular thought, the private and domestic, as represented by the conduct books of Mary Ann Stodart, and the public and political, as represented by the writing of John Stuart Mill.[110]

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[109] He consequently obscures the public conflict between Protestant and Catholic theology in which he played a significant role.

[110] These disparate writers provide the opportunity to assess the extent of any common ground between polarised perspectives, for example Stodart's conservatism and Mill's radicalism, Stodart's Protestantism and Mill's antisectarianism. Walter E. Houghton notes Mill's religious antisectarianism and discusses the religious and political sectarianism of the Reviews (pp. 3-27).

2. Different Truths: John Stuart Mill's 'Two Kinds of Poetry'

The influence of Romantic ideas on Keble's writing has already been noted. The Romantic context in which Mill's ideas developed has also been addressed. Some have considered Wordsworth's influence whereas others have concentrated on that of Coleridge.[111] For Christopher Turk, Mill's writings on poetics appear as a peripheral activity: 'they are not usually given much historical importance, and undoubtedly they are an early, and marginal part of Mill's output'.[112] His conclusion begins with a categorical reinforcement of this view:

> Mill's writings on art are in no sense a central part of his work. It is almost certainly because Mill himself evidently did not regard these as central, and after a brief active period between 1832 and 1833 left speculations on art to return to politics, that they are so obviously derivative (Turk, p. 211).

Thomas Woods takes a similar view of Mill's writing on poetics stating that it is 'very strongly influenced by the Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*' and presents a view that 'in later years, Mill would probably not have cared to defend' (Woods, p. 62). However, the strength of such influence is insufficient to dismiss this aspect of Mill's work, serving only to question its originality.[113] Mill himself notes the 'considerable amount of thought' contained in his work on the theory of poetry.[114]

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[111] Thomas Woods, *Poetry and Philosophy: A Study in the Thought of John Stuart Mill* (London: Hutchinson, 1961). Woods considers Wordsworth's influence as 'all-pervasive' (p. 48). Further references will be given in the text. Christopher Turk, *Coleridge and Mill: A Study of Influence* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1988), p. 188. Further references will be given in the text.

[112] The marginality of the journalism on artistic and literary matters is noted by John M. Robson and Ann P. Robson, '"Impetuous Eagerness":the Young Mill's Radical Journalism' in *The Victorian Periodical Press*, pp. 59-77 (73).

[113] Woods refers to the remarks of Benthamite contemporaries in which they disparage Mill's defence of Wordsworth (Woods, p.49).

[114] *The Early Draft of John Stuart Mill's 'Autobiography'*, ed. by Jack Stillinger (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1961), p. 156.

Moreover, Turk contradicts himself in his subsequent comment that Mill's modifications of the ideas of Coleridge and Wordsworth 'enable us to see the beginnings of characteristically "Victorian" critical theories' (Turk, p.188).[115] Although Turk only devotes a short chapter to Mill's poetics, his line of argument confirms the importance of the marginalia both to the Utilitarianism that informs Mill's wider theoretical perspective and to a transition in poetics itself: the transition that Turk identifies as the shift from 'Romantic' to 'Victorian' theories.[116] Turk's 'early' and 'marginal' may thus become 'formative' and 'pivotal'. This shift, noted by Isobel Armstrong in *Victorian Scrutinies*, is discussed in detail by John Woolford who considers the 'profound ideological conservatism' of reviewers in the 1850s and Mill's contribution to the perception of the poet as an isolated lyricist.[117]

As Jason Camlot has suggested, in this respect 'Mill's conception of poetry functions as a fantasy of truthful communication' which can be employed against the 'emphatic' discourse associated with the popular periodical.[118] Where Camlot discusses Mill's concern with authenticity and the threat that anonymous publication poses to 'truthful writing' (Camlot, p. 172) I will consider the implications of Mill's position for the possibility of a popular poetic. I will begin by demonstrating how Mill's formulation of poetry as a kind of common language resistant to cultural influence (such as the 'emphatic' discourse of popular periodical publishing) is self-contradictory by contending

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[115] Turk also notes that 'Mill's poetic theory also offers an interesting sidelight on the modifications Utilitarianism underwent in his hands' (Turk, p. 188).

[116] A large proportion of Mill's writing took the form of articles in newspapers, and weekly and monthly magazines. For example *Utilitarianism* first appeared in *Fraser's Magazine* in the October, November and December issues for 1861. For further details of the extent of Mill's contribution to periodicals see the *Bibliography of the Published Writings of John Stuart Mill [...]*, ed. by Ney Macminn, J.R. Hainds and James McNab McCrimmon (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University, 1945).

[117] John Woolford, 'Periodicals and the Practice of Literary Criticism, 1855-64' in *The Victorian Periodical Press*, pp. 109-142 (116). Armstrong argues that, in his reviews of Tennyson, Mill departed from the 'extreme expressive theory of poetry' outlined in the two essays discussed here (Armstrong, *Victorian Scrutinies*, p. 3). Whilst Mill's stance may later have shifted, as I will demonstrate, the poetic of the magazines is similar to his earlier position.

[118] Jason Evan Camlot, 'Character of the Periodical Press: John Stuart Mill and Junius Redivivus in the 1830s', *VPR*, 32 (1999), 166-176 (p. 169).

that as he attempts to distinguish poetic value from cultural influence and factual information his thesis becomes increasingly informed by cultural issues. In order to do this I will focus upon two essays from the 'brief active period' that Turk identifies: 'What is Poetry?' and 'The Two Kinds of Poetry'.[119]

Having first dissociated poetry from formal definition, Mill answers the question 'What is Poetry?' by limiting it to the 'delineation of states of feeling' rather than of 'outward objects': 'if the human emotion be not painted with the most scrupulous truth, the poetry is bad poetry, i.e. is not poetry at all but a failure' (*Collected Works*, I, p. 347). This derives from another distinction between the 'truth' of appearances and the 'truth' that lies behind appearances, in terms of their causes.[120] Woolford maintains that 'in Mill's philosophy as in any Idealist system, only the phenomena of perception can be known, and the noumena which form "things as they really are" remain unknowable' (Woolford, p. 120). This reduction of knowledge to self-knowledge is, however, problematised by Mill's use of abstract terminology. Mill associates poetry with the kind of 'truth' that lies behind phenomena:

> Poetry, when it is really such, is truth; and fiction also, if it is good for anything, is truth: but they are different truths. The truth of poetry is to paint the human soul truly: the truth of fiction is to give a true picture of *life* (*Collected Works*, I, p. 346).

Poetic insight is not merely self-knowledge, it is knowledge of 'the human soul'. However isolated Mill's poet may be, 'he' is not a solipsist. Mill's argument, as it is applied to poetry, draws upon Idealist principles but also makes a Romantic modification: he makes

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[119] J. B. Schneewind notes that these two essays 'were revised and combined into a single essay, entitled "Thoughts on Poetry and Its Varieties." [for *Dissertations and Discussions* (1859)]. The later version omits a number of passages of considerable interest'. *Mill's Essays on Literature and Society*, ed. by J. B. Schneewind (New York: Collier Books; London: Collier-Macmillan, 1965), p. 102. References are to the 1833 text in Mill's *Collected Works*.
[120] 'Appearances too, like other things, must have a cause, and that which can cause anything, even an illusion, must be a reality' (*Collected Works*, I, p. 343).

the Kantian distinction between phenomena and noumena but appends the Coleridgean modification that the 'truth' behind phenomena is intuitively accessible. It is the 'truth' beyond personal phenomena, the soul, which poetry delineates, not the 'truth' behind the world as a whole.

In 'What is Poetry?' poetry is discussed as one among several discourses (fine art, architecture, writing, and music). In 'The Two Kinds of Poetry', as the title makes clear, there are two kinds of poetry: in place of an analysis of the poetical in discourse Mill introduces a hierarchy of discourses.[121] He shifts from a system in which elements of discourse may be compared according to their degree of poeticality (the extent to which they delineate feeling and thus associate themselves with one sort of truth) to one in which certain *kinds* of discourse are evaluated according to an emotive standard. Mill moves from being content to assert the co-existence of 'different truths' to becoming the champion of one particular 'truth' associated with the poetic expression of the emotions.

This association of truth with one particular form of discourse rather than as a constituent of various discourses has clear cultural implications in that it would be endorsed by a monologic rather than dialogic view of language. This echoes the position of the first 'Spirit of the Age' essay in which the progressive potential of dialogue is subordinated to an existing body of 'facts': 'To be rationally assured that a given doctrine is *true*, it is often necessary to examine and weigh an immense variety of facts'.[122] For Mill popular publishing has contributed to the dissemination of knowledge but its technological achievement is only the beginning:

[121] Keble regards the Utilitarian perspective as the antithesis of poetry stating that 'nothing is further removed from poetry than the spirit which reduces everything to the mere standard and test of gain and utility' (*Lectures*, I, p. 257).

[122] John Stuart Mill, 'The Spirit of the Age I' in *Collected Works*, XXII: *Newspaper Writings December 1822 - July 1831*, ed. by Ann P. Robson and John M. Robson, (1986), pp. 227-234 (pp. 233-234).

> The grand achievement of the present age is the *diffusion* of *superficial* knowledge; and that surely is no trifle, to have been accomplished by a single generation (*Collected Works*, XXII, p. 232).
> [...]
> The proofs of the moral and social truths of greatest importance to mankind, are few, brief, and easily intelligible; and happy will be the day on which these shall begin to be circulated among the people, instead of second-rate treatises on the Polarization [*sic*]of Light, and on the Rigidity of Cordage.[123]

These comments recognize the technological advances that have made the popular dissemination of information possible, for example through periodicals such as the *Penny Magazine* and *Saturday Magazine*. However, they also distinguish between 'facts' and 'truths', between '*superficial*' knowledge (of phenomena such as the polarisation of light) and knowledge of that which informs the sensible world.[124] The popular magazines circulate information that is superficial in both a Kantian and a colloquial sense: not only does it focus upon phenomena but it does so in an insufficiently rigorous way.

However, the comments regarding the unproblematic dissemination of the truth of the '*superficial*' details of the world, its quantity of facts, do not easily accord with those that extend into areas of qualitative analysis such as morality and social organization. The circulation of these 'truths' is essentially different from that of information about cordage. Moreover, these are issues that directly affect the person and permeate beyond the '*superficial*' into the problematic areas beneath the 'outward objects', whether this is designated 'the soul', 'the personality', or 'the feelings'. Mill's insistence upon the regulation of understanding through a particular body of knowledge goes further than the surface detail. He distinguishes between that part of human experience to which poetry has access and about which it may communicate certain 'truths' and other discourses, which are merely descriptive. His distinction contradicts the basis of his didactic project.

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[123] John Stuart Mill, 'The Spirit of the Age II' in *Collected Works*, XXII, pp.238-245 (pp. 242-243).

[124] As Keble's 'sacred' poetry was defined as the means of illustrating the effects of doctrine rather than its explanation, so Mill's secular view of truth sees it as illustrative. See also 'Wordsworth and Byron' in *Collected Works*, XXVI: *Journals and Debating Speeches*, ed. by John M. Robson (1988), pp. 434-442.

As the following quotation illustrates, Mill's distinction is not between metaphysical categories but between different members of society:

> Those persons whom the circumstances of society, and their own position in it, permit to dedicate themselves to the investigation and study of physical, moral, and social truths, as their peculiar calling, can alone be expected to make the evidences of such truths a subject of profound meditation, and to make themselves thorough masters of the philosophical grounds of those opinions of which it is desirable that all should be firmly *persuaded*, but which they alone can entirely and philosophically *know* (*Collected Works*, XXII, p. 242).

In Mill's analysis those whose circumstances allow them an education beyond 'second-rate treatises', such as those popularly disseminated by the instructive magazines, are permitted to control not merely discourses over which their ability to collect quantities of material 'facts' might qualify them for the task but those 'moral and social' issues which impinge on spiritual matters. The hierarchy established within 'The Two Kinds of Poetry' is a translation or displacement of existing social structures. Mill recognizes that society regulates intellectual activity by maintaining an elite with the time and resources to undertake the 'profound meditation' of rigorous study. However, in emphasising this division of labour he moves from a distinction founded on contingency, the contemporary 'circumstances of society', to an absolute distinction based on that between rhetoric and epistemology. The accumulation of facts is a necessary but not a sufficient condition of knowledge. Such information forms the basis of a rhetorical device used by the social élite to persuade others of the veracity of their opinions.[125]

[125] In Camlot's argument this 'developed character of the speaker' is linked directly to the production of coherent and truthful discourse through the 'automatic authenticity' of poetic, moral and philosophical discourse. Camlot focuses upon Mill's association of authorial integrity with the presence of a consistent persona, the '"assurance of a *man*"' (p. 172). Here it would appear that discursive coherence (and by the associative inferences of Mill's argument, the coherence of thought and feeling) is reserved for a particular social group. Mill's sample poets indicate that this group excludes, or at best marginalizes, women and working-class writers.

Despite the title, Mill's concern is not with 'The Two Kinds of Poetry' but with two kinds of poets.[126] This concentration on the poet is demonstrated by his use of individual examples from Wordsworth and Shelley. By comparing poets and forms of subjectivity rather than poems Mill creates a problem for himself by shifting his object of enquiry out of material textuality into metaphysics.[127] He is no longer in the domain of the particular, of the empirical analysis of diversity, but of the metaphysical generalisations from which he claims to depart: 'while they [the metaphysicians] have busied themselves for two thousand years, more or less, about the few *universal* laws of human nature, [they] have strangely neglected the analysis of its *diversities*' (*Collected Works*, I, pp. 356-7). He may refer to particular poets but this is only to form a basis for generalisation. His method is therefore both founded upon a philosophical tradition of universal truth and counter to one of the tenets of this tradition, namely the logical impossibility of inferring the general from the particular. It is no surprise then that his argument can appear contradictory and sometimes confused. John M. Robson identifies, but does not pursue, this issue in his discussion of Mill's poetics: 'in describing his own skills Mill does much to clarify the poet's function, although here again the possibility of confusion exists because he offers several distinctions (Robson, 'J .S. Mill's Theory of Poetry', p. 163).

For Mill, poets are 'those who are so constituted, that emotions are the links of association by which their ideas, both sensuous and spiritual, are connected together' (*Collected Works*, I, p. 356). It is not so much the feeling that makes the poet or the poetry but the principle of mental organization that lies behind it. However, he has difficulty in distinguishing the features of the poet from the mass of humanity.

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[126] Turk notes this as following Wordsworth and Coleridge (Turk, p. 195).
[127] John M. Robson follows Mill in blurring the distinction between poet and poetry in his analysis of Mill's writing on poetry: 'an appeal to feeling on the basis of reason remained for him [Mill] the essential task of poetry, essential in two ways, as defining the "essence" of the poet (or of poetry), and as answering to individual and social necessities'. 'J. S. Mill's Theory of Poetry' in *Mill: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. by J. B. Schneewind (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), pp. 251-279 (p. 253).

> As there are few who are not, at least for *some* moments and in *some* situations, capable of *some* strong feeling, poetry is natural to most persons at some period of their lives. And any one whose feelings are genuine, though but of the average strength, - if he be not diverted by uncongenial thoughts or occupations from the indulgence of them, and if he acquire by culture, as all persons may, the faculty of delineating them correctly, - has it in his power to be a poet (*Collected Works*, I, p. 356).

It might be argued, as Mill appears to do at some points, that it is the intensity of the emotion that makes the poet. However, this line of argument is undermined by his insistence that intensity is not the defining criterion but circumstance. Emotion is 'natural' and therefore a property common to all humanity. Feeling is put forward as a necessary but not a sufficient condition for poetic production. The preceding question, 'What is poetry, but the thoughts and words in which emotion spontaneously embodies itself?' (*Collected Works*, I, p. 356) is necessarily rhetorical. To answer it would be to admit the significant influence of the cultural environment.

Despite his location of value in the 'natural', uncultured poet, his praise of Shelley and acceptance of a certain pedestrian worthiness in Wordsworth, Mill cannot escape the role of culture in the production of that discourse he calls 'poetry'. One may be a poet only 'if he be not diverted by uncongenial thoughts or occupations from the indulgence of them, and if he acquire by culture, as all persons may, the faculty of delineating them correctly' (*Collected Works*, I, p. 356). That is, poets rely on certain conditions, including the ability to benefit from certain aspects of culture and to escape from its detrimental influences. The expression of private emotion is restricted by the day-to-day demands of social life and the poet requires peace of mind, leisure and education in order to express himself. Mill sees the common 'poet' as limited to expressive speech. This is not surprising given the lack of opportunity and the limited availability of the requisite conditions for the production of 'true' poetry.

For Mill the true poet is the one whose production of poetry is distinct from social activity or obligation. In Turk's analysis:

> The link between poet and audience is severed, and any conscious attempt to communicate is seen as staining the purity of poetry. Mill is led to the conception of poetry as essentially a solitary, individual pursuit, antagonistic to society (Turk, p. 204).

In 'The Two Kinds of Poetry' Mill makes both explicit and implict attempts to divorce the poet from the production of poetry. He does so in the distance that immediately opens up between the title (with its focus on poetry) and the first paragraph with its emphasis on the poet: '*nascitur poëta*'. This is subsequently explicitly reinforced: 'One may write genuine poetry, and not be a poet; for whosoever writes out truly any one human feeling, writes poetry. [...] But "poet" is the name also of a variety of *man*, not solely of the author of a particular variety of *book*' (*Collected Works*, I, p. 356). In this way Mill manages to establish 'poet' as an honorific title and distinguish it from any form of productive or cultural activity. As 'poetry' is no more than the name given to the writing out a certain kind of feeling, so 'poet' is the title conferred on someone, specifically a male, who exhibits a certain form of subjectivity.

Despite suggesting common access to 'poetic' speech, Mill thus resists conferring the title of 'poet' on the mass of the population. Moreover, labour is the antithesis of 'true' poetry. For example, in his qualified assessment Wordsworth's poetry is described and praised in language that leaves no doubt as to its cultured artifice. Mill peppers his description with words and phrases such as: 'occupied', 'producing', 'skill and study' and 'laboured' (*Collected Works*, I, p. 358). The popular poet is not by these criteria a poet at all. Mill denies the title to anyone engaged in productive activity. A man is not a 'poet' because he writes poetry, but because of the way his mind works. As Mill's usage suggests, in this context women may be poets to the extent that they are a 'variety of *man*'. Where Keble dissociated poetry from actuality by associating it with a kind of

pleasurable narcosis, the hiatus between feeling and expression, Mill does so by collapsing gender distinctions in favour of those of class.

Mill is unable to distinguish successfully between the poet and the non-poet without reintroducing culture in forms that reflect contemporary class divisions. The classification of 'The Two Kinds of Poetry' mirrors the distinction between the leisured classes and the working masses. Labour is necessarily excluded from the poetic elite because of its lack of an opportunity to acquire the necessary modes of articulation rather than an inability to express its subjective condition. Although Mill does not equate poetry with verse in 'What is Poetry?', he does equate it with a form of expression in which social considerations play no part. For Mill the poet is one who refuses to acknowledge any link between his subjective condition and the objective world. As a poet, the privileged access to certain 'truths' is predicated upon, and proportionate to, the discursive distance from the public sphere:

> A poet may write poetry with the intention of publishing it; he may write it even for the express purpose of being paid for it; that it should *be* poetry, being written under such influences, is far less probable; not, however, impossible; but not otherwise possible than if he can succeed in excluding from his work every vestige of such lookings-forth into the outward and everyday world, and can express his feelings exactly as he has felt them in solitude, or as he feels that he should feel them, though they were to remain forever unuttered (*Collected Works*, I, p. 349).

Both Keble and Mill dissociate poets and poetry from worldly concerns. For Keble, the superior discourse of poetry is not governed by the superficialities of form but the specifics of content: the superiority of poetic discourse lies in its reserve, its self-censorship and the degree to which the subject it represents appears 'naturally' (and by extension divinely) regulated.

However, Mill sees poetic discourse as socially ineffective because it is associated with a lack of productivity, with the absence of commercial intercourse:

> Prose is after all the language of *business*, & therefore is the language to do good by in an age when men's minds are forcibly drawn to external effort ... True, this is only part of the mission of mankind & the time will come when its due rank will be assigned to Contemplation, & the calm culture of reverence and love. Then poetry will resume her equality with prose, an equality like every healthy equality, resolvable into reciprocal superiority. But that time is not yet (cited in Turk, p. 210).[128]

The view Mill expresses here is similar to Keble's notion of the function of 'sacred' poetry but, unlike Keble, Mill does not consider poetic discourse as of contemporary relevance. Poetic discourse has no currency in society either as a means of avoiding public controversy through the isolation of deferential subjects in a 'calm culture of reverence and love' or as a successful way of participating in public life. As Mill also makes clear at the beginning of the essay:

> The days are gone by, when every raw youth whose borrowed phantasies have set themselves to a borrowed tune [...] while unable to disguise himself that he had taken no means whereby he might *become* a poet, could fancy himself a born one. Those who would reap without sowing, and gain the victory without fighting the battle, are ambitious now of another sort of distinction, and are born novelists, or public speakers, not poets' (*Collected Works*, I, p. 355).

The poet is displaced from contemporary society into the past or the future as a 'has been' or 'a yet to be'. In 'The Two Kinds of Poetry' Mill states that

> the contemporary poets, those who deserve the name, those who have any individuality of character, if they are not before their age, are almost sure to be behind it. An observation curiously verified all over Europe in the present century (*Collected Works*, I, p. 364).

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[128] 'Poetry' is gendered in this letter of 1841 where it was not in the article of 1833. It should be noted that Mill is able to see even the concept of equality in terms of a hierarchy and to perpetuate the popular doctrine of the distinct spheres of male and female competence.

For him, to be a poet is to be abstracted from contemporary discourse and denied a public voice. As Turk notes, in 'The Two Kinds of Poetry' Mill 'cannot say "communicate" so he chooses "exhale" instead' (Turk, p. 205): the possibility of poetic dialogue and debate is reduced to a solitary, voiceless breath.

Although Turk indicates Mill's awareness of a 'close relationship between poetry and politics' (Turk, p. 208) the evidence from the earlier essays in which poetry is directly addressed does not seem to support this. In those writings truths about social matters are the province of non-poetical discourse; poetry is regarded as the bearer of truths about subjective experience. Mill's idea of the dissemination of '*superficial* knowledge' is couched in terms of a persuasive (and therefore by his own definition a non-poetical) discourse, the 'eloquence' he identifies as the opposite of poetry. However, in 'The Two Kinds of Poetry' the relationship of the social to the poetic is explicit. As the '*superficial* knowledge' of phenomena is logically authenticated by the existence of a deeper knowledge of the existence of noumena, so the persuasive facts of discursive eloquence are supported by the deeper knowledge afforded by the poetic temperament:

> [There are] two essential elements of the poetic character - creative imagination, which, from a chaos of scattered hints and confused testimonies, can summon up the Thing to appear before it as a completed whole: and that depth and breadth of feeling which makes all the images that are called up appear arrayed in whatever, of all that belongs to them, is naturally most affecting and impressive to the human soul (cited in Turk, p. 193).

This description of 'the poetic character' reflects its ability to combine disparate discourses in a semblance of unity through the agency of the emotions. In the light of Mill's previous discussion of the necessity of social regulation through the public dissemination of a coherent world-view in terms of '*superficial* knowledge' his desire for poetry to create an imaginative whole out of the fragments of 'scattered hints and confused testimonies' is allied to a desire for effective social regulation through the creation of an imaginary community for the members of a divided culture to inhabit.

Much of Mill's argument concerns itself more with divisions between individuals than similarities and points of contact. No matter how carefully 'The Two Kinds of Poetry' attempts to distinguish between the 'natural' and the 'cultured', it has an overt preference for the natural. However, this is undermined by Mill's need to qualify his argument with reference to matters of culture. As he notes:

> Of these [laws of human nature], none lie deeper or reach further than the varieties which difference of nature and of education makes in what may be termed the habitual bond of association (*Collected Works*, I, p. 357).

Mill's psychological 'habitual bond of association' is influenced as much by culture as by nature. Any predisposition to 'poetic sensibility' is a function not of 'natural' habits of mind but of cultural influence. The 'habitual bond of association' in the psychological sense Mill uses it is actually the 'habitual bond of association' in the material sense of class relations. His position here is similar to the one he assumes in *Utilitarianism*:

> It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied. And if the fool, or the pig, is of a different opinion, it is because they only know their own side of the question. The other party to the comparison knows both sides.[129]

In 'The Two Kinds of Poetry' Mill represents himself as the agent of division, the didactic prose writer. He obliquely notes his place in the chronology of intellectual endeavour and proceeds to explain how even the two words (*nascitur poëta*) with which he begins are highly complex, yet:

> contain some truth: truth, however, which has been so compressed and bent out of shape, in order to tie up into so small a knot of only two words, that it requires an almost infinite amount of unrolling and laying straight, before it will resume its just proportions (*Collected Works*, I, p.355).

[129] *Collected Works*, X: *Essays on Ethics, Religion and Society*, ed. by John M. Robson (1969), p. 212.

There is a similarity here between the formal 'knot' of epigrammatic language and the concision that is associated with poetry. For Mill, Shelley's greatness and poetic sensibility are best discerned in 'his smaller, and especially his lyrical poems' (*Collected Works*, I, p. 360). Such poetry is, however, associated with an emotional and not a philosophical veracity. In Mill's view, language, and particularly literary language such as the poetry or the epigram to which he refers, requires 'laying straight' in order to conceptualise it and recognize its importance. Truth is not readily discernible in simplicity but requires laborious professional mediation, the work of the 'Logician-in-Ordinary' to which he refers in a letter to Thomas Carlyle. This is a position which he regards as both 'more wanted even than the poet himself' and one that he is qualified to fill (cited in Woods, p. 64).

Despite Mill's claim to be more interested in the particularities of diversity than a unified overview it is the latter his essay provides. Like the 'poet of culture' he embellishes his central thought in the effort to make it more attractive and palatable to the reader. The implied teleological consistency of 'laying straight' (with its intimations of expository closure, a textual 'laying out') disappears as his text 'unroll[s]' in contradiction. Poetic diction, in terms of the 'words which we spontaneously use only when in a state of excitement' is also indicative of self-reflection: it 'prove[s] that the mind is at least as much occupied by a passive state of its own feelings, as by the desire of attaining a premeditated end' (*Collected Works*, I,. p. 362). However, this Wordsworthian conception of poetry as commentary on the 'passive state' of the feelings in the act of expression contrasts with those statements elsewhere in Mill's essay which characterize poetry and the poetic sensibility in terms of motive power and excessive flow. Whereas the 'poetic' organization of mind is earlier described as the one in which 'the succession of [...] ideas is subordinate to the course of [..] emotions' (*Collected Works*, I, p. 362), here this has shifted closer to the intellectual detachment from the feelings that was said to identify the lesser, 'cultured' poet.

'The Two Kinds of Poetry' marks a transitional point in Mill's thought. 'What is poetry?', the earlier article from which it departs, begins by addressing the problem of the relationship between poetic form and poetry. In this piece Mill opens by dismissing the equation of poetry with poetic form:

> It has often been asked, What is Poetry? And many and various are the answers which have been returned. The vulgarest of all—one with which no person possessed of the faculties of which poetry addresses itself can ever be satisfied—is that which confounds poetry with metrical composition (*Collected Works*, I, p. 343).

Turk shows how Mill moves from the Wordsworthian position that 'poetry "may exist in what is called prose as well as verse"' in early 1833 to a more Coleridgean perspective in the early 1840s.[130] In Turks's words

> he goes on to describe the characteristic excellencies of verse as, firstly, "it affords a language more *condensed* than prose" and secondly, "ever since man has been man, all deep and sustained feeling has tended to express itself in rhythmical language." (Turk, pp. 200-201).

This focus on vocal rhythm recalls Mill's distinction between poetry and logic. Whereas Wordsworth is presented as a cultured poet concerned with the clear and precise communication, his poetry is 'almost always the mere setting of a thought' (*Collected Works*, I, p. 360), and Shelley's lyric poetry is characterized as both cathartic 'exhala[ation]' and 'reckless' largesse (ibid.).[131] Unlike Shelley whose verse is exuberant and impressive, Wordsworth 'distil[s]' and 'economizes' (ibid.) providing not an overflow of separate images but a synthesis of perspectives. In Mill's view Wordsworth fails as a

[130] Although asking the question 'What is Poetry?' Mill's debt to Wordsworth is readily apparent as he moves rapidly from a discussion of poetry to one of the poet and thus closer to Wordsworth's focus upon the question 'What is a Poet?'. As Woods notes, both Mill and Wordsworth draw upon Hartleian associationism in their conception of poetry as 'impassioned truth' (Woods, p. 63).

[131] The term 'reckless' is deleted from the combined version of these essays appearing in *Dissertations and Discussions*.

poet precisely because his writing strays onto the ground Mill marked out for himself in the letter to Carlyle. Where Wordsworth saw the poet's role as combining insight with intelligible communication, as 'a man speaking to men', Mill wishes to divide these activities between the impressive Shelleyean poet and the logician who, whilst accepting that 'poetry is higher than logic', associates power with the logician rather than the poet.[132] Both the mundane language of Wordsworth and the impressive rhetoric of Shelley are represented as inadequate forms of communication. One fails to persuade. The other is impressive but incomprehensible. The 'Victorianisation' which Turk detects is a process by which the poet is isolated from the social context of writing in which men communicate. Mill's revaluation of Romanticism is less, as Turk characterizes it, a movement towards the Coleridgean elitism of a 'clerisy' than a subversion of Shelley's vision of the poet as 'unacknowledged legislator'. Valorised by virtue of an unusual strength of feeling which over-rides logical intercourse, the poet is cast as an impressive figurehead with whom the majority can sympathise in limited ways but whom they cannot know.[133] In acknowledging the poet Mill exposes him: not merely unmasking Shelley, but forestalling the possibility of a democratic poetics. If the power of the poet lies in his person rather than in his form of discourse, and this poetic personality is unusual, then a popular poetics is impossible.

Mill also isolates the expressive poet in 'The Two Kinds of Poetry'. This is a philosophy that Turk regards as the addition of 'a new term to the Romantic theory of poetry' and concludes that this revalues poetry 'as the expression of passion, but now only in private, and therefore not truly expression at all' (Turk, p. 205). It is this isolation that underwrites the role of the logician as the new 'unacknowledged legislator', the mediator between the private world of the poet and that of the public.[134] Turk's view of the marginality of Mill's work on poetics noted how he soon turned to politics and suggested

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[132] *Collected Works*, XII: *Earlier Letters*, ed. by Francis E. Mineka (1963), pp. 161-163 (p. 163).
[133] The aristocratic connotations of Mill's use of 'largesse' reinforce this distinction.
[134] Carlisle sees Mill as casting himself in the role of mediator between 'Utilitarian philosophy [and] the individual's need for "an internal culture" of the feelings'. (Carlisle, p. 252).

this work was derivative. However, another of Mill's letters to Carlyle demonstrates that, in the period of his writing on poetry, whatever his disillusionment with politics his ideas on the mechanics of political power are little different from those he expresses in relation to poetry:

> Though I am sick of politics myself, I do not despair of improvement that way [by original thought rather than by the amplification and broad dissemination of established ideas]; *you* hear the cackle of the noisy geese who surround the building, *I* see a little of what is going on inside. I can perfectly sympathise in Bonaparte's contempt of the government of *bavards*: talking is one thing and *doing* another: but while every corner of the land has sent forth its noisy blockhead to talk, over head I am near enough to see the real men of *work*, and of head for work, who are quietly getting the working part of the machine into their hands, and will be masters of it as far as anybody can be with that meddling and ignorant assembly lawfully empowered to be *their* masters (*Collected Works*, XII, p. 151)

In this passage Mill emphasises his ability to sympathise and to provide insight into the complexities of public discourse. The incomprehensible 'cackle of noisy geese' that he associates with democracy is similar to the rhetorical power that he associates with the Shelleyean poet in that it is emotive rather than logical and expresses not original ideas but common feelings. In Mill's view the 'Poet and Artist' Carlyle hears only the democratic cacophony whereas Mill (as 'Logician-in-Ordinary') looks behind the acknowledged legislators to discern the true political activity.[135]

Mill sees the continuity and breadth of dissemination of a particular ideology merely as a diversion that distracts attention from the real location of power. However, although Shelley might be regarded as an example of the distinction between talking and doing as it applies to the political influence of poets, he is also an example of a poet whose work had a limited circulation. Mill's public valorisation of the Shelleyean poet can thus be seen as a form of popularisation that, although limited, may serve to divert attention from 'the working part of the [political] machine'.

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[135] In terms of his earlier distinction between truth and superficial knowledge Mill's poet would appear to work only within the realm of the superficial.

However, for Turk, Mill 'does deduce [...] a conclusion which Coleridge endorsed, that true poetry can only exist in short, that is lyric, forms' (Turk, p. 199). Although Mill does not explicitly connect poetic textuality with compression in 'The Two Kinds of Poetry' his discussion of Shelley contrasts overflowing excess with the measured detachment of Wordsworth.

> Never did a fancy so teem with sensuous imagery as Shelley's. Wordsworth economizes an image, and detains it until he has distilled all the poetry out of it, and it will not yield a drop more: Shelley lavishes his with a profusion which is unconscious because it is inexhaustible (*Collected Works*, I, p.360).

Here it is the '*degree*' rather than '*kind*' of poetic sensibility that Mill wants to emphasise: the hierarchical position rather than the intrinsic qualities. It is the quantity rather than quality *per se* that is stressed in the comparison:

> And such [Shelleyean] poetry, to all who know enough of nature to own it as being *in* nature, is much *more* poetry, is poetry in a far higher sense, than any other, since the common element of all poetry, that which constitutes poetry, human feeling, enters far more largely into this than into the poetry of culture (*Collected Works*, I, p. 361).

Despite its 'inexhaustible' content of emotion the Shelleyean poet is able to be concise in a way in which the cultured poet or the writer of prose cannot. Such poetry can encapsulate an infinity of emotional truth whereas the truth of an epigram requires 'almost infinite' prosaic exposition.

Part of the reason for this is that, as he dissociates 'poetry' and 'the poet' from the production of poetry, so he dissociates them from poetic texts. As 'poet' becomes the name of a certain subjectivity rather than of a certain type of worker so 'poetry' becomes the name for something insubstantial and protean, a marker of value rather than any linguistic or material object. Mill shifts his words out of the vulgar discourse of society at

large in preparation for their revaluation and reintroduction into such discourse by means of periodical publication.[136]

In spite of his care to make distinctions between kinds of poetry Mill is sometimes less careful in his use of terminology. As in the example of the classical allusion, '*Nascitur poëta*', Mill's concern is not with the words themselves but with the ideas that he associates with them. Like the didactic writer he characterizes, his writing 'clothes' a central thought.[137] Moreover, in his analysis such clothing is primarily emotive rather than logical, a subjective expression and not a reasoned argument. The persuasive power of such writing, its 'unpoetical' eloquence, is not a matter of intellectual rigour but emotive rhetoric. Mill indicates this emphasis in 'On Genius':

> A man who knows may tell me what he knows, as far as words go, and I may learn to parrot it after him; but if I would *know* it, I must place my mind in the same state in which he has placed his; I must make the thought my own thought; I must verify the fact by my own observation, or by interrogating my own consciousness (*Collected Works*, I, pp. 327-339 (331)).[138]

Words alone are insufficient to communicate ideas and their materiality must give way to appropriation. Mill leaves the final decision on the veracity of a speech act open to empirical investigation *or* personal judgement by concluding that in practice the logical

[136] MacMinn lists occasional pieces in which an explicit interest in semantics is evident. However, such articles are concerned with defining a 'proper' meaning for particular words more than analysing their use. Mill attaches his own values and defines his own linguistic relationships. See 'To Mr R. Carlisle, Dorchester Gaol' in the *Republican*, 3 January 1823, pp. 25-26 and the *Globe* 6 January 1835, p. 2. MacMinn glosses these as on the words 'nature' and 'destructive' respectively (MacMinn, p. 1 and p. 43). See also 'Remarks on the Use and Abuse of some Political Terms. By George Cornewall Lewis ...' in the *Examiner*, 22 April 1832, 259-260. Mill's position on semantics in the poetic field, and, more particularly, in respect of his own definitions, is at variance with his pronouncements on public and performative language. For an example of the latter see 'Judicial Oaths' in the *Morning Chronicle*, 23 July 1823, p. 3 and 'To the Editor of the *Morning Chronicle*', in the *Morning Chronicle*, 15 August 1823, p. 3, in which Mill gives priority to public opinion over oaths as the ultimate sanction of truth.

[137] Carlisle identifies a similar process in the *Autobiography* where 'through his depiction of [John] Sterling's character, Mill rewrites his own' (Carlisle, p. 252). Mill's revisions of the early draft of the *Autobiography* excise personal differences to the extent that 'the assimilation of the two men to each other seems almost uncaused' (ibid).

[138] First published in the *Monthly Repository*, VI, n.s. October 1832 (649-659)

and scientific intellect may well be philosophically inferior to the poetic sensibility.[139] For Mill, ideas are not communicated by words but by an intellectual sympathy reminiscent of the mysterious emotive processes he identifies in the recognition of 'poets'.

In the example above he defines knowing as 'mak[ing] the thought my own thought'. In 'The Two Kinds of Poetry' his use of the thought of others, and of Coleridge in particular, is very much a case of making it his own and this extends to the revaluation of terminology. His analysis leads him not to invent a new set of definitions but to modify old ones. Despite the centrality of Coleridge's ideas to his thought (which Turk has no hesitation in labelling 'derivative' in a number of areas) the terms 'Fancy' and 'Imagination' are used loosely. Turk notes that 'Mill often uses the terms "Imagination" and "Fancy" without any rigour' (p. 193). He later indicates that 'Mill did not, in fact, concern himself much with the differences between Wordsworth and Coleridge on the question of the true nature of poetic diction, despite his involvement in the argument about metre' (Turk, p. 201). This supports the view that Mill is disinterested, if not uninterested, when it comes to semantics. To the extent to which poetry is expressive Mill wants to empty it of intellectual content. The strength of Wordsworth's poetic distillate is rejected in favour of Shelley's largesse of emotive imagery.

In 'The Two Kinds of Poetry' 'Poetry' is constituted of 'human feeling' and yet is also (emphatically) '*in* nature'. At first sight this might be read as a description of the poetic product of the inspiration of the Romantic poet. Indeed, Mill does refer to Shelley's poetry as 'exhal[ation]' (*Collected Works*, I, p. 360). In this interpretation the poet is inspired, his character infused and enlarged by the natural world, and this fusion and development within the individual personality is publicly expressed in poetic form. However, this respiratory metaphor does not seem adequate. The combination of elusiveness, ubiquity and ultimate value which Mill attaches to poetry in its superior form

[139] Here I use 'subjective' in the modern sense.

has more in common with Deism. The contradiction between poetry as an essential constituent of both humanity and the natural world and as a text is the same contradiction that Christian conceptions of God attempt to reconcile. God is both the Word and its inscriber, omnipresent yet removed from the fallen world. For Mill, like Keble, the superior poetic text supplies an immediate contact with the truth: it comes to correspond with 'the Truth' insofar as it is accessible.[140]

This conflation of word and writer, poet and poetry elides the distinction between the writer and his writing and thus the work of writing disappears in 'spontaneity', the apparently causeless effect. However, it re-emerges at the point at which the attempt is made to distinguish between poetry and the generality of emotive expression. Mere expression is not enough, the poet is identified by the use of 'words which we spontaneously use only when in a state of excitement' (*Collected Works*, I, p. 362). Thus Mill returns briefly to matters of textuality, or at least diction. The poet is not recognized by the apparent strength of his emotion after all, but by the words he uses: the poetic sensibility is signified by usage. Even in this tangential contact with the issue of the text Mill has returned to his starting-point: the difficulty in distinguishing between 'the poet' and 'any other person who writes' (*Collected Works*, I, p. 355).

The reason for this can be found in his associated comment that both are communicating 'by words, every one of which derives all its power of conveying a meaning, from a whole host of acquired notions, and facts learnt by study and experience' (*Collected Works*, I, p. 355). Mill's problem is the social nature of language. He wants to make a distinction between two forms of discourse, one in which cultural factors and particular conscious motives determine the utterance, and one in which the utterance is determined by unconscious and universal emotions ('genuine feelings'). However, because expression is as culturally weighted as its context he cannot successfully separate the utterance from

[140] As Mill distinguishes 'The Two Kinds of Poetry' so he also distinguishes Homer and the Bible as the 'greatest books' (*DNB*, XIII, p. 391). Further references will be given in the text.

that cultural context (with its own divisions of class and gender) without contradicting his first premise. Although he begins with an almost Bakhtinian view of language as coloured by various aspects of the speaker's social environment, in order to convert this dialogical perspective into a monological theory and establish the poetic hierarchy of 'Two Kinds of Poetry', he has to depart from his original position through a series of examples unified by the principle that 'poetry' is somehow not actually linguistic but purely emotive. Thus he moves from statements that include the linguistic element: 'What *is* poetry, but the thoughts and words in which emotion spontaneously embodies itself?' (*Collected Works*, I, p. 356) to those from which it has been excised: 'the poetry of a poet is feeling itself' (ibid., p. 357).

Unlike Keble, Mill sees the equation of poetry with poetic form as a popular misconception and intends to demonstrate that this view is fallacious since it: '[brings] before their [the public's] minds as a distinct *principle* that which, as a vague *feeling*, has really guided them in their actual employment of the term' (ibid., p. 344). His judgement seeks to replace the material reality of the text as it is culturally constructed (in language) by reifying an idea (a '*principle*') that is only known as a '*feeling*'. Mill establishes his position in 'What is Poetry?' upon the assumption that his view is a common one:

> That, however, the word 'poetry' *does* import something quite peculiar in its nature [...] all this, as we believe, is and must be felt, though perhaps indistinctly, by all upon whom poetry in any of its shapes produces any impression beyond that of tickling the ear [...] The object of poetry is confessedly to act upon the emotions; and therein is poetry sufficiently distinguished from what Wordsworth affirms to be its logical opposite, namely, not prose, but matter of fact or science (*Collected Works*, I, p. 343).

Mill's emphasis , his imperative and his communal 'we' are predicated upon the acceptance of the 'inculcated opinion' of the Romantic orthodoxy.

Poetic diction which does not enter into the essay in any explicit form, is restricted to its assimilation into his argument for the primacy of 'natural' emotion. Any difference between poetic language and non-poetic language is reduced to its congruence with the emotions it expresses:

> All emotion which has taken possession of the whole being - which flows unrestrictedly, and therefore equably - instinctively seeks a language that flows equably like itself (cited in Turk, p. 203).

The language of poetry is not merely distinguished from other forms but is distinguished by being a language that recognizes similitude without recognising the existence of difference upon which the concept of similarity relies.

Mill dismisses the popular conception of poetry as verse without reference to any particular poetry. There are no quotations in verse. He concentrates upon names and titles: 'Coleridge', 'Wordsworth', 'Shelley', 'Milton' and '*The Cenci*' rather than arguing to establish the value of 'unknown' poetry and thus ensuring that his arguments stand on their own. Instead, he enlists those who have already been entitled 'poet' in order to support an argument about the mechanisms through which poetry is 'naturally and spontaneously' created and the poet recognized.

This circularity is replicated in Mill's conclusion to 'Two Kinds of Poetry'. His discussion closes with the claim that in principle the combination of the strong motivation of the poetical temperament (that is, the mind in which thought is organised by feeling) and the philosophical intellectualism of the cultured mind (where thought organises feeling) would be ideal. In practice, however, the knowledge imparted through acculturation contains unrecognized errors that make the combination of motivation and temperament unreliable as a means of access to the truth:

> Unfortunately, in practice the matter is not quite so simple; there the question often is, which is least prejudicial to the intellect, uncultivation or malcultivation. For, as long as so much of education is made up of artificialities and conventionalisms, and the so-called training of the intellect consists chiefly of the mere inculcation of traditional opinions, many of which, from the mere fact that the human intellect has not yet reached perfection, must necessarily be false, it is not always clear that the poet of acquired ideas has the advantage over him whose feeling has been his sole teacher (*Collected Works*, I, p. 364).

On balance, Mill falls in with the primitivist view that acculturation, at least in its institutional forms, inhibits human development at both personal and communal levels. This view of cultivation as a perversion of the natural state, and culture as restrictive is borne out by the language that Mill uses earlier:

> In the one, feeling waits upon thought; in the other, thought upon feeling. The one writer has a distinct aim, common to him with any other didactic author; he desires to convey the thought, and he conveys it clothed in the feeling which it excites in himself, or which he deems most appropriate to it. The other merely pours forth the overflowing of his feelings; and all the thoughts which those feelings suggest are floated promiscuously along the stream (*Collected Works*, I, p. 357-358).

The distinction between feeling as a modest covering of thought ('cloth[ed]') and as the motive power ('stream') of thought '*au naturel*' is highly suggestive. It exhibits something of the religious overtones of primitivism where 'culture' equates to a 'fallen', postlapsarian state. Culture is characterized here as something that operates through the enclosure of thought. 'Natural' feelings become materials for concealment, a multitude of fig-leaves sewn by the intellect. Cultured expression foregrounds feeling in order to conceal or modify thought whereas 'natural' expression displays it and invites interaction. The latter's 'promiscu[ity]' is both the recognition of its exposed state and the recognition of its culturally censured vulnerability.[141] Expression is problematic for Mill because, for

[141] The vulnerability of thought, ideas and the intellect is 'culturally censured' from the point of view that rationality underpins social organization. The primacy of rationalism in post-Enlightenment philosophy, together with the discipline's treatment of, and permeation into, social organization and public discourse is undermined to the extent that it can be seen as subject to organization on non-rational principles: 'Civil Society' requires the subordination of passion to the intellect. As already discussed, Mill's own Utilitarian views reflect this.

all its emotive power, it is the intellect that it exposes: it is the publication not only of private feeling but of private thoughts.

Despite their differences Mill's secular and Keble's Christian poetics each define a poetic hierarchy. Mill distinguishes between the 'true poet' and the 'poet of culture'. Keble between 'primary' and 'secondary' poets. Each defines the former (valorised) category in terms of natural spontaneity and the latter (inferior) category in terms of self-conciousness. Both consider writing for acclaim or money as detrimental to the production of 'true' poetry.

This self-conciousness takes various forms ranging from professional interest to personal ambition and affectation. For Keble the archaic diction and detailed imagery of the Cockney School is affected and he identifies them with the lowest forms of writing. For Mill, Shelley's scattered profusion of images marks him out as an exemplary poet whereas Wordsworth's methodical approach is represented as problematic.

In both accounts, however, poetical expression is subject to rigorous procedures that exclude the possibility of spontaneous and immediate communication. The prominence that Keble gives to formal considerations precludes spontaneous expression even in the mode of tranquil Wordsworthian recollection. In his account the writing of poetry calms and regulates the writer's emotions rather than exciting them. As Battiscombe notes, in his own case Keble establishes 'his own very personal theory of poetry as a means of concealment rather than of expression, or at best, of veiled and cryptic expression' (Battiscombe, p. 140). Similarly, Mill, distinguishing himself from the 'Poet and Artist', does not allow the poet autonomy but interposes a logical interpreter between poetic discourse and its audience.

Both theories would appear to allow for the validity in principle of popular poetry. Mill accepts that spontaneity of expression or 'poetic speech' is common to all classes of

society. Keble's association of formal accuracy and the choice of devotional subject matter with poetic value would allow for, perhaps even facilitate, popular poetry by setting out some simple rules for composition. However, in practice, both theories exclude popular poetry. Neither writer includes such poetry in their canon (unless Keble can be said to tacitly include his own writing within the definition of 'sacred poetry').[142] Battiscombe places the notion of poetical 'reserve' at the centre of Keble's theory and practice and notes that:

> lyrical poetry is the type of poetry most difficult to fit into this theory of reserve, "since in this species of poetry", as Keble himself says, "everything is uttered in the poet's own person." (Battiscombe, p. 139)

Mill dissociates himself from the role of the poet entirely. Keble is unable to do so. Moreover, he has difficulty with a form that is both popular and favours first person narrative over the use of devices that distance the poet from his poetry. It would appear that the lyric form is best suited to the authenticity of expression that Keble and Mill value. However, as a form closely associated with both a tradition of popular poetry and with commercial and political interests (such as those involved in the proliferation of cheap periodicals) Keble at least is unwilling to accept it.[143] Where Mill interposes the logician as the third person and authority in any communication between poet and audience, an examination of Keble's poetry shows that he prefers to introduce devices such as the poetic persona or third person narration in order to distance poet and reader. For both Keble and Mill the poet is given a supporting role: in Mill's case in favour of the logician as the ultimate authority, in Keble's in favour of the Deity.

[142] Keble's poetry is written from a position of social superiority, as a highly-educated clergyman and is consequently not popular in the sense of a product of the masses.

[143] Lyric predominates in the poetry of the popular magazines. The *Family Friend* even includes several lyrics which are presented both as poems and as musical scores. See for example the poem 'A Mother's Tears' (*Family Friend*, II, June 1850, p. 75) and the corresponding score entitled 'Oh! Sacred are a Mother's Tears' conveniently located overleaf (pp. 76-82).

Each theory sees poetry as an important channel of communication but differs as to the authority that informs it. For all their reliance upon Romantic conceptions of the poet and the poet's social role they divorce him from his social context and thus from the source of his authority as a personal critic and commentator, 'a man speaking to men'. In doing so they emphasise the role of the literary critic as arbiter of value whether he takes his authority from a religious or secular system of thought.

However, neither Mill nor Keble is consistent in the application of their respective systems. Moreover, these inconsistencies are directly related to attempts to preserve a hierarchy of poetic discourse that is only superficially socially inclusive. This suggests a conflict that is less between the religious and secular discourses of Keble's brand of Anglicanism and Mill's version of Utilitarianism than between such authoritative institutions and those they seek to regulate.

Mill moves from a Wordsworthian position in which the valorised discourse of poetry is available to all in 'the thoughts and words in which emotion spontaneously embodies itself' to a Coleridgean one in which it is only accessible to a particular class of people. This is not, however, a Coleridgean 'clerisy'. Neither is it a covert Shelleyean legislature, but a group distinguished by their excess of emotion and detachment from the public sphere.

In 'Sacred Poetry' Keble argues that the apparent limitations of devotional poetry actually provide a framework for an infinite variety of composition. He re-incorporates poets within the Church as 'Sacred poets' rather than as the alternative authority to established religion that is represented by Coleridge's 'clerisy'. However, like Mill, he retains the Romantic identification of poetry with the expression of emotion and dissociates the 'true' poet from worldly concerns.

Mill and Keble demonstrate how two very different approaches reach a similar conclusion regarding the role of the poet and of poetry. Each revises Wordsworth's poetics of engagement as 'a man speaking to men' into a poetics of detachment. The figure of the poet comes to resemble that of the 'Man of science' against which it was contrasted in Wordsworth's Preface:

> The knowledge both of the Poet and the Man of science is pleasure; but the knowledge of the one cleaves to us as a necessary part of our existence, our natural and unalienable inheritance; the other is a personal and individual acquisition, slow to come to us, and by no habitual and direct sympathy connecting us with our fellow-beings. The Man of science seeks truth as a remote and unknown benefactor; he cherishes and loves it in his solitude: the Poet, singing a song in which all human beings join with him, rejoices in the presence of truth as our visible friend and hourly companion.[144]

This position is reinforced in the conclusion of the 'Essay, Supplementary to the Preface' of *Lyrical Ballads* (1815) in which the ability to discern '*good* poetry' as opposed to fashionable verse, is associated with a politicised entity, 'the People', rather than with an acquiescent 'Public' and distinguished from the kind of intellectual elite represented by Coleridge's clerisy, Mill's 'Logician-in-Ordinary' or Keble himself as cleric and academician (*Poetical Works*, II, pp. 409-430, p. 429 and p. 430 respectively).

The process of 'Victorianis[ation]' discussed by Turk in the context of Mill's 'derivative' poetics would appear to extend beyond these writings into those of other prominent theorists such as Keble. Both Mill and Keble shift the emphasis from the self-regulating, socially and politically engaged Romantic poet willing and able to theorize his own practices both individually and collaboratively (latterly as demonstrated by the Preface to *The Lyrical Ballads*) to the systematic regulation of poetry by external interests.

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[144] *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, 5 vols, ed. by Ernest de Selincourt (Oxford: Clarendon, 1940-1949) II (1944), pp. 384-404 (p. 396). Further references will be made in the text.

The argument I have presented so far has concentrated upon the 'Victorianis[ation]' of Wordsworthian Romanticism and has focused upon the revision of the definition of poetry as independent and socially engaged through the phrase 'a man speaking to men'. Whereas the magazines are explicitly directed towards the domestic scene and the poetry they include is attributed to both men and women, sometimes writing (if not speaking) to each other both Mill and Keble exclude women from their respective poetic canons. In order to examine the regulatory framework specific to female writers and readers I will now turn to the poetics of a different kind of theorist, one whose writing concentrates upon domestic matters, namely, Mary Ann Stodart.

Chapter 3

1. Speaking to Women: Beyond the Domestic Sphere

The magazines address a broad readership, representing themselves as intimate and informative *Family Friends* and *Welcome Guests* to the reader's home. Stodart's books have a narrower focus where they advise upon matters of female conduct. In *Every-Day Duties* she concentrates on an audience of her own gender and expresses her ideas in an intimate form, through 'Letters to a Young Lady'.[145] Its companion, *Hints on Reading*, is also written in epistolary form.[146] This positions her readers within an imagined circle of confidential feminine correspondence.[147] Although authoritative in tone, her writing is often conversational even when writing upon public issues such as the formal education of women or their place in the literary canon.[148] Where Wordsworth saw the poet as a personal critic and commentator communicating across class divisions, as 'a man speaking to men', Stodart's writing relies on an acceptance of the validity of class divisions as well as those of gender. She represents herself, to modify Wordsworth's phrase, as well as his more inclusive usage, as 'a woman speaking to women':

> I write, as much with the intention of giving safe hints to such mothers and teachers as may require them, as to those young ladies, who, after being removed from the superintendence of masters and governesses, are at a loss how to keep up their acquirements (*Hints on Reading*, p. 64).

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[145] M. A. Stodart, *Every-Day Duties: in Letters to a Young Lady*, new edn. (London: Nisbet, 1858). Further references will be made in the text.

[146] M. A. Stodart, *Hints on Reading: Addressed to a Young Lady* (London: Seeley and Burnside, 1839). Further reference will be given in the text.

[147] Citing the *Westminster Review*, Helsinger notes the contemporary perception that the debate over women's social role was '"a matter of interest and discussion, especially to themselves"'. *The Woman Question: Society and Literature in Britain and America, 1837-1883*, ed. by Elizabeth K. Helsinger, Robin Lauterbach Sheets and William Veeder, 3 vols (University of Chicago Press, 1989), I, pp. 4-5.

[148] M. A. Stodart, *Principles of Education Practically Considered: with an Especial Reference to the Present State of Female Education in England* (London: Seeley, Burnside and Seeley, 1844); *Female Writers: Thoughts on their Proper Sphere, and on their Powers of Usefulness* (London: Seeley & Burnside, 1842). Further reference will be given in the text. These works abandon the epistolary form of those relating specifically to matters of private conduct.

The family magazines purport to address 'all classes' on a variety of subjects. Stodart's writing, although more closely focused, establishes her authority in a similar way. The contributors listed in the prefaces to the *Family Friend* are represented as both respectable and specialist. By and large these are not vaunted as world authorities but as experienced middle-class amateurs. Their ability to specialise makes them superior to generalist educators with whom the readership may have had contact, such as the 'mothers and teachers' and 'masters and governesses' mentioned above. Stodart also bases her authority on class and experience, establishing herself as a widely read mature woman with detailed knowledge of household management.

In addressing herself to 'Young Lad[ies]' she concentrates upon the transition from childhood to adulthood, the period between the socially insignificant identity afforded to 'children and servants' and the significant one of 'wife and mother'. Her interest is in women who stand at the boundary between private and public spheres, young women whose public identity has been veiled by the domestic seclusion of childhood and who are in the process of acquiring a public face. Moreover, she writes not only to guide the conduct of 'Young Lad[ies]' but for those who monitor the transition to womanhood. As well as addressing women whose identities are in the process of formation, she addresses those who fall between the external regulation imposed by 'masters and governesses' and the self-regulation expected of the responsible and mature woman.[149] She watches over those otherwise 'removed from superintendence'.

Stodart's language of supervision and regulation, of 'superintendence' and 'safe hints', is typical of the conduct manuals of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in representing domestic life as 'a world with its own form of social relations, a distinctively

[149] Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 59-95 (p. 81).

feminine discourse'.[150] She sees household management and the acquisition of accomplishments likely to attract a husband and decorate the home as the main objective of a woman's education.[151] Whilst she values a broader education for women, this is judged in relation to the domestic context and in contradistinction to its male equivalent:

> When French *is* studied, it ought to be well studied, not merely because whatever a lady does ought to be done well, but because French commonly holds the same post, and perhaps the same office in her education, as Latin and Greek do in the education of a gentleman (*Hints on Reading*, p. 65).

At the time Stodart was writing the discussion of such gender distinctions was not restricted to matters of education. Judith Lowder Newton identifies widespread unease, asserting that there was an ideological 'crisis of confidence, which emerged in the 1830s and 1840s in Great Britain, [and which] took the form of a prolonged debate over the "woman question"'.[152] This debate focused upon the relationship between the domestic and social 'worlds' and the extent to which these could be regarded as distinct:

> The insistence upon women's influence reaches a culmination [...] when Sarah Ellis begins *The Women of England* (1839) by declaring both that women's influence is social in nature and that it is in some ways more socially significant than the power of men: 'You have deep responsibilities; you have urgent claims; a nation's moral worth is in your keeping.' (Newton, p. 766).

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[150] Stodart uses the idea of the household as the 'woman's sphere' of influence as discussed in Sarah Lewis's *Woman's Mission* (1839). This position is outlined in the second 'letter' of *Every-Day Duties* entitled 'Home is the True Sphere of Woman' (pp. 13-24) and reinforced by the poem 'Home, the True Sphere of Woman' that concludes the 'letter' (p. 24). Unlike the family magazines, however, Stodart's modes of address and publication do not encourage actual correspondence.

[151] This is not limited to the class Stodart addresses. In a detailed study of workhouse children Lynn MacKay has noted that the workhouse provided 'comparatively little [academic] education for the girls in its care, using them to perform household tasks instead.' Lynn MacKay, 'A Culture of Poverty: The St Martin in the Fields Workhouse 1817', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 25 (1995), 209-231 (p. 231).

[152] Judith Lowder Newton 'Power and Ideology of "Woman's Sphere"' in *Feminisms: An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism*, ed. by Robyn R. Warhol and Diane Price Herndl (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1991) p. 765 first publ. Judith Lowder Newton, *Women, Power, and Subversion: Social Strategies in British Fiction 1778-1860* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1981).

Stodart appears to take a more conservative view of the social importance of women , approving Jeremy Taylor's construction of the domestic role of the woman as the 'underworker in the house of the Lord' whose 'labour is in the foundations' (cited in *Every-Day Duties*, p. 20). In *Female Writers* she deliberately distances herself from Lewis, stating that 'we entertain no extravagant thoughts of "woman's mission," but we yield to none in our sense of women's responsibility' (*Female Writers*, p. 123). This does not mean that she distances herself from the ideology of domestic womanhood, however, and she is careful to emphasise the importance of women's domestic role in her introductory remarks by stating that: 'Home is and ever must be the true sphere for woman, and her domestic duties are her first duties' (*Female Writers*, p. 9). For Stodart, responsibility for the home is a woman's primary obligation but it is not the limit of her capabilities or duties. The language of *Every-Day Duties*, the reference to 'foundations' and 'responsibility', however, echoes and modifies Sarah Ellis's 'deep responsibilities'. The image of womanhood Stodart represents is a collective one. Although, like Ellis, she adopts an authoritative tone, she does not distinguish herself from her audience. Ellis's declaration of women's influence identifies social responsibility with her readers rather than herself and may be interpreted as representing this responsibility as that of individual women. Stodart avoids Ellis's ambiguity by identifying herself with her female readers. The assertion 'we yield to none' represents a collective responsibility and a shared task rather than merely an act of delegation. For Stodart the concept of collective womanhood is more than the sum of its parts.

Stodart also emphasises the importance of gender distinctions in literature, considering that 'it is more honourable to a woman to have written Mrs Rundell's Domestic Cookery than Miss Martineau's Political Tales' (*Every-Day Duties*, p. 20). This is a conventional position: the married woman takes precedence over the unmarried; domestic matters are seen as within a woman's competence whereas public affairs are not. In Stodart's formulation this is a logical distinction and she uses the unfamiliar juxtaposition 'the female politician' to emphasise incongruity '(there is an anomaly in the sound)' (ibid.).

Although the unmarried Martineau might not be deserting domestic duties in order to write, her 'Political Tales' are a departure from earlier religious works such as *Devotional Exercises for the Use of Young Persons* (1823) and *Addresses with Prayers and Additional Hymns for the Use of Families* (1826) directed towards domestic consumption. Whilst conforming to the '*energy, industry,* and *perseverance*' emphasised in *Every-Day Duties* (p. 23) as the model of feminine activity, Martineau's effort is misdirected. For Stodart, she soon moves beyond the bounds of feminine competence as her literary labour 'in the foundations', the religious instruction of the young, turns to social criticism.

In common with other conduct books Stodart's work is primarily concerned with the definition of a particular femininity and the establishment of this as a standard by which her female readership should judge themselves and to which they should strive to conform.[153] In doing so she accepts the conventional terms within which the 'woman question' is posed. Female collectivity is perceived not as groupings of women, different individuals associating in accordance with different sets of needs and aspirations, but as a unified category: 'woman'. Individual women come to be seen as instances of 'woman': more or less successful reifications of this ideal.[154] The themes of female subordination and Christian piety occur together throughout Stodart's work:

> The author's deep conviction is, that the part of woman is one of subordination and dependence; and that her duty in social life is, commonly speaking, to be

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[153] This standard is both a measure of worth and an examplar to which an individual should aspire.
[154] Stodart notes that:

> A merely literary lady is generally, (at all times, I ought rather to say) an almost useless member of society, and the affectation, the neglect of common duties, and the general evils connected with the assumption of the character, are indeed grievous faults — but faults to be spoken of rather in sorrow than in anger (*Hints on Reading*, p. 21).

She is also predictably disapproving of the theatre, recommending the polite declination of such invitations to such frivolous excesses (*Every-Day Duties*, p. 31).

expressed in one word — 'obedience,' qualified by one single adjunct — 'in the Lord' (*Every-Day Duties*, pp. v-vi.).[155]

The value of women's labour 'in the foundation' is dependent upon the structure it supports. The 'deep responsibilities' identified by Ellis are, for Stodart, less the maintenance of civil society directly than the support of the religious structure which stabilises it. As she emphasises: 'we *must have* scaffolding' (*Every-Day Duties*, p. 40). However, the 'obedience' which 'commonly speaking' is so easily summed up, is itself problematic. Even in her advocacy of the domestic ideal Stodart introduces a qualification distinguishing the mundane discourse of domesticity from the religious discourse that is seen to authorise it. A married woman's obedience to her husband and to patriarchal authority in its temporal manifestations is, of itself, insufficient and must consequently defer to divine authority. The word which defines a woman's social duty must be underwritten by the Word (as befits her Protestantism, Stodart places more emphasis upon textuality than orality). Here Stodart indicates that the domestic ideal of womanhood is a necessary but not a sufficient condition of good conduct. The regular duties of household management are marked out as a distinct field of activity. Domestic duties are not discharged automatically and require constant vigilance. This qualifies the passivity of the feminine role that informs the domestic ideology of the period. The regulation of the home has its own aesthetic.

> A large and well-ordered family, assembling at appointed hours, morning and evening, for the purpose of prayer and praise, is a very beautiful spectacle; and there is something in the very regularity and consistency of this, which is calculated to affect the minds of those which [*sic*] are not real believers in Christ with a sense of the reality of religion (*Every-Day Duties*, pp. 39-40).

Religion is valued for its 'regularity and consistency' and observance appreciated as 'a very beautiful spectacle'. In the home the 'reality of religion' is one of orderly obedience,

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[155] This position is similar to that of Marion Reid's *A Plea for Woman* (1843) in which 'in the best Protestant tradition, she vows that obedience is ultimately owed to a higher authority than a husband', (*The Woman Question*, I, p. 15).

of the 'gracefulness of arrangement, quietness of tone, simplicity of feeling [that] should everywhere reign (*Every-Day Duties*, p. 105). Domestic ritual exemplifies the strength and rigidity of the religious 'scaffolding' that supports the social structure.

The value of prayer as a domestic ritual, however, lies in its ability to impress particular values upon potential dissidents, 'to affect the minds of those which are not real believers'. Such arrangements are also a manifestation of power. Feminine superintendence is accompanied by a certain elevation and authority 'in entering on the management of a house, endeavour to arrange everything on a regular plan' (*Every-Day Duties*, p. 36). The peaceful ambience attributed to domesticity is created and maintained through a feminine and Christian determination and didacticism, the 'Firmness [that] is perfectly consistent with gentleness' (p. 31). As Stodart informs her intended readership of young women: 'Be firm. Be decided. You will say that I am falling into repetition, but it is the lesson which I wish you to learn' (p. 28).[156]

Stodart attempts to counter the imputation that such influence may be exercised beyond the domestic boundary: 'In answer to this, it is sufficient to say, that the imparting of instruction to our families does not in itself imply the assumption of authority' (*Every-Day Duties*, p. 51). Nevertheless, in contradiction to an earlier assertion of the poor synthetic ability of the female mind (p. 36), these supervisory skills may be afforded a more general application: 'Who is so fit to take this comprehensive view as the mother?' (*Principles of Education*, p. 269). In exhorting women to exercise their proper control over the domestic sphere Stodart risks giving her readers a taste for extended control:

> A race of mothers! It is that which is wanted in England; a race of Christian, intelligent, active, sensible women; women who view the charge entrusted to them in its right light, and who endeavour to fulfil their duties on right principles, with that sort of uneasy anxiety which springs from the aim at a high and scriptural

[156] Stodart's books are themselves part of a genre that relies upon repetition. As Nancy Armstrong notes 'under the sheer force of repetition, however, one does see a figure emerge from the categories that organize these manuals' (*Desire in Domestic Fiction*, p. 60).

> standard. No delegated influence can be so strong, so potent, as maternal influence (*Principles of Education*, pp. 267-268).

Here Stodart's language emphatically contradicts that usually associated with models of domestic womanhood. It transgresses the gender boundaries that elsewhere are rigidly defined: first motherhood is abstracted as an ideal racial and national characteristic rather than merely a feminine duty, then, although quickly realigned with feminine duty, it boasts of both the 'activ[ity]' of a particular mission and attributes of strength and potency more commonly associated with ideal masculinity. That the initial phrase, 'A race of mothers', is associated with a woman's advice to Napoleon demonstrates Stodart's problematic relationship with the concept of passive femininity.

By dressing her effusion on women's maternal 'mission' in adjectives conventionally associated with masculine attributes *Principles of Education* begins to transgress and question conventional gender roles. As in the example above, 'mighty Napoleon' can appear as the model for organizational efficiency in the home. Such associations reinforce the assertions of female power. Although contradicted by conventional statements, such as the dictum that women's privilege is to '*obey* not to *rule*' (*Every-Day Duties*, p. 2), such assertions resurface with persistent vigour: 'Subordinate as her place is, she is not a passive, but an active being: she has duties to perform and her influence often extends beyond the immediate sphere of these duties' (ibid.).

In *The Women of England* Ellis refers to the social nature of female influence noting women's 'deep responsibilities' and 'urgent claims'. In this context Stodart's extension of influence 'beyond the immediate sphere', beyond the domestic boundary, is powerful indeed. For all her conventional insistence on the careful regulation of young women by their social superiors Stodart repeatedly draws attention to the limits of conventional domesticity. She hints at inappropriate authors and texts, qualifies conventions of feminine obedience and passivity and provides an example of a woman extending her influence beyond the 'immediate sphere' of her own household by participating in the public debate

over the ‘woman question’: for Stodart, as for other ‘Victorians of “the articulate classes,” the Woman Question [...] really was a question’ (*The Woman Question*, I, p. xi).

Whilst popular magazines represent themselves as inclusive publications intended for a readership of ‘all classes’, that is all categories of the populace whether defined by class, age or gender, to the extent that they also include material on fashion, social conduct and domestic management, they also participate in this debate. Like Stodart, they provide authoritative representations of how the domestic sphere should be whether in the form of the frontispiece illustrations discussed by Beetham or the practical hints and tips on household management and recreation they contain. However, in keeping with their intention to avoid controversy, such periodicals fail to question the ideology of the separate spheres of domestic and public life. In fact they reinforce it by representing themselves as intermediaries.

2. Poetic Contamination

Stodart's *Hints on Reading* attempts to proscribe and prescribe certain types of literary text rather than to encourage a variety of reading material: 'many persons will tell you to read, and I tell you so too; but I add — be careful what you read, how you read, and do not read too much' (*Hints on Reading*, p. 21). Stodart's earlier book, *Every-Day Duties*, is noted as a companion to *Hints on Reading* and this indicates something of the importance she places upon the activity of reading as a formative influence on the readership of 'Young Lad[ies]' whom she addresses.[157] Such influence can be either helpful or detrimental to the development of character and therefore requires careful regulation (the *raison d'être* of her own writing): 'many books which young persons may read with safety under the guidance of a pious and sensible friend ought not to be allowed them for solitary perusal' (*Hints on Reading*, p. vi.). She is careful to emphasise both her own piety and the primacy of the Bible with 'Scriptural Reading' receiving precedence as the first 'letter' of *Hints on Reading*. Other forms of literature are compared to the Biblical standard of propriety and veracity. For example, she condemns novels at length: 'I need hardly warn you against every species of novel and romance [...] a Christian novel-reader is a contradiction in terms' (*Hints on Reading*, p. 22), and provides an anecdote to the effect that 'novel-reading lad[ies]' are not interested in the truth (pp. 167-8). However, it is not only novels that are antithetical to Christian values. In the role of 'pious and sensible friend' she warns against a 'species of literature [which] has sprung up within the last thirty years, against which I cannot forbear levelling a cautionary admonition; — I mean that in which religion is mingled with fiction' (pp. 22-23). Such writing blurs the distinction between the truth of scripture and literary fabrication. Whilst romances may be readily distinguished as irreligious and morally suspect even by a naïve reader, texts which combine fiction and religion may not. Reading is represented as a

[157] Reading is incompatible with domestic responsibilities, however. In *Hints on Reading* she notes that 'When the mind is occupied by domestic duties, there is, generally, but little time for reading' (*Hints on Reading*, p. 168). *Every-Day Duties* is noted as a 'companion to' *Hints on Reading* ('Preface', *Hints on Reading*, p. iv).

potentially confusing and morally dangerous pastime for the inexperienced. It is particularly hazardous for women because 'in women the imagination is commonly too active, the judgement not sufficiently so' (*Hints on Reading*, p. 22).

Poetry is seen to hold particular dangers for the active imaginations of young women. Reading poetry is represented as an activity beset with the dangers of excess: it is as if Stodart has identified it as a 'solitary vice' peculiar to young women. She even admits to having succumbed to its sensual appeal herself:

> Poetry was my passion, and, if you will have it, my bane even in childhood; and if I appear to speak with harshness of so early and intimate a friend, it is because I know her to be deceitful and treacherous, and a very Circe. The cup which she holds is crowned with flowers, but the draught is poisoned, and woe to those who drink deep of the brook of Castaly, and never turn their steps towards the purer rill of Siloam! (*Hints on Reading*, p. 54)

For Stodart, the damaging influence of poetry on the female character lies in its sensuality and inconstancy, the antithesis of the 'regularity and consistency' she identifies in domestic and religious ritual. In the quotation above, 'Poetry' is personified as an intimate but deceitful friend ' a very Circe'. This allusion associates poetry with the power of transformation and identifies it with debasement through sensual indulgence: with Burke's image of the 'swinish multitude' and Mill's 'pig satisfied'.[158] The bewitching influence of poetry is similarly represented as superficially attractive but deadly: a fashionably ornamented cup with contaminated contents. Using 'a strong and uncouth expression' she rejects 'much of worldly poetry [... as ...] a sand-box of Satan' and reminds her reader that:

[158] These representations of degeneracy are closer to those of another Protestant writer, Edmund Spenser, than to the Homeric episode that Stodart's usage suggests. Where in the *Odyssey* Circe transforms men into swine physically but not mentally, Spenser, like Stodart, regards sensual pleasure and appetite as wholly debasing. See *The Faerie Queene* II, xii, 85.

> Many have been blinded to their own destruction — have been lulled asleep by soft and melting airs, and [rather than finding themselves 'amidst flowers and music'] have lifted up their eyes in hell (*Hints on Reading*, p. 59).

Her use of the imagery of the adorned cup and soporific 'soft and melting airs' recall the distinction between the sensual impact of the Catholic service and the simpler forms of Nonconformist worship. Although not referring to Keble by name, Stodart's views on the dangers of texts in which 'religion is mingled with fiction' oppose his position both on Anglican doctrine and on the value of 'Sacred Poetry'. Where Keble sees poetry as a useful pedagogic tool and popular vehicle for the dissemination of religious ideas, for Stodart the genre is inimical to any such project. Moreover, the lyrical 'airs' and floral imagery that she identifies as the agents of poetic seduction are characteristic of much of the poetry published through the popular periodicals such as the instructive and family magazines. The moral instruction provided by Swain's 'Earth's floral page' or Twamley's 'GOD-WRITTEN Poetry of Nature' is not seen to extend to literary representation.

Her fears extend beyond overtly 'worldly' poetry. Devotional works may also have their dangers. She considers 'much modern sacred poetry is objectionable on the ground of taste; much more on the far higher ground of principle' (*Hints on Reading*, p. 63). The danger of unregulated reading is explicitly associated with a confusion of secular material and scripture, for example reading the Bible for its style rather than its religious content. Moreover, 'sacred poetry' is seen to have its own aesthetic, even sensual, power 'the very word stirs thoughts and feelings' (*Hints on Reading*, p. 62).

Poetry offers a licentious yet childish playground in the 'Sand-box of Satan' which opposes both God (as Truth) and the truth of a 'Young Lady['s]' transition into the adult world as a recognized sexual being. Poetic 'licence' draws on notions of childish play and sensuality which are only socially permissible if regarded as without sexual content, connotation or consequences. It also may permit associations of words and images that postulate alternatives to accepted norms of behaviour or causality. It is difficult to

determine whether Stodart's detailed confession of her own poetic seduction and subsequent recovery and her associated warning indicate a greater concern with the power of poetry than her off-hand comments about novel-readers. However, given her assertion that the insidious enemy is the most dangerous, it might be concluded that poetry is more threatening to her position than the novel. If so, this raises the question as to whether it is the ability of poetry to dispense with the causal and social conventions indispensable to the formation of realist narrative and replace them with an associative structure that causes Stodart concern.

The sensual appeal of poetry introduces forms of coherence that are not subject to familiar regulatory structures. The 'soft and melting airs' of poetic influence are indifferent to the rigid principles of domestic conduct and religious 'scaffolding'. Even devotional poetry may offend against quietude and simplicity. For example, the apparently orderly and conventional verses of Keble's *Christian Year* endure as a popular legacy of the Tractarian controversy. Poetry, despite its formal orderliness, threatens the 'gracefulness of arrangement, quietness of tone, simplicity of feeling' of the domestic order and consequently the foundation of society itself. Contaminated by sensual appeal and worldly, political concerns, such as the doctrine and conduct of the Established Church, even 'sacred poetry' may not be 'read with safety'.

She notes the dire spiritual consequences of the unregulated reading of poetry by young women:

> to allow a girl unrestrained access even to the British poets, is much the same as to place in her hands a draught of virulent poison. It is worse: the ruin of the soul is more fearful than the ruin of the body (*Hints on Reading*, p. 60).

The metonym, 'British poets', which collapses the distinction between the poets and their work, emphasises the ruinous consequences of 'unrestrained access'. The unregulated

reading of such material is the literary equivalent of Byronic promiscuity.[159] Here the bewitching sensuality of the childhood Circe and the lure of the Parnassian spring are transformed into a more immediate threat of spiritual corruption. Unlike her own improving prose in which information is carefully selected and edited for particular audiences, poetry, like poison, is indiscriminate. Passionate rather than intellectual, it transgresses boundaries rather than demarcating them.

However, Stodart's position is ambiguous. Despite the warnings of the dangers of inappropriate reading her 'hints' alert the reader to the existence of the publications and writers she proscribes. She advises reading Bowdler's Gibbon in preference to the original: 'Remark, that I say Bowdler's Gibbon. The unrevised work is quite inadmissible, on account of the sly innuendoes against Christianity, which are more dangerous than an open attack' (*Hints on Reading*, p. 26). This power of 'sly innuendo' is used elsewhere. She adopts a conspiratorial and scandalous rather than scandalised tone.

> THERE is, indeed, a real difficulty in treating the subject of poetry publicly. I should have little comparative difficulty had I to discuss it between you and me alone; but not knowing into whose hands my papers may fall—how remarks may be misconstrued, in quarters where explanations could not possibly be made; and being deeply convinced of the importance of cultivating sobriety of mind, and of restraining imagination, especially in young females, you can hardly feel surprised at my feeling reluctant to discuss the subject (*Hints on Reading* p. 54).

The secretive intimacy of 'you and me alone' is carefully developed into the threat of publicity 'in quarters where explanations could not possibly be made', like a series of

[159] Kathryn Chittick notes that 'The moral [of *Pendennis*] seems to be that writing for newspapers is a form of wild oats, something forgivable only in bachelors: with maturity and property comes a steadier interest—that of politics'.'Literature and Politics in 1833', *Dalhousie Review*, 66 (1975|1976), 118-129 (p. 124). Here the 'few bad verses and some reviewing work' (ibid.) which might be the extent of legitimate political activity for the working-class are seen as the juvenile excess of the gentleman. Stodart's imagery also suggests an anxiety over the status of her own writing. The unacceptable sensuality of the 'British poets' is expressed through a feminine, not a masculine figure, the 'soft and melting airs' of a Circe rather than a Prospero. Mermin notes the conflation of poet and poetry as common in the context of commentaries on women poets. 'The Damsel, the Knight, and the Victorian Woman Poet' *Critical Inquiry*, 13 (1986), 64-80.

escalating rumours. Stodart's intimate tone is as 'deceitful and treacherous' as poetry. Rather than 'restraining the imagination' she encourages continued speculation. She 'yield[s] all that can be reasonably asked' (*Hints on Reading*, p. 55) and although 'strongly impressed with the responsibility attendant upon writing for the press at all' (*Hints on Reading*, p. 57) is otherwise tempted to literary excess:

> the consciousness of not knowing what manner of persons, or how many, may peruse the words which are now escaping from my pen, increases my desire not to add to my sins of omission that of suffering the opportunity to escape of giving such a testimony as I can, on a subject, the importance of which I so painfully feel (ibid.).

Stodart's response to the prospect of publication, of popular exposure, is not modest restraint but the desire to polemicise she criticises in Martineau.[160] The control represented by the refusal to pursue the subject of poetry has been replaced by its temporary absence, by the automatic writing of 'words which are now escaping from my pen'. Similarly, she is not averse to using the crudest populism to promulgate her own political opinions in *National Ballads: Patriotic and Protestant* (1841):

> The following ballads are purposely written in a simple and popular style, and it is hoped that such as concur in the writer's views will kindly forward the object, by promoting the circulation among the mass of the community (p. v).[161]

In this volume Stodart's scruples regarding poetry disappear. Drawing heavily upon rural and domestic imagery to paint a conventional picture of 'Old England' she combines this comfortable construction of national identity with vehement expressions of anti-Roman Catholic feeling. The sentiments of 'Patriotism and Contentment', 'English Domestic Life' and 'Reasons for English Patriotism (*National Ballads*, pp. 71-72, pp. 74-75, pp. 84-85) sit uncomfortably with tales of historical religious persecution and contemporary intolerance. Stodart recounts how 'This land hath reeked with martyrs blood' (l. 9) and

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[160] *Hints on Reading* notes in its preface that six of its chapters had previously appeared in the *Christian Lady's Magazine*.

[161] M. A. Stodart, *National Ballads: Patriotic and Protestant* (London: Baisler, 1841)

rejoices in the defeat of the Spanish Armada ('"The Bishop of Rome hath no Jurisdiction in this Realm of England" article xxxvii' (pp. 11-12). In 'Popular Song, Written after Seeing a Good Bonfire on 5th November 1840' (pp. 66-67) she writes herself into this history of religious conflict:

> It hurts the sight of our Popish friends,
> To see our bonfire rise;
> But never mind that—let it high ascend,
> For it gladdens our Protestant eyes.
>
> (l. 22-25)

Deliberately inflammatory, these poems show that for all her admonishments regarding the reading of poetry and religious writing in *Hints on Reading* she is eager to disseminate religious poetry that is directly opposed to the 'sacred poetry' of Keble in both its religious affiliation and style.

Every-Day Duties also includes poetry. In the Preface she justifies this on stylistic grounds reminiscent of the *Family Friend*:

> A few pieces of poetry (some of which have already been published) are interspersed, from the consideration that in treating subjects so interwoven with ordinary life, variety of style and of illustration are alike essential (*Every-Day Duties* p. vi).

Despite her acknowledgement of its moral dangers, Stodart feels obliged to include poetry in order to maintain the appeal of her book. Generic diversity and the use of previously published material are the mainstay of popular miscellanies such as the *Penny Magazine* and later titles like *Bradshaw's Journal* and the *Family Friend*.[162] For both Stodart and

[162] Later, Dickens's magazines *Household Words* and *All the Year Round* would take regulation of style and tone to greater lengths. See Anne Lohrli, *Household Words: A Weekly Journal 1850-1859 Conducted by Charles Dickens* ... (Toronto: University of Toronto , 1984), p. 23.

these popular magazine instructive prose is seen as unable to hold an audience alone and consequently to require a companion body of verse which may nevertheless undermine it.

Stodart's desire not to commit 'sins of omission' causes her to transgress the limits she has set. In doing so she not only indulges herself and her readers in the 'excesses' of poetry and 'sly innuendo' but provides a commensurate excess of (self-)regulation. Even *Every-Day Duties* has its older 'companion' or chaperone in the volume *Hints on Reading*.

In *Hints on Reading* Stodart develops a view in which the lyrical and floral characteristics of popular poetry are deprecated as morally threatening. Like writing which combines religious truth and fiction, poetry blurs the boundaries defining proper conduct. Its 'soft and melting airs' confuse the senses and lay readers open to moral corruption.[163] However, it is not only the subject of poetry that she has difficulty 'treating [...] publicly'. She regards the diversity of discrete information disseminated by popular magazines, particularly miscellanies, as problematic. This is because, for all the apparent rigour with which it is edited and organized within a serial title, the serial itself represents a continuous flow of arbitrarily juxtaposed material. As a genre the popular magazine does not regulate itself on strict religious or logical principles but on the commercially successful one of variety of content. Where poetry confused by blurring the boundaries of truth and fiction, popular non-literary material does so by an excess of complex detail:

> I would further caution you not to bewilder yourself, in science at least, with those bits of ready knowledge, that small coin which, for want of a better, passes current, much prized and belauded, among dabblers of the day. I refer to Penny Magazines, Saturday Magazines and Co. with all the shreds and patches, and choice little pieces of information therein contained. It may seem a sweeping censure, but I must confess that I can see little benefit arising to any class of persons from such publications, excepting indeed to the parties who share the profits of the sale (*Hints on Reading*, p. 39).

[163] By contrast with the musical 'sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not' (*The Tempest*, III. 2. 130) these written lyrics are morally damaging, whilst similarly soporific.

The miscellany provides a patchwork of short articles and fillers with no overall coherence other than that provided by the publication itself. Unlike Stodart's books these periodicals do not attempt to provide a comprehensive overview of a subject, neither is their content structured so as to form an argument. Where the 'letters' of *Hints on Reading* introduce the topic and develop an argument through the examination of different aspects of literature and its consumption, the miscellanies do not. They do not seek to empower their readers with knowledge appropriate to a particular activity as Stodart does by informing female adolescents about the supervision of the home. Instead, they encourage an unsystematic approach, a temporary dabbling in a variety of subjects. In providing a multitude of discrete snippets of information these instructive periodicals also 'confuse' in that their mode of representation ignores any hierarchy of knowledge.[164] They combine 'religious truth' and fiction, poetry and science, and so forth without an indication of precedence. Unlike Stodart's writings these periodicals do not have a single textual foundation. Neither do they encourage a structured and orderly approach to the acquisition and use of knowledge. Like the 'soft and melting airs' of the poetry they contain, popular magazines weave in and out of the structures that maintain the social order. They cross class and gender boundaries, they ignore logical argument, and they encourage readers to structure their own reading as 'dabblers of the day'. They can therefore be seen to oppose the principles that inform Stodart's *Hints on Reading.*

Stodart's distaste for commerce is interesting given her own books and publication in periodicals such as the *Christian Ladies' Magazine*. As a published writer she is one of the 'parties who share the profits of the sale'. Her description of mass-market magazines associates intellectual and material impoverishment. In exchanging one small coin (the 1d cover price of the instructive magazine) for its equivalent in information (the 'small coin' of 'ready knowledge') one obtains only partial information 'shreds and patches', 'choice

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[164] A hierarchy of knowledge is implicit in her own discourse of proscription and prescription.

little pieces'. Second-hand knowledge, like cheaply assembled or re-used clothing, is a sign of low social status, status so low in fact that Stodart sees little difficulty in condemning such material out of hand with her 'sweeping censure'.

Popular magazines share Stodart's interest in those 'subjects so interwoven with ordinary life' and they, too, interweave poetry between and through their more 'ordinary' articles. However, rather than providing the argued and comprehensive view of a subject that Stodart values, they supply a miscellany of attractive fragments, a series of foci lacking any explicit logical connection.

3. The Glazing Eye: Woman's Poetic Sphere

Stodart shares Mill's view of poetry as affective and therefore intuitively accessible:

> The power of poetry is not confined to those who take rank and precedence as the poets of the land. [...] Many unconsciously are poets; thoughts and feelings struggle within, and sometimes flash out in glowing, burning words, marking their path in a line of living light. Poetry is the forcible expression of truth (*Female Writers*, p. 85).

By contrast with her discussion in *Hints on Reading*, where the works of the 'English Poets' including 'sacred poetry' of the kind advocated by Keble are seen as morally dangerous, her own publication of poetry suggests her difficulty is not with poetry *per se* but with the popular manifestations of its use by others. It is a powerful medium and in her opinion is generally misused: 'Far from us and ours to be [the] debasing doctrine that its proper region is fiction' (*Female Writers*, p. 85). *Hints on Reading* provided a guide to the material appropriate for her female readership. *Female Writers* concentrates upon production rather than consumption. However, it is equally prescriptive. Having identified poetic discourse as accessible through the expression of tension between the emotions and the intellect she proceeds to define poetry in affective terms. As in Mill's analysis, poetry moves from being a valid and popularly accessible discourse to one that is both closely regulated and regulating.

Stodart's argument emphasises the appeal of poetry to the affections rather than the intellect: 'The domain of poetry is wide; her power over the human heart immense' (*Female Writers*, p. 83). This is congruent with the discussion of the seductive quality of poetry in *Hints on Reading*. However, here poetry is itself gendered. Appealing to the emotions, it is readily incorporated into the ideal of femininity maintained by domestic ideology. However, like the 'unconscious' poet whose 'thoughts and feelings struggle within', poetry is itself divided:

> It is the province of poetry to arouse by her trumpet-call to vigorous action, and to melt by her plaintive warblings to gentle and tender emotion. Sometimes she is found amid scenes of horror and sublimity, hanging over the beetling precipice and listening to the roar of the torrent far, far beneath; at other times she delights to rove in scenes of rural beauty, watching the sunbeams flickering on the fields, listening to the warbling of the birds, or rejoicing in even the simple little flowerets which spring up beneath her feet; but whether she is amid scenes of sublimity or scenes of beauty, still true to herself, she inspires feelings and sentiments and gives expression to them (*Female Writers*, p. 84).

Like Sarah Ellis's 'women of England', and Stodart's 'race of mothers', poetry is gendered but incorporates both active and passive principles. The breadth of its 'domain' is such that it threatens to transgress the domestic boundaries of propriety. Here poetry personified in the image of a female 'hanging over the beetling precipice' recalls the sensationalism of a range of popular literary genres (from gothic novel to sensational serial fiction). Not surprisingly, Stodart anticipates the question posed by the impropriety of her characterisation of poetic power, asking, 'Is the hand of poor weak women ever permitted to sweep the living lyre, and to elicit its thrilling tones?' and reconciles the power of poetry with femininity by identifying Burke's distinction between the sublime and the beautiful with the doctrine of the separate spheres of masculine and feminine activity: ' We cannot doubt the answer. All that is beautiful in form, delicate in sentiment, graceful in action, will form the peculiar province of the gentle powers of woman (*Female Writers*, p. 86). As Stodart's earlier description of birds, streams and 'flowerets' indicates this province is that of the idealised, pastoral scene favoured by many of the poems appearing the popular magazines.

This division of poetry into two distinct spheres is also a matter of scale:

> It is hers [poetry's] to describe, with truth and force, those objects which are too vast, and those which are too minute for ordinary ken; the former escaping common observation, from the inability of an ordinary eye to take the range of the whole at one view; and the latter, from the delicacy of observation required for their survey (*Female Writers*, p. 83).

Differences are not a matter of intensity of feeling but of the scope of vision. The masculine principle in poetry addresses itself to the panoramic, the epic, 'the range of the whole at one view' whereas the feminine focuses upon detail. Milton may 'range through heaven and hell' in order to 'ascend to the height of great argument, and justify the ways of God to man' (*Female Writers*, p. 87) and 'myriad-minded' Shakespeare may expose 'hidden secrets of the soul' but this is explicitly outside the remit of the female writer (p. 88).[165] The generalised perspective, the delineation of public spectacle exemplified by 'the stirring interest of the battlefield', as portrayed 'with the vivid power of Homeric song' (p. 86) is replaced by a poetic discourse potentially outside male sanction in which:

> we [females] can follow one solitary soldier as he drags his wounded limbs beneath the sheltering hedge; and while we mark his glazing eye, we can read with woman's keenness, the thoughts of wife, children, and home, which are playing around his heart (*Female Writers*, pp. 86-87).

Where 'myriad-minded' male writers may uncover a variety of 'hidden secrets' the female writer sees only a reflection of her own sphere of influence in the 'glazing eye'. 'Woman's keenness' is incisive, but less so than its male equivalent: she sees the familiar domestic scene around the heart(h) rather than the mysterious soul within it. This passage explains the qualification in her earlier statement that: 'the point where lies the true poetic power of woman, [...] is in the heart —over the heart— and especially in the peculiarities of her own heart.' (*Female Writers*, p. 88). In the hands of women the immense emotive power of poetry is a means of affective control. However, this power 'over the heart' does not provide insight or influence over others: it merely produces hypnotic, idealised images of the observer. The 'glazing eye' of the dying soldier is not a conventional 'window on the soul' for the female poet but a reflective surface in which she must judge herself. The writing of women's poetry forms part of the processes of self-regulation advocated in Stodart's other books.

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[165] Here Stodart alludes to Coleridge, citing a part of his description of Shakespeare.

The persuasive power Stodart identifies with poetry is similar to the category of 'eloquence' that Mill dissociates from 'true' poetic discourse. Moreover, Mill considers poetry as an anachronism as public discourse, displacing it into both past and future in terms of any public function. He sees it as part of an epic cycle in which it has played a public role and will do so again. By contrast, Stodart identifies it with a vital and immediate circulation, the indication of both physical and emotional vitality. Where Mill uses quotation to establish his intellectual credentials and in doing so marks his link with an educational inheritance (both in terms of the inheritance of the philosophical progress from classical to modern times and in respect of his inheritance of particular pecuniary and class positions enabling him to have access to that education), Stodart uses them to join the flow of contemporary culture. In opposition to his cultured archaism '*nascitur poëta*' she cites a contemporary writer: 'Song is but the eloquence of truth'. [166]

That readers of magazines that pride themselves on the propriety of their selection of material might find something to disquiet them in their consideration of the context of poetic composition indicates the possibility that broader issues are at stake than merely the gender of the poet. Stodart's care and deliberation in delineating the 'proper sphere' of women's writing and in limiting this sphere to a range of subordinate 'powers of usefulness' similar to the supportive, domestic role of women she defines elsewhere appears as an attempt to restrict the range of women's poetry within the laws of the same sphere as governs their other actions. This, in common with her insistence upon imaginative restraint, also helps to circumscribe the context in which composition is considered proper. In common with the restrictive definition of 'true' poetry proposed by Keble and Mill, Stodart draws a firm line around both the content and context of 'proper' poetry.

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[166] The quotation also appears on the title page of Stodart's *National Ballads* where it is attributed to [Thomas] Campbell.

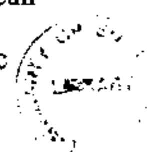
By identifying the spontaneous production of poetry with internal tensions, the 'thoughts and feelings [which] struggle within', Stodart, like Mill, allows for the possibility of poetry produced 'unconsciously'. Involuntary expression can have all the persuasive power of more reflective poetry. *Hints on Reading* provides an example of how in Stodart's view religious feeling guards against the kind of internal conflict that is sometimes externalised as poetic discourse. She appeals to religion to 'cast down imaginations' (p. 56) and counsels:

> If they [such as possess imagination] do not thus watch, and pray, and strive, they may add the word of a humble individual to the experience of thousands, that they are laying up for themselves a store of mental anguish, and are fostering in their bosoms a rebel, ready, at every moment, to start up in the exercise of usurped sovereignty, and that sovereignty of the most dangerous character (*Hints on Reading*, pp. 56-57).

For Stodart the combination of thoughts and feelings that is the imagination requires strict regulation. Without such restraint the reading of poetry, of another's expression of conflict may engender a similar conflict in the reader, an affective 'rebel' which may lead in turn to their own expression of 'mental anguish'.

This extension of supervision, particularly Stodart's warnings against the exercise of the imagination by her female readers, can be seen to recognize something that Keble and Mill failed to satisfactorily address. According to the doctrine of the separate spheres, if 'true' poetry communicates to its readers emotively, then it would follow that its most suitable exponents would not be men but women. Stodart sees this power in women but insists it must be constantly regulated lest it 'usurp' the patriarchal structures that support the social fabric.

Jerome J. McGann regards Romantic poetics more as a substitute for revolutionary change than its precursor, stating that 'this idea that poetry, or even consciousness, can set one free of the ruins of history and culture is the grand illusion of every Romantic



poet'.[167] Stodart does not share this Hegelian view of history. Culture is not 'in ruins' but nevertheless requires continual maintenance. Its structures are unstable rather than collapsed. The power of poetry is not that of radical opposition to the social order. Poetry does not inspire and guide Shelleyean legislators or a Coleridgean clerisy but insidiously undermines society 'in the foundation' by blurring the distinctions between the spheres of masculine and feminine discourse.

Poetry establishes emotional connections between readers and writers that are beyond regulation. Where Stodart identifies a moral threat to her domestic audience McGann sees one that threatens his academic one. He recognizes the extent to which his own efforts are bound up with his object of study. For him Byron (and the Romantic Movement as a whole) appear 'dangerous to know' precisely because any engagement with their work involves more than an intellectual appreciation: 'I would say now that my initial enthusiasm for Byron's self-representations misled my critical judgement' (McGann, p. 137). Byron, whom McGann sees as an '"outsider" [...] who presented himself as "the enemy within," the gadfly and critic of his own age and culture'(ibid.), is seductive when viewed through his representations of himself. This analysis is very similar to that which Stodart provides. The pathogenic poetry of the 'English Poets' is not merely poisonous but contagious. It communicates the 'mental anguish', the 'struggle of thoughts and feelings', within the poet and in so doing fosters 'a rebel' in the reader. Emotive poetry threatens to 'usurp the sovereignty' not only of the reader's intellect (thereby undermining self-control) but of the social structure as a whole. It threatens to publicise the conflicts experienced by social beings (whether these are between ideas and emotions or between perceptions of culture and nature). The 'Romantic illusions, the ideas and the ideologies' which McGann discusses are as successful as self-perpetuating fantasies as they are ineffectual as the foundation for concrete policies:

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[167] Jerome J. McGann, *The Romantic Ideology: A Critical Investigation* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1983), p. 137.

> in the end Byron's poetry discovers what all Romantic poems repeatedly discover: that there is no place of refuge, not in desire, not in the mind, not in the imagination. Man is in love and loves what vanishes, and this includes—finally, tragically—even his necessary angels (McGann, p. 145).

As the discussion of Mackley's 'I Saw a Flower' has demonstrated, this anxiety over ephemerality is also a concern of the poetry of the magazines which themselves rework the desire for 'what vanishes' or for some refuge from what remains. Stodart is explicit in identifying literary excesses with contemporary popular culture. As she notes in *Female Writers* there are 'actually more writers than readers'. Like the figure of Byron in McGann's critique, Stodart's 'poets' are simultaneously '"outsider[s]"' and '"the enemy within"' (McGann, p. 137).

It is in the nature of poetic expression to transform 'even the English poets' who might be supposed to contribute to the social 'scaffolding' by representing the ideological coherence of the 'national mind', into dissenting voices. Even those, who like Mackley, appear to express conventional sentiments and represent ideas of dutiful obedience and resignation deemed suitable for a domestic readership, must necessarily also represent its opposite: the absence of coherence, and emotional or intellectual refuge in either the 'necessary angel' of the poetic imagination or the 'Angel in the House' which forms the social foundation in the domestic ideology.

As *Family Friend*[s] and *Welcome Guests* to the home, the popular magazines form part of the regulation of the domestic imagination through their avoidance of 'controversy' and concern for regularity of style and appearance. Their intentions are represented as specifically normative, being to fashion a 'national mind' from the diversity of their readers in the same way that Stodart's writing attempts to regulate conduct and inform character. Both forms of publication ostensibly enter the domestic sphere not to 'judge the judges' but rather to govern the governesses. However, as the example of Mackley's poem and the poetics of Stodart, Mill and Keble suggest, the context in which such

magazines are produced is one where popular poetic expression is both derided and feared less for its polemic pronouncements than for the insidious and destabilising influence of even the most conventional, and consequently the most readily imitated and widely disseminated verses.

Chapter 4

1. 'Handfuls of Trash': Poor Poetry and Poor Poets

Virginia Blain suggests that in the period between 1820 and 1850 literature can be seen to have undergone a 'feminization' in which the meaning of terms such as 'poetess', and by association perhaps 'poesy' also, are contested.[168] Mermin supports this view noting that 'I now think that in some important sense all the Victorian poets, male and female, can be read as women' (Mermin, 'The Fruitful Feud', p. 165). In Mermin's analysis this feminization is particularly associated with lyric, the poetic genre most predominant in the magazines:

> As lines of gender demarcation became exceptionally rigid, the gendered division between private and public spheres marked poetry itself—and especially lyric—as feminine and private even though publication belonged to the masculine sphere. While most women writers suffered galling constraints on their freedom to move beyond domestic seclusion, many male writers found the public world of bourgeois masculinity alien and disagreeable (Mermin, 'The Fruitful Feud', p. 149).

In the 'feminization' of poetry, lyric has a central place. If the blurring of gender distinctions opens a route out of 'seclusion' into 'publication' for women, it also marks a retreat from the highly public and political pronouncements of a Romanticism conceived as masculine. The transition from 'Romantic' to 'Victorian' sensibilities provides an incremental loosening of women's 'galling constraints' at the expense of more significant restraint upon male writers. Stuart Curran has considered the appellation 'poetess' as a 'trap enforced by masculine disdain for cultural refinement'.[169] However, the evidence of Mill, Keble, Stodart, and of popular verse itself suggests that this 'trap' is one set by a poetics founded upon notions of refinement rather than disdain for it. Mill discusses the

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[168] Virginia Blain, 'Letitia Elizabeth Landon, Eliza Mary Hamilton, and the Genealogy of the Victorian Poetess', *VP*, 33 (1995), 31-51, p. 32.

[169] Stuart Curran, 'Women Writers, Women Readers' in *The Cambridge Companion to British Romanticism*, ed. by Stuart Curran (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 193 (cited in Blain, p. 31).

refined intellect and peculiar sensibility of the true poet. Keble addresses himself to the importance of regular composition. Stodart and the magazines identify certain subject matter as poetic. All these perspectives concentrate upon processes that, like the distinction between 'poet' and 'poetess', establish a poetic hierarchy in which a carefully refined regulation of expression is equated with poetic value.

Having discussed the poetics of Keble, Mill and Stodart, I will first turn to that found in the popular magazines themselves and secondly compare this to Germaine Greer's more recent and controversial examination of the 'poetess'.[170] Leigh Hunt, who, like Thomas De Quincey, bridges the gap between Romantic poetry and the commercial ethos of the magazines, is cited to the effect that:

> Poetry in its highest sense, belongs exclusively to such men as Shakespere [*sic*], Spenser, and others, who possessed the deepest insight into the spirit and sympathies of all things; but poetry, in the most comprehensive application of the term, I take to be the flower of any kind of experience, rooted in truth, and issuing forth into beauty. All that the critic has a right to demand of it, according to its degree, is, that it should spring out of a real impulse, be consistent in its parts, and shaped into some characteristic harmony of verse.[171]

Stodart and Hunt share the view of the English poets as providing insight into the fundamentals of human character. Hunt, however, distinguishes between this exclusive category of 'poetry in its highest sense' and the poetry 'rooted in truth, and issuing forth into beauty' which is the kind of writing that Stodart identifies with women. Hunt shares Mill's recognition that the popular definition of poetry includes a broad range of verse. However, whereas Mill regards such inferior poetry as 'not poetry at all, but a failure', in the extract appearing in the *Illustrated Family Journal* Hunt acknowledges this inferior

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[170] Germaine Greer, *Slip-shod Sibyls: Recognition, Rejection and the Woman Poet* (London: Viking Penguin, 1995). Isobel Armstrong dismisses Greer's argument on the grounds that Greer's 'criteria of value are identical to those of the males she accuses of corrupting London'. Isobel Armstrong, 'Msrepresentation: Codes of Affect and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Women's Poetry, in *Women's Poetry: Late Romantic to Late Victorian*, ed. by Isobel Armstrong and Virginia Blain (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), pp. 3-32 (p. 6).

[171] Untitled, *Illustrated Family Journal*, 5 April 1845, p. 68.

writing as poetry, but as poetry of a different kind to that he values. Readers of the magazine are provided with examples of poetry by poets with an established reputation such as Elliott, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, Byron, Tennyson and Hunt himself.[172] The *Illustrated Family Journal* resists the poetics governing the selection of poetry in other popular magazines, which includes readers as potential contributors alongside familiar names such as Thomas Campbell, Felicia Hemans, and Thomas Hood.

For 'inferior' poetry the criteria of judgement are different from those applied to Spenser and Shakespeare. In Hunt's analysis it is not for an 'inferior' poem to appeal to the intellect through its ability to convey insight but rather to appeal to a sense of authenticity and order. Hunt's language suggests that this desired regularity is both logical, 'consistent in its parts', and physical in the sense of being visible to the reader as an arrangement of words or audible to an audience as a 'characteristic harmony of verse' (*Illustrated Family Journal*, 5 April 1845, p. 68). Like Keble, Hunt insists on the importance of rhythm. He also retains the fundamental value of the immediacy of expression from which Mill departs by introducing the medium of the 'Logician-in-Ordinary'. In this extract Hunt demonstrates an attempt to reconcile Romantic poetics to the writing currently being produced under the name of 'poetry'. Although he maintains a hierarchy of poetries he also introduces the idea of a popular form of poetry which, if inferior, is not altogether valueless.

Like Mill, Hunt regards contemporary usage of the term 'poetry' as insufficiently rigorous and therefore tending to devalue poetry as a whole. Rather than merely noting that poetry is no longer deemed appropriate or effective as a public discourse, he perceives a continuing decline in the quality of poetry. Contemporary poetry appears incapable of the

[172] Despite appealing to a similar domestic audience to the *Family Friend*, the *Illustrated Family Journal* represents a more radical strain of family miscellany and was illustrated by W. J. Linton. For a brief study of two other instances of Tennyson's 'apparently unnoticed periodical reprintings' in a more overtly political periodical see Crys Armbrust, 'Tennyson's Political Readers: W.J. Linton's *The National* and the Chartist Literary Canon', *VPR*, 26 (1993), 199-202 (p. 199).

insight and sympathy valued in poets such as Spenser and Shakespeare who are 'of a former world' and has to be defined in formal terms in order to maintain its distinction from other verse. He questions the possibility of 'poetry in its highest sense' being written in the future and envisages low expectations of future critics as poetry shifts from the refined particulars of Shakespeare and Spenser into 'comprehensive application'. That he regards the probable future of poetry as reduced to '*some* characteristic harmony of verse' and the 'flower of *any kind* of experience' (my italics, *Illustrated Family Journal*, 5 April 1845, p. 68). demonstrates a fear that the definition of poetry will extend almost indiscriminately to all aspects of experience, however, trivial. Hunt's argument differs from Mill's in associating 'true poetry', or 'poetry in its highest sense', not only with particular personalities but with a particular range of experience. The threat to the cultural status of poetic discourse is that it may express reactions to the individual details of experience not merely the universal truth of 'the spirit and sympathies of all things'. Moreover, unlike Mill, for Hunt the inferior forms of poetry must not be judged by a single standard but by a kind of sliding scale, 'according to its degree'. Such poetry is largely beyond the analysis of a philosophical critic, a 'Logician-in-Ordinary', and amenable only to technical criticism: 'it should spring out of a real impulse, be consistent in its parts, and [be] shaped into some characteristic harmony of verse' (*Illustrated Family Journal*, 5 April 1845, p. 68).

Mill, Keble and Stodart all establish poetic distinctions in order to regulate the ways in which poetry is written and read. Hunt is resigned to the impossibility of such regulation. He opposes Mill in accommodating the popular perception of poetry as regular lyrical verse in order to maintain the status of the 'poets of a former world' whose work he values.[173] Whilst designating popular poetry as inferior, he also distinguishes it as a separate genre requiring its own form of critical appraisal. In doing so he marks out the ground on which a popular poetics can establish itself.

[173] Hunt is cited in one of the 'parallel passages from popular authors' in the article 'What is Plagiarism?', *Bradshaw's Journal*, IV, March 1843, pp. 211-212 (p. 212).

Reviews and literary criticism are uncommon in the popular magazines. When they do appear their focus is on technique and the suitability of the subject matter in a way reminiscent of Hunt.[174] For example, *Bradshaw's Journal* is as keen to disparage other aspiring poets as it is to 'puff' those appearing in its own pages.[175] The article 'Handfuls of Trash' reviews the *Poems and Songs of Susanna Hawkins*.[176]

Of the various criticisms levelled at Hawkins it is her choice of subject matter (such as the 'Lines on a Newcastle Warehouse') and her use of the first person that are most harshly attacked:

> Like many eminent poets, Miss Hawkins is not exempt from the charge of egotism, for she ingeniously manages, whatever be her theme, to associate herself with it, and in more than one of her metrical compositions, she figures as the heroine. For example, the poem on "Household Friendship" commences with the following:—
>
> "When I went to Northumberland,
> Unto Newcastle fair,
> I was a stranger in that place—
> I had few acquaintance there.
>
> ('Handfuls of Trash', *Bradshaw's Journal*, 26 March 1842, p. 331)

For all her 'errors' of composition it is the content, her concentration upon urban views and her reactions to warehouses, libraries and the people in and around them, that is deemed at fault. She dares to ignore the rural landscape of 'her journey from Scotland to

[174] The critical approach is similar to that taken by Henry Fothergill Chorley in the *Athenaeum*. See Rosemary Scott, 'Poetry in the *Athenaeum*: 1851 and 1881', *VPR*, 29 (1996), 19-32 (p. 21).

[175] Prince's *Hours with the Muses* is reviewed favourably (*Bradshaw's Journal*, 1 January 1842, p. 142) and there is also a more general review of his work listing other titles (*Bradshaw's Journal*, IV, January 1843, pp. 121-128). In one instance the latter piece corrects his diction but considers this lapse exceptional (p. 127). Rogerson's *Voice from the Town* is reviewed in two parts (*Bradshaw's Journal*, 6 August 1842, pp. 222-223; 20 August 1842, pp. 254-255).

[176] According to the review this was a 'a pamphlet [...] consisting of sixty pages, and containing upwards of forty separate pieces', 'Handfuls of Trash', *Bradshaw's Journal*, 26 March 1842, pp. 330-332, (p. 331).

England' ('Handfuls of Trash', *Bradshaw's Journal*, 26 March 1842, p. 331) in favour of comments upon the hospitality received once there. Hawkins 'egotism' consists of a willingness to represent her experience as her own, as the activity of an individual, rather than as an occasion for sympathy. She does not render her experience aesthetically into 'some characteristic harmony of verse'. The review highlights grammatical and metrical inaccuracies which make the poem read haltingly. This prevents it from 'issuing forth into beauty' as a regular composition. Moreover, she includes images that are uncharacteristic of poetry, such as the features of the industrial landscape that fill pages of prose in the magazine in articles on railways and factories.[177] Despite its title, the views of 'Household Friendship' are not restricted to domestic interiors. The poem celebrates the virtues of the domestic sphere by placing them in a social context. It takes the comprehensive view that Hunt associates with inferior poetry.

Where *Bradshaw's Journal* would appear to consign Susanna Hawkins to poetical oblivion on the grounds of her subject matter, male writers attract a different kind of criticism even when ostensibly writing in the mode of Prince and Rogerson. This criticism, however, retains the focus upon the propriety of selection and treatment of subjects. *Shadows of Thought; or, Poems Epistolary, Moral and Descriptive* by John Allen Slater is criticised on grounds of logic, grammar and versification by turns. The poem 'Excursion to the Reservoir' receives the following commentary:

> We have visited a few reservoirs in our lifetime, exclusive of the one which supplies London, at the City Road; but we must confess that they fall short of that so graphically described by Mr. John Allen Slater. [...] But enough of the Excursion. The remaining "poems" in the volume are not inferior to it either in originality or vigour; indeed the former quality is conspicuous in every page; and

[177] In prose 'A Ramble on the Banks of the Wye: No. 1. Liverpool and Manchester' (*Bradshaw's Journal*, IV, March 1843, pp. 249-251 and pp. 290-292) is as welcome to the editors as 'The Railways of England' (*Bradshaw's Journal*, IV, January 1843, pp. 113-114) or 'The Industrial Training School for Pauper Children, Swinton, Near Manchester' (*Bradshaw's Journal*, IV, May 1843, pp. 370-372).

> we should be doing great injustice both to Mr John Allen Slater and to English poetry, were we to insinuate that he has either borrowed or stolen from anyone.[178]

Slater's 'originality' is not of the kind of which *Bradshaw's* approves under the heading of 'Original Poetry' but a form of poetic deviance and an affront to both 'English poetry' and its various authorised practitioners. Most importantly, Slater, like Hawkins, shows evidence of the attempt to include aspects of the industrialised landscape, not with customary pathos but, more shockingly, with Romantic exuberance.

The review's invective is also levelled at another collection that is considered to combine 'Miss Hawkins'' language and versification with the vigour and 'originality' of 'Mr John Allen Slater'. This collection, however, locates itself firmly in the genre of flower poetry. Styled as *Original Poesy, comprising Blossoms for the Beautiful. By Philo Patriæ* this work expressly links patriotism with sentiment and is reviewed with an energy reminiscent of the enthusiasm criticised in Slater:

> "In the lowest depths," sings Milton, "there is a deeper still;" and we had thought "the force of folly could no further go," when we lighted on Mr John Allen Slater's volume; but amongst the heap of doggerel which has been submitted to our notice, the 'Blossoms for the Beautiful' surpass every competitor in stolidity and puerile imbecility, though emanating, we opine, from a veteran muse ('New Books', *Bradshaw's Journal*, 15 October 1842, p. 383).

This anonymous writer is considered to have exceeded the bounds of propriety to the extent that 'he' is compared to Rabelais and Sterne. The verse is considered as evidence of 'a diseased mind and vitiated taste' ('New Books, *Bradshaw's Journal*, 15 October 1842, p. 383). The poet is criticised, as Hawkins is, for offending against more than grammar and 'the trammels of rhyme and metre' (ibid.):

> We will not disfigure our columns by "showing cause" for this condemnation, but content ourselves with pointing out some of the balderdash that has been

178 'New Books', *Bradshaw's Journal* 15 October 1842, pp. 381-383 (p. 383). Such plagiarism is one of the accusations levelled at Hawkins.

> contorted into rhyme, in these "Blossoms for the Beautiful," with the view to avert their being "speedily followed by 'Lyrics for the Ladies,' and 'Lessons for the Lassies,'"—an intimation in the title page, conditional "on the present trifle being approved of." On a cursory glance at the Blossoms we find a lamentable paucity of language and imagery; out of ten poems on flowers, eight open in nearly the same terms; as, "Behold yon lovely blooming flower,"—"See yon white lily,'"—"Behold yon blushing rose,"—"See yon rich poppy," &c &c; this reiteration might be pardoned did the sequel reveal aught of a redeeming character ('New Books, *Bradshaw's Journal*, 15 October 1842, p. 383).

Even allowing for the review's hyperbole, *Blossoms for the Beautiful* is little more than a condensation and simplification of themes repeated across a variety of periodicals and exemplified earlier by Mackley's 'I Saw a Flower'. It is not the lack of variety that is at issue but the fact that the writer is 'woefully ignorant of the laws of poetry': laws which not only preclude 'prurient indelicacy' and 'grammatical absurdity' ('New Books, *Bradshaw's Journal*, 15 October 1842, p. 383) but require that poets continue to demonstrate an ability to elaborate on prescribed themes. In exposing himself as a poor poet 'Philo Patriæ' also exposes the limitations of the genre within which he is expected to write.[179]

The poems criticised in 'Handfuls of Trash' exemplify the lack of discrimination that Hunt regards as characteristic of contemporary poetry. The article, however, goes further, considering verse as more indicative of the period than the railways: But, however justly the historian might term ours the age of railroads, were we [...] to become chroniclers of our times, we should be inclined to denominate this the age of *rhyme*' ('Handfuls of Trash, *Bradshaw's Journal*, 26 March 1842, p. 330). Stodart maintains a similar position in *Female Writers*:

[179] In drawing upon the republican, Milton, as an apposite foil for 'Philo Patriæ' the reviewer suggests a connection between changes in political and poetic semantics. The 'patriot' of the 1840s would be defined (after Edmund Burke) as conservative and not the radical 'patriot' of Milton's time. The reference also problematises Vicinus's assertion that 'the more controversial beliefs of Milton [...] never touched [self-educated working-class poets]; instead they saw poetry as perennially soothing and uplifting'. Martha Vicinus, *The Industrial Muse: A Study of Nineteenth-Century British Working-Class Literature* (London: Croom Helm, 1974), p. 143.

> Not that there is at present any want of *literary* activity. On the contrary, almost everybody writes; it is a writing age; women have caught the mania, a disease which is most easily caught, but which is most difficult to be cured (*Female Writers*, p. 6)

Here writing is, like the 'words escaping' from Stodart's pen, represented as an involuntary activity. In Stodart's opinion 'there are actually more writers than readers' (*Female Writers*, p. 6). Writing is symptomatic of excitement and excess and an obsessive activity in which the communication of ideas is no longer the object of literature. *Bradshaw's Journal* emphasises the contemporary importance of regularity of form rather than logical coherence, rhyme rather than reason. Stodart identifies popular '*literary* activity' with a rising tide of literary ephemera: 'and thus we go on till the public is inundated with crude and childish productions' (*Female Writers*, p. 7).

'Handfuls of Trash' equates the inappropriate subjects selected by Hawkins with a welter of versified advertising.[180] Nicolette Scourse identified flowers as the ubiquitous decoration of the period and 'Handfuls of Trash' sees popular verse, 'poetry, in the most comprehensive application of the term', as equally abundant:

> From the "whining school-boy" to the "slipper'd pantaloon"—all now dabble in verse—the newspaper press teems with poetical effusions in praise of cheap clothing—tobacco papers are redolent of rhyme—songs are sung in every street—illustrated sonnets figure on handkerchiefs, and our lock-ups and gaols bear witness that even felons
>
> ——locked from ink and paper, scrawl,
> With desperate charcoal, round their darkened wall."
>
> ('Handfuls of Trash', *Bradshaw's Journal*, 26 March 1842, p. 330)

[180] This subject was earlier pursued in 'A Chapter on Handbills' *Bradshaw's Journal* 22 January 1842, pp. 177-181. Peter W. Sinnema notes how the *Illustrated London News* used 'a series of doggerel quatrains' to accompany an illustration drawing attention to the newspaper's use of the railway and coach networks for mass distribution. 'Representing the Railway: Train Accidents and Trauma in the *Illustrated London News*', *VPR*, 31 (1998), 142-168 (p. 143). Further references will be given in the text.

Here poetry is used as it is in the epigrammatic extracts of earlier miscellanies such as the *Penny Magazine* and *Saturday Magazine* as a means for the periodical to establish itself as an authoritative source.[181] Stodart identified the 'shreds and patches, and choice little pieces of information' favoured by these magazines as of use only in their contribution to a magazine's profit. However, literary 'fillers' are not merely a tool of the compositor. They serve to demonstrate the breadth of a title's literary expertise and thrifty spatial economy.

Neither the epic poetry to which Mill refers nor Hunt's poetry of 'deepest insight' is regarded as informing public discourse.[182] However, poetry in its inferior, artificial form has an important place in commerce's transactions with its customers and penetrates to the most confined and isolated of locations. Such market penetration is the avowed aim of miscellanies from the *Penny Magazine* to the *Family Friend*. Despite representing itself as part of a distinct periodical genre and thereby distinguishing itself from other ephemeral publications such as newspapers and pamphlets, *Bradshaw's Journal* contributes to the teeming ephemera of popular culture through its publication of poetry and miscellaneous information. Poetry lacking the continuing relevance of Shakespeare or Spenser would appear appropriate for the modes of mass distribution and ephemeral materials by which profit is maximised. Like the songs 'sung in every street', the materials used in the production and dissemination of popular poetry are represented as cheap: thin papers, newsprint, erasable charcoal, even handkerchiefs easily lost or stolen.

Bradshaw's Journal, in common with other miscellanies, identifies itself as an enduring rather than ephemeral feature of the cultural landscape. It highlights the quality of its materials as well as its content. It represents itself as an ever-expanding library of

[181] For example the quotations '"whining school-boy"' and '"slipper'd pantaloon"' from *As You Like It* II. 7. 145 and II. 7. 158 respectively.

[182] Elsewhere Hunt equates epic with the 'highest' form of poetry. See *Imagination and Fancy[...]* (London: Smith Elder, 1844), p. 62. This is, however, qualified by the subsequent comment that there is also poetry in events 'no bigger or more pretending than a sweet face or a bunch of violets' (p. 66).

knowledge and not a collection of random papers. Whilst acknowledging the ubiquity of verse and its commercial uses, it must therefore maintain the distinction between 'true' poetry and commercial poetry. It takes a position similar to Mill's in distinguishing between poetry and verse and dissociating poetry from financial interest. It echoes Mill's notion of writing that is 'not poetry at all but a failure' in making the distinction between poetry and 'trash'. It also incorporates Hunt's distinction between poetry of permanent value and relevance and the bulk of inferior, ephemeral poetry.

This popular poetry is not the spontaneous expression, that Mill concedes is both a legitimate form of poetry and accessible to all individuals irrespective of class, intellect or education. Mill's 'true poetry' is to reflect the mental state of its writer. Hunt's 'poetry in its highest sense' is seen to provide individual insight into the human condition. Conversely, the conventions of popular poetry provide both common structures and themes that are readily understood by writers and readers and access to a variety of ephemeral modes of distribution from the periodical press to the street song.

The article's association of the production of popular verse with the young, senile old men, and incarcerated criminals reinforces its assertion of the intellectual poverty of popular verse by associating it with social groups lacking a legitimate public voice. Popular poetic convention provides a regulatory structure that ranges from the distancing of writers and readers from the subject matter in the manner of 'I Saw a Flower' to the recycling of titles, rhymes and themes, and it also provides a public channel of communication, albeit a limited one. Whilst *Bradshaw's* confines its comments to '"whining school-boy" and "slipper'd pantaloon"' authors, others turn their attention, like Stodart, to female writers.

Thomas Hood's poem 'Literary and Literal' confirms the connection between the consumption and production of a certain type of poetry.[183] Choosing a porcine trope like Burke and Mill, he ridicules the pretensions of sophistication that accompany 'The March of Mind upon its mighty stilts, | (A spirit by no means to fasten mocks on)' (ll. 1-2). The poem centres on an unflattering comparison between the literary outpourings of a farmer's daughter and her acquaintances and the viscera of a slaughtered pig. However, the narrative of the poem suggests that for all her provinciality and affectation the poetess is prepared to venture a short way into the public sphere as:

> The founder of Hog's Norton Athenæum
>   Framed her society
>   With some variety
> From Mr. Roscoe's Liverpool museum
>
> (ll. 25-28)

Hood satirises the rural would-be bluestocking and amateur poetess as the antithesis of his male, metropolitan, and professional writer.[184] The provincial literary society, for all its derivative composition, represents a challenge to his profession by encouraging widespread literary production rather than merely consumption. Like the cheap weekly magazines which Stodart criticises for encouraging popular 'dabbling' in the arts and sciences, the 'Hog's Norton Athenæum' represents another vehicle for popular expression.[185]

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[183] Thomas Hood, *The Comic Annual* (London: Hurst Chance, 1830) pp. 139-146. Further references will be given in the text. The poem was reprinted in *Hood's Own: Or, Laughter from Year to Year* (London: Bailey, 1839; repr. London: Moxon, 1855) pp. 377-381. Hood is celebrated in a long article in the *Illustrated Family Journal* taken from the *Illuminated Magazine*, 'Illustrations of the Genius of the Late Thomas Hood', *Illustrated Family Journal*, 19 July 1845, pp. 305-313 and 26 July 1845, pp. 326-331. The piece reproduces several of his poems including 'Sonnet on Steam', 'The Sweep's Complaint' and 'The Song of the Shirt'.

[184] Hood was himself reliant on periodicals (both as writer and editor) for income for the majority of his adult life. This interest may explain his opposition to writers in the mould of 'A.P.I.G.' although his criticism is directed at her geographical and class origins and the origin of her writing rather than at its mode of publication.

[185] Readers of 'improving' periodical literature were similarly satirised by the producers of irregular, cheap literature they sought to replace. Patricia Anderson notes the use of animal imagery in broadsides satirinsing the *Penny Magazine*: 'Of this group, perhaps the most interested reader of all was a large pig

Martha Vicinus's account of the 'Sun Inn' circle, later formally the 'Lancashire Literary Association', indicates that such provincial gatherings were in still in evidence after Hood's death in 1845. Unable to raise funds for its own periodical its members turned to the local *Bradshaw's Journal*, which bears a passing resemblance to Hood's derivative 'Hog's Norton Athenæum' in Vicinus's assessment of it as 'close to the middle-class quarterlies' in matters of presentation and reflecting 'ideas and cultural values [that] were an imitation of the leading journals of the day' (Vicinus, p. 161). The 'circle' included many of those connected with *Bradshaw's*, the editor, George Falkner, and contributors of poetry and other items such as John Critchley Prince, John Bolton Rogerson, Charles Swain and Isabella Varley.

Hood's representation of the provincial literary society's activity also shows it to be informed both by contemporary popular writers and by the kind of verse regularly included in the periodical press.[186] The provincial writer is characterized by the ambition, the 'lookings-forth into the outward and everyday world', that Mill regards as the antithesis of poetic expression.

> Of learning's laurels—Miss Joanna Baillie—
> Of Mrs Hemans—Mrs Wilson—daily
> Dreamt Anne Priscilla Isabella Grayley;
> And Fancy hinting that she had the better
> Of L.E.L. by one initial letter,
> She thought the world would quite enraptured see
>
> "LOVE LAYS AND LYRICS
> BY
> A.P.I.G."
>
> (ll. 60-68)

whom we see about to dip into a weighty essay illustrated with the image of yet another pig. And the essay's title? "Bi-hog-graphy, for the Swinish Multitudes"'. Patricia J. Anderson, *The Printed Image and the Transformation of Popular Culture 1790-1860* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 145. Chittick takes a similar view asserting that 'The *Edinburgh Review*'s comparison of novels to periodicals and pamphlets is a revealing one. The public of the 1820s and 1830s wanted only to read about themselves.' (p. 123).

[186] For example, John Bolton Rogerson's *Rhyme, Romance and Revery* (London: n.pub., 1840) from which *Bradshaw's Journal* draws some of its poetry.

In representing a title page, Hood emphasises that it is the production and dissemination of poetry rather than its consumption that exposes the amateur's lack of originality.[187] Her use of initials demonstrates her swinish lack of refinement and self-satisfaction. She values quantity regardless of meaning and is pleased to reveal herself as 'a pig' even as she attempts to better the popular Letitia Landon in an affectation of feminine modesty.[188] Similarly, her interest in the canon of female writers concentrates upon their public recognition rather than their writing. As 'learning's laurels' figures like Hemans and Baillie are reduced to the symbols of their success rather than appreciated for the quality of their work.[189]

Miss Grayley and her circle are also represented as avaricious and indiscriminate consumers of literature:

> O shades of Shakespeare! Chaucer, Spenser!
> Milton! Pope! Gray! Warton!
> O Colman! Kenny! Planché! Poole! Peake!
> Pocock! Reynolds! Morton!
> O Grey! Peel! Sadler! Wilberforce! Burdett!
> Hume! Wilmot Horton!
> Think of your prose and verse, and worse — delivered in
> Hog's Norton!
>
> (ll. 17-24)

Their reading is represented as ranging from the canonical poets Hunt identifies with 'poetry in its highest sense' through satire, eighteenth-century nature poetry, popular playwrights from the Covent Garden and Drury Lane theatres, politicians and social reformers to Tractarians and possibly one of those responsible for the destruction of

[187] 'Literary and Literal' is not the only example of Hood's satire on the ineptitude of women's versification. Another poem emphasises the necessity of editing women's writing. 'Number One, Versified from the Prose of a Young Lady' (*The Comic Annual*, 1830, pp. 1-5)

[188] A volume of verses by an erstwhile contributor of poetry to *Hood's Magazine* was dedicated to Hood's memory. See E. L. E., *Poems by a Sempstress [...]* (London: Mitchell, 1848).

[189] Hemans and Baillie hold similarly exalted positions in Stodart's canon. Baillie is noted as the 'first poetic genius of the day [whose] laurel-wreath is firmly fixed upon her brow' (*Female Writers*, p. 97) after Hemans has been established as 'most emphatically a lady-poet. Elegant in mind, refined in thought and sentiment' (p. 91).

Byron's memoirs. The quality and style of writing represented are correspondingly varied and include poetry, farce, political speeches, pamphlets and journalism.[190] Some names have several literary references, representing both the variety of reading and the potential for confusion. For example, the reference to 'Reynolds!' can be read as Frederick Reynolds the dramatist, his son Frederick Mansel Reynolds, editor of the *Keepsake* from 1828 to 1835 and 1838 to 1839, or John Hamilton Reynolds a proprietor of the *Athenaeum*, correspondent of Keats and one-time friend of Hood. Similarly, in the rural context of the poem, 'Morton!' may equally refer to the dramatist John Maddison Morton or the agricultural writer John Morton.

Hood represents Grayley's diverse reading as lacking in any organising principle other than perhaps the contemporary notoriety of its authorship. It is unregulated and unfeminine. No distinction is made between 'Shakespeare!' and 'Wilmot Horton!'. The use of emphasis in the list of writers also suggests a lack of discernment and propriety both in their selection and mode of delivery 'in Hog's Norton'.

In her discussion of Chartist poetry Martha Vicinus sees such 'emotional bombast' as a legacy of Ebeneezer Elliott:

> Elliott's fervid language and urgent appeals to God were appealing to those making their first attempts at verse. If reading Shelley encouraged personification and capitalizations, Elliott encouraged ranting and exclamation points (Vicinus, p. 97).

The emphatic style Hood uses in this passage parodies both that of poets associated with politics such as Elliott and those associated with domesticity such as Letitia Landon on whom Hood's Grayley models herself. Hood's poem connects the work of the provincial

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[190] The *DNB* entry for Joseph Warton reflects the association of questionable verse with controversial politics that Hood emphasises. Warton is described as a 'political pamphleteer' and 'his verse, although it indicates a true appreciation of natural scenery, is [considered] artificial and constrained in expression' *DNB*, XX, pp. 884-887 (p. 887).

poetess with that of the 'Corn Law Rhymer' through the influence of a heady mixture of controversial politics, religion and popular entertainment. The Romantic poets do not feature in her literary canon. Her enthusiasm to be associated with controversy of all kinds suggests Hood's satire is directed towards the portrayal of the provincial poetess as the antithesis of both the domestic ideal of womanhood and of the inclusive conception of the modern cultured individual promulgated by the popular instructive magazines.

The contrast between the refined, if derivative, 'Love Lays and Lyrics' and the animalistic behaviour of 'A.P.I.G.' also satirises the social impact of these magazines. Where Stodart regarded them as undesirable because commercial and uninformative, Hood sees them as positively detrimental. His poem concentrates upon the undesirability of the personal attributes and habits of the provincial poetess: representing the literary 'A.P.I.G.' is, literally, a pig. Here poetical rules ensure that propriety is maintained. The rhyme dictates that Grayley's lamentable intellectual and moral condition is spelled out rather than said directly. However, the poem also suggests that derivative poetry may be informed by more than its superficial subject matter indicates—even when motivated by personal ambition. As represented by Hood the poetess is conventional in her mode of expression but controversial in her ideas and behaviour.[191]

In the context of periodical publishing Hood's selection of Landon as the model poetess is interesting because her poetry differs from that in the magazines in that it avoids the religiosity and 'tortuous immaturity' that Angela Leighton identifies with Felicia Hemans.[192] Leighton argues that:

[191] Hood's use of Landon draws upon the scandal surrounding her to add sexual indiscretion to Grayley's catalogue of social misconduct. This disapprobation is not universal, however. *Bradshaw's Journal* calls her 'talented and amiable' and uses her as the authority for an associationist view of poetry: 'L.E.L. owned this two-fold power in music—the power of melody and of association' ('What Is Plagiarism?', *Bradshaw's Journal*, IV, March 1843, p. 212).

[192] Angela Leighton, *Victorian Women Poets: Writing Against the Heart* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992), p. 44.

> Whatever the biographical evidence, it is certainly true that, compared with Hemans, L.E.L.'s poetry is strikingly free of religious conclusions. Death or suicide are her usual outcomes; the suffering faith of 'therefore pray!' is not. [...] It is as if L.E.L. eventually rebels against the idea that femininity is a transparently good, hurt, simple object of reproach to men and appeal to heaven, and instead shows it as having depths of knowledge lying out of the eye's easy reach (Leighton, p. 69)

This is the construction of femininity favoured by the popular magazines of the succeeding decades and relied upon in Mackley's 'I Saw a Flower'.[193] However, the fragmented structure of Mackley's poem also suggests the limitations of this perspective and highlights the partiality of superficial observation. Mackley's poetic persona focuses upon that lying within 'eye's easy reach' but his poem is centred upon an event outside the poet's visual field. As Hood's chosen model for the provincial poetess, Landon not only exemplifies a challenge to contemporary conventions of behaviour but illustrates the capacity for sentimental poetry to question these conventions.

As parody, Hood's poem relies upon a reader's knowledge of both the popular writing he satirises and the extensive canon to which he refers. Readers are invited to recognize their own reading habits in those of Grayley and her circle. The diversity of genre indicates a blurring of the boundaries between the high literary culture of Shakespeare and Spenser and its 'inferior', controversial and popular counterparts in the literature of the political speech, the pamphlet, the periodical, or the farce. Hood satirises the eclecticism of provincial readers as lacking in coherence. Grayley's reading does not conform to either intellectual or social principles of conduct. She disregards distinctions of literary genre and of what is considered appropriate material for women by failing to distinguish between literary and political writing.

Greer's *Slip-shod Sibyls: Recognition, Rejection and the Woman Poet* continues the line of adverse criticism in which popular verse is decried as both technically suspect and

[193] On the rare occasions when her poetry is reprinted, it is the shorter poems that are selected.

vacuous in content. Whilst her title might be read as an ironic comment on the equation of poetic value with formal accuracy and with the inflated status afforded to literary figures in both Romantic and post-Romantic thinking (Shelley's poet-legislator or Carlyle's Heroic 'man of letters' for example) this is not the case. Her discussion centres on the kind of superficial judgement that she might otherwise be expected to criticise: popular writers become 'poor' poets because their work is read as a reflection of their straitened personal circumstances and defective personalities. Hood's 'Literary and Literal' satirises the attempts of the uneducated and provincial 'poetess' to use her knowledge of popular poetic conventions, the 'characteristic harmony of verse' to which Hunt refers, in order to establish a public voice by means of 'Love Lays and Lyrics'. Greer's discussion of Letitia Landon, to whom the fictional Isabella Grayley favourably compares herself, examines the detrimental effect of the literary establishment upon those wishing to express themselves in less conventional ways.

Greer makes much of Landon's intensity of feeling: 'her yearning for incandescent passion was so strong that it terrified at least one man, who suspected she was mad' (p. 243). Even when expressed privately, such strength of feeling contradicts the domestic ideal of feminine modesty and brands Landon as at best eccentric. The channels of literary communication to which Landon has access similarly constrain her:

> The story of Letitia Landon is the story of the exploitation and destruction of an extremely talented but uneducated young middle-class woman at the hands of the London literary establishment of the 1820s and 1830s [...] The reality of her life was daily work, endless deadlines, poor pay and no power whatsoever, even to express what she really believed (Greer, p. 259).

Demanding deadlines and other commercial pressures may also be responsible for the repetitive and derivative nature of some poetry published in periodicals of the period. It cannot account for these similarities alone. In Greer's analysis, these pressures contribute to the lack of expressive power in Landon's writing and are associated with the repetition of theme and form:

> Her mind was too choked with images, mostly images of herself and the man she loved, moving through fantastical, luxury landscapes like those of Angria, the hothouse world created by the adolescent Brontës. Once her surrogates had found their form in her dense, choppy verse, she was powerless to refine it. The impetus was spent, and she was hurrying on to the next permutation of a pattern that remained essentially unaltered (p. 264).[194]

Greer sees both inconsistencies and consistencies in her poetry as indicative of its inferiority rather than as the representation of tensions and contradictions of the environment in which it was written. Instead of a poetry of impoverishment she sees only impoverished verse. Like Hood's provincial poetess Landon is portrayed as self-regarding and extravagant. Her writing is juvenile and inelegant, derivative, even if self-plagiarised. The strength of feeling that privately brands her 'mad' ensures her poetry is similarly eccentric. 'Dense' and 'choppy', her poetry fails to achieve the lyrical harmony and self-consistency that form Hunt's standard of technical competence even if arising from a 'real impulse'.[195] In this analysis the absence of consistency within a poem is deemed a sign of inferiority. Conversely, consistency across a range of poems, the 'permutation of a pattern that remained essentially unaltered' is equally damning. Landon's 'orderly disorder', her consistent but chaotic production of poetry in the form of a 'pattern with disturbances' recalls the appearance of poetry in the popular family magazines.

The poetry appearing in the magazines often demonstrates a similarly 'choppy' structure and a degree of consistency across periodical titles in terms of the use of floral imagery and preference for nostalgic themes. Landon, whom Hood identifies as a model for the amateur writer, shows how the production of such 'inferior' poetry is not necessarily

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[194] Scourse notes the escapist function of 'stove houses' (Scourse, p. 1). The hothouses of Landon and the Brontës would appear to be a literary equivalent to this aristocratic luxury.

[195] This view of Landon's writing represents it much as Richard H. Horne represented the style of the radical unstamped press. Camlot cites Horne's description of this uneven style 'equally strong and awkward, racy and irregular, sincere – and unwashed' and notes its 'amalgam of rhetorical influence' as being indicative of partial acculturation according to Mill's notion of character. For Camlot it is also indicative of the 'sincere expression of inherent impulses which are separable from an exclusive desire to sell [periodical] numbers' (Camlot, p. 169).

connected with commercial pressures but with a strength of feeling that disrupts the conventions within which it is expected to express itself.

Far from the spontaneous expression which Mill concedes as potentially poetic, 'inferior' poetry and its producers are judged by both Greer and Hunt according to an aesthetics of orderly arrangement: verse itself represents the process of the self-regulation of expression, its revision and refinement into a socially acceptable form.

Hood satirises the provincial poetess as eccentric in her appetite for literary culture. Her lack of refinement is evident in her indiscriminate appetite for literature, her immodest ambition and her derivative literary activities. Whilst couched in gendered terms, Hood's satire is an attack upon a certain form of poetry and literary pretension rather than on female writers alone. The associations of the category of 'poetess' can also be seen as applicable to the 'whining school boys' and slipper'd pantaloons' identified by *Bradshaw's Journal*, a magazine which Vicinus considers as an example of the working-class imitation of the middle-class quarterlies (Vicinus, p. 161).

2. Lyrical Limits

Shairp comments that Keble's academic lectures were 'almost unknown to the present generation [of the 1860s]' (*John Keble*, p. 77) and given the select academic audience to whom they were delivered their popular influence might be regarded as less significant than even the review article on 'Sacred Poetry'. However, in his lectures Keble draws attention to the contemporary popularity of poetic composition in similar language:

> the authors are like untrained boys trying to sing: the one aim of each is to sing as loud as he can: whether they are singing sweetly and in tune they neither know nor care (*Lectures*, I, p. 17).

Here popular lyric is characterized by the absence of regulation. It is consistent only in its lack of conformity. Like the 'street songs' and advertising mentioned by *Bradshaw's Journal* it is individualistic rather than communal and may even be competitive and commercial. It lacks the organising principles of the 'characteristic harmony of verse' that Hunt describes. However, elsewhere Keble notes the contemporary popularity of the sonnet form. It is, he says, 'one of the favourite forms of the present day' (*Lectures*, II, p. 101). The brevity and simplicity of form demonstrated by the sonnet is also associated with the poetry of sentiment in the first volume of the lectures (*Lectures*, I, p. 90). The lyrical cacophony of popular poetry is not, as Keble suggests, merely a function of the poet's ignorance. In the quotation above he elides the distinction between not knowing and not caring whether one is 'in tune' with poetical convention. As in the examples of Slater and Hawkins, above, such 'failures'' deviancy is consequently represented as unintentional, a technical failure or a mental aberration rather than a refusal to be bound by the accepted poetic conventions.

The consistent selection of short, lyrical poems by the magazines is, in part, the result of constraints of space and pagination. However, that extended discussion is not excluded in other literary genres is demonstrated by the presence of serial fiction and instructive

articles stretching over several pages or weekly numbers. As the earlier examples drawn from *Bradshaw's Journal* indicate, the longer poems of Charles Swain and John Bolton Rogerson only appear as extracts quoted in a review. The short lyrics are included in the department of 'Original Poetry' while the longer works require editorial qualification. *Bradshaw's* treatment of Swain and Rogerson provides evidence of the curtailment or circumlocution of poetic argument.

The examination of Mackley's 'I Saw a Flower' in the introduction noted how the poem avoided addressing issues of causality by eliding the action upon which the poem's limited narrative relies. It describes two states: the exuberant, living flower and the downtrodden, decaying flower, but does not examine the process by which this change occurs. The *Family Friend* explicitly associates the concealment of process with artistic endeavour in general and lyrical poetry in particular:

> A sonnet, in the highest sense, naturally obeys the law of art, which is to conceal its processes. And where, in the Sonnets of Petrarch, of Milton, of Shakespere [*sic*], of Coleridge, or of Wordsworth, can any "anointed eye" see the least shadow of constraint, or trace of effort? so [*sic*] unconstrainedly do the poetic language and imagery arrange their metrical feet in the beautiful order of the sonnet, —while the one luminous idea, like electricity, runs through the whole [...] In our opinion, Wordsworth's Sonnets, save one or two Odes, are worth all his other poems.[196]

The article argues against 'a periodical' in which the sonnet form was criticised as childish and restrictive and regarded as reminiscent of 'a child struggling to walk in swaddling clothes' ('A Few Words on the Sonnet', *Family Friend*, II, n.s. December 1852, p. 207). For the *Family Friend* the sonnet epitomises poetic refinement in that it conceals the labour of composition, emphasises regularity and consistency of structure and avoids confusion by focusing upon 'the one luminous idea'.[197]

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[196] 'A Few Words on the Sonnet', *Family Friend*, II, n.s. December 1852, p. 207.

[197] The language of the extract reflects Hunt's distinction between poetry 'in its highest sense' and his concern with structural consistency and the 'characteristic harmony of verse' in inferior poetry. The appropriate response to a '*true* sonnet' is likened to that of a 'Grecian temple'. It is deferential rather than

Although citing Wordsworth's 'Scorn not the Sonnet…' and drawing upon three of the poets mentioned in the poem to support its argument, the article's concentration upon form rather than content distances it from Wordsworth. Wordsworth emphasises distinctions in the use of the sonnet form: the poetry of Shakespeare and Petrarch is personal, that of Dante visionary, and of Milton political. In 'A Few Words on the Sonnet' such distinctions are reduced to 'the richest gems of poetic thought and fancy' ('A Few Words on the Sonnet', *Family Friend*, II, n.s. December 1852, p. 207). Poetic variety is conveniently subsumed within the category of 'the sonnet'. As in the series 'Poesy and Posies' the *Family Friend* anthologises diverse poets and their works, sonnet-like, according to a single idea.

Paul Hamilton has compared Wordsworth's position in 'Scorn not the Sonnet' in which the sonnet is 'praised as the most economical vehicle for poetic self-expression' with the earlier sonnet series 'Personal Talk'.[198] In doing so he notes the latter poem's contrast between domestic solitude and domestic sociability:

> The poem homes in on the permanent features of a subjectivity which are incapable of being erased: essential characters rather than the temporary guidelines of pleasurable distraction—the chalk-marks for the dancers to follow (*Wordsworth*, p. 12).

For all its reliance upon Wordsworth the *Family Friend*'s view of the sonnet opposes this perspective. Not only are differences ignored but the language used emphasises the 'permanent features' of poetic form rather than of 'essential character'. Unlike the dances of 'Personal Talk' the arrangement of 'metrical feet' is not governed by temporary

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critical. Instead of 'calculating the labour and manner of its construction […] the lover of Art, blind to its process, in silent awe worship[s] the grandeur of its complete manifestation' ('A Few Words on the Sonnet', *Family Friend*, II, n.s. December 1852, p. 207). For the *Family Friend*, poetry 'in its highest sense' should be read much like the home in which it is consumed, as it too relies upon hiding the labour of arrangement and ornamentation that maintains its public face.

[198] Paul Hamilton, *Wordsworth* (Brighton: Harvester, 1986), p. 12.

guidelines but by more permanent cultural markers such as the Petrarchan sonnet or Spenserian stanza.

'A Few Words on the Sonnet' blurs the distinction between natural and cultural processes. The 'law of art' is represented as a universal law that is obeyed 'naturally' rather than being a cultural construct such as poetical convention. The sonnet form itself is deemed 'not the invention of mechanical genius, but a living creation, that owes its being to the strong emotions of hopeless passion' ('A Few Words on the Sonnet', *Family Friend*, II, n.s. December 1852, p. 207). Poetry is not, as it was for Keble, a mechanism by which those temporarily 'carried away' might be calmed and returned to the everyday processes of cultural exchange but an aesthetic experience that abstracts the poet from such processes. Neither is poetry a channel of communication for individual poets. Poets are channels through which a certain cultural perspective is maintained and disseminated.

Hamilton identifies a correlation between 'trivial' subject matter and poetic detachment in Wordsworth:

> as the contemporary reviews of *Poems in Two Volumes* indignantly complained, the subjects chosen—robins, butterflies, daffodils, celandines, a sparrow's nest—are undeniably trivial. What the reviewers failed to appreciate was the art of disengagement which these poems displayed (*Wordsworth*, p. 128).

Bradshaw's article 'What is Plagiarism?' acknowledges the use Wordsworth, Hemans and others make of such stock imagery but takes an opposite view both to Hamilton and to the reviewers to whom he refers. Such imagery is valuable and represents engagement with the world rather than abstraction from it:

> The lay of the lark, the glitter of the dew-drop, the thorn of the rose, with the obvious morals they suggest, are not wearisome or contemptible, because many bards have made them the subject of song, sonnet or stanza ('What is Plagiarism?', *Bradshaw's Journal*, IV, March 1843, p. 212).

Here certain natural imagery is shown to have particular cultural connotations, 'obvious morals', which are not subject to misinterpretation. Their reiteration by various poets in various lyrical forms does not demonstrate a lack of originality but a consistent relationship between ideas and the world. The use of originality of thought or expression as criterion of originality in the judgement of poetry threatens the continued existence of poetry itself:

> There is nothing *new* under the sun, and if we must become fastidious, and reject writers for the want of originality, we should soon be able to write the names of successful ones where the old philosopher registered those of his friends—*upon his thumb nail* (What is Plagiarism?', *Bradshaw's Journal*, IV, March 1843, p. 212).

The view of poetry popularly disseminated by *Bradshaw's Journal* is one which values consistency not merely, as Hunt does, in terms of structural and intellectual coherence within a particular poem, in terms of the 'characteristic harmony of verse', but over time and across European cultures. The article lists several examples comparing Dryden with Moore, and Dante with Byron amongst others.[199] Hunt is also included in this list of plagiaristic 'popular authors'.[200]

As Mill distinguished between two kinds of poetry, 'What is Plagiarism?' distinguishes between two types of imitation: the kind practised by acknowledged poets and that perpetrated by novices. Recurrent imagery in Wordsworth and Hemans is read as the appropriate use of certain sentimental touchstones. The frequency of stylistic or descriptive similarities in Dante and Byron is considered a sign of poetic consistency. The same practices are not, however, acceptable in another kind of 'popular author':

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[199] One other is Thomas Campbell whose *Pleasures of Hope* is cited. An extract from this poem entitled 'Picture of Domestic Love' also appears in the *Family Friend*, III, n.s. March 1853, p. 356.

[200] He is compared to Sir Walter Scott.

> Authors of established celebrity and of considerable polish are those in whose pages we frequently meet with passages that would be condemned as plagiarisms in any unlucky wight just beginning to struggle up
>
> > "The steep, whence Fame's proud temple shines afar."
>
> > ('What is Plagiarism?', *Bradshaw's Journal*, IV, March 1843, p. 212)

To ensure that the reader is aware that this refers to them the paragraph concludes by stating that the examples it provides are there to illustrate its argument and not to serve as a guide for would-be poets:

> The following quotations may, perhaps, serve to exemplify this, though they have been selected at random, and without any motive but that which makes the naturalist lay his specimens side by side, *that he may compare them and admire but never try to imitate*('What is Plagiarism?', *Bradshaw's Journal*, IV, March 1843, p. 212).

In acknowledging the presence of potential poetic 'dabblers' amongst its readership, 'What is Plagiarism?' goes beyond the identification of the popularity of poetic composition in 'Handfuls of Trash'. Like Hood in 'Literary and Literal', the author of this article is keen to distinguish between popular authorship in the sense of those classed among the 'authors of established celebrity' ('What is Plagiarism?', *Bradshaw's Journal*, IV, March 1843, p. 212) and popular authorship in the sense of 'all [those who] now dabble in verse' ('Handfuls of Trash.', p. 330). The article instructs its readers to read the subsequent quotations as if part of a scientific rather than literary discourse, as 'specimens side by side'. This distinction also distances the poetry from associations with the domestic sphere of feminine competence with which poetry is associated in the *Family Friend*. These quotations are not 'poetical flowers', literary cuttings available for domestic arrangement, and neither are they examples to be copied like that magazine's recipes, sewing patterns and model letters.

Bradshaw's criticism of Hawkins and Slater highlights technical errors and ridicules their pretension in supposing that even the more unusual events in their mundane lives are worthy of poetic representation. Their writing demonstrates neither the elevation of particular experience into universal truth in the manner of Mackley's 'I Saw a Flower', nor the 'strong emotions of hopeless passion' which the *Family Friend* associates with true poetry. The 'faults' identified are the traces of engagement with experience, moments where personal expression is no longer constrained by poetical convention. Such 'poor' poetry offends against contemporary poetics because it struggles against the 'swaddling' of poetical convention that prevents the representation of process. The poetry of Slater and Hawkins is excessive both in its superficial adherence to convention and in its transgression of it. Where 'true' poetry conceals its processes, poetry failing to conform to even Hunt's standard of 'inferior' poetry draws attention to the process of composition through its deficiencies. The poetry of Slater and Hawkins foregrounds the process of poetic composition by offending against conventions of subject matter and poetic form. It is 'slip-shod' and awkward in its attempts to conform to the metrical consistency by which 'inferior' verse is judged. It is the self-referential and 'choppy' verse of Landon approaching self-parody.

Poems lacking this idiosyncracy may equally exhibit the 'trace of effort' required to adhere to convention. Whilst 'I Saw a Flower' is sufficiently conventional and technically competent to appear in the *Family Friend* it is not presented without censure. Its fragmented structure indicates convention's 'shadow of constraint' in the line of asterisks upon which the poem's limited narrative turns.

In singling out Wordsworth's sonnets for particular praise 'A Few Words on the Sonnet' tacitly includes poems such as 'On the Projected Kendal and Windermere Railway' and 'Proud were ye, Mountains, when in times of old', late lyrics that explicitly engage with

the process of social change.[201] 'On the Projected Kendal and Windermere Railway', although also drawing on conventional imagery in its reference to the blighted 'flowers of hope' (l. 4), contrasts with Mackley's 'I Saw a Flower' in its attempt to prevent detrimental change through the identification of its cause. Wordsworth emphasises the 'ruthless' inhumanity of change but unlike Mackley he represents it as a social and political phenomenon rather than mysterious and individual:

> And must he too the ruthless change bemoan
> Who scorns a false utilitarian lure
> 'Mid his paternal fields at random thrown?[202]

For Wordsworth the prospective change has a specific ideological cause and practical as well as aesthetic consequences.[203] The blighted 'flowers of hope' do not refer to refined sentiment, hope in the abstract, but to 'Schemes of retirement sown | In youth, and 'mid the busy world kept pure' (l. 2-3).[204] In the conflict between the 'paternal fields' of landed interest and modern commerce, the latter not only challenges the existing systems of inheritance (for example by buying up land), but uses the aristocratic paternalism of landowners against itself, offering them both a challenge and an inducement. The invasive railway appears 'at random thrown' across fields without thought for existing boundaries. A symbol of modernity, it thwarts expectations that would once have been legitimate and, read according to an aristocratic code, might appear as a deliberate and personal challenge. However, it is a 'lure' in that firstly it offers financial reward for supporting it

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[201] For Sinnema these poems exemplify the 'late anti-train poems of Wordsworth'. Wordsworth's concern is not merely with the railway but with the developing technologies of steam that facilitate mass communication. Wordsworth 'stands out – a near-legendary figure of opposition and resentment – in pointed contrast to the [*Illustrated London News*]' (Sinnema, p. 159).

[202] William Wordsworth, 'On the Projected Kendal and Windermere Railway', *Poetical Works*, III (1946), pp. 61-2 (p. 62, ll. 6-8).

[203] Hamilton notes Wordsworth's reactionary pose in his letters to the *Morning Post*. In addition to noting Wordsworth's defence of feudal tenures and Tory patronage, Hamilton quotes the poet's characterisation of the rural community as 'a perfect Republic of Shepherds and Agriculturalists' (*Wordsworth*, p. 45). This problematic accommodation between democratic and feudal ideals indicates the tensions in Wordsworth's public position.

[204] The personal impact of development upon the local population is reinforced in a note to 'On the Projected Kendal and Windermere Railway' (*Poetical Works*, III (1946), p. 61).

(directly in terms of payment for land and indirectly through shares) and secondly it offers a liberal philosophy that justifies its actions. For Wordsworth the offer is also 'false' because this apparently 'ruthless' and 'random' action is like the utilitarian philosophy itself, the result of careful calculation.

These poems are not motivated by a 'hopeless passion' but by politics and the 'passion of a just disdain' for both the practical consequences of industrial capitalism and the utilitarian philosophy that underpins it. 'Proud were ye, Mountains …' maintains this attack upon commercial interest by specifying 'the Thirst for Gold, | That rules o'er Britain like a baneful star' (ll. 4-5). The prospect of the railway is also given an acute immediacy both in performance and on the page by typographic emphasis:

> Hear YE that Whistle? As her long-linked Train
> Swept onwards, did the vision cross your view?
> Yes, ye were startled;—and, in balance true,
> Weighing the mischief with the promised gain,
> Mountains, and Vales, and Floods, I call on you
> To share the passion of a just disdain.
> (ll. 9-14)

Setting nature, individuated in the form of 'Mountains, and Vales, and Floods', against the anonymous 'long-linked Train' of cultural progress, Wordsworth identifies his readers with the landscape the poem overtly addresses. Here the 'natural' response is represented as a reasoned conclusion arising from an analytical process, 'Weighing the mischief with the promised gain'. Conversely, by substituting asterisks for any description of the process of change, 'I Saw a Flower' is unable to reach a conclusion. Rational judgement is replaced by faith. The poem merely notes the mischief of the 'ruthless foot' and looks heavenward in deference to divine judgement.

The *Family Friend*'s tacit acceptance of lyrics of social criticism in 'A Few Words on the Sonnet' is occasionally reflected in its poetry department. Charles Swain's 'We Live in a

Very Strange World' is, however, unusual in the strength of its polemic.[205] The poem contrasts contemporary interest in financial gain, the fashionable and the ephemeral with more compassionate and enduring social values such as constancy and friendship. Like Wordsworth, Swain attacks aspects of the prevailing ideology but also goes beyond specific criticism of the 'Thirst for Gold' ('Proud Were Ye Mountains…', l. 4) and the consequences of the expansion of industrial capitalism for established rural communities.

Where, in 'On the Projected Kendal and Windermere Railway', Wordsworth is concerned with immediate prospects of both an aesthetic and practical nature and gives as much weight to the 'bright Scene, from Orrest-head | Given to the traveller's rapturous glance' (l. 9) as he does the threat to 'Schemes of retirement' (l. 2), Swain highlights a series of social peculiarities:

> How often our *hopes* have been given
> To things that but mockeries be,
> As the *hills* that seem touching on Heaven
> Are just as far off it as we!
> 'The idols we worship are those
> Which Fashion and Fortune can mould'
> (ll. 1-6)

Where conventional poems such as 'I Saw a Flower' represent hope as indicative of faith and a Christian virtue, Swain's poem sees it as a worldly delusion.[206] The emphasis on alliteration linking the dissimilar '*hopes*' and '*hills*' hints at the failure of high-minded Romantic ideas to deliver social change. For Swain 'Fashion and Fortune' have supplanted early Romantic hopes of personal, spiritual fulfilment through the power of the Imagination and the establishment of a democratic social order. Contemporary society is

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[205] *Family Friend*, II, n.s. December 1852, p. 97. Another exception is William Bryant's 'Hymn of the City'. This doesn't share Swain's politics but is unusual in its insistence that 'Nor in the solitude | Alone may man commune with Heaven, or see | Only in the savage wood | And sunny vale the present Deity (ll. 1-4), *Family Friend*, III, n.s. March 1853, p. 381.

[206] The poem 'Hope On, Hope Ever' provides another example of the explicit connection between Christian faith and hope (*Family Friend*, II, n.s. December 1852, p. 146).

characterized by a collective failure to examine the processes of change and a concentration upon ephemeral detail:

> We live in a very strange world—
>   Strange things are occurring each day;
> But they pass without comment or word,
>   And to-morrow goes just the same way
> (ll. 11-14).
>
> [...]
>
> Once the laurel was Friendship's own leaf,
>   As constant—as free from decay:
> Now its emblem, alas, is more brief—
> 'T is the flower that but lives for a day!
> (ll. 21-24)

Here the unfamiliar is usual. Change is so rapid and mundane an occurrence that it is accepted without question and continuous change is perceived as inevitable: it even takes on a static or cyclic predictability as 'to-morrow goes just the same way'. The poem's use of a refrain also reinforces the idea of change as continuity. Each stanza is demonstrably different but also demonstrably similar. Conventions of representation have themselves changed to reflect the new social conditions and values. The signifier of friendship has been moulded by contemporary fashion and no longer connotes constancy but its opposite.

Like the individual poetic persona represented in Mackley's 'I Saw a Flower', Swain's collective identity, 'we', is represented as a passive observer unable even to intervene discursively in the train of events described. Swain details effects rather than causes. He identifies a ubiquitous obsession with capital as Wordsworth does, but unlike Wordsworth he fails to address either the philosophical basis for this phenomenon or the possible consequences. The daily events and activities which effect change remain inadequately defined, 'strange things' that 'pass without comment or word' in the poem.

The poem's social criticism cannot satisfactorily locate its object. The regular structure of the poem allows for the presentation of a series of issues but not their examination or resolution. The poem is contradictory rather than argumentative:

> Like a honeycomb, rich and replete,
>   Is Society—some people tell;
> But if it be equally sweet,
>   It is equally hollow as well!
>
> (ll. 25-28)

The simile of the social 'honeycomb' is confusing. Its 'sweet[ness] is predicated upon its fullness and it cannot therefore be 'equally sweet' and 'equally hollow'. Its enthusiastic approach is unable to support a logical critique or produce a satisfactory metaphor for the social order it criticises.[207] Although this exclamatory enthusiasm is the opposite of the narcotic stupor that Keble associates with regularity of poetic rhythm, it is similarly debilitating for the intellect.

In this poem Swain adopts a style similar to that of Ebeneezer Elliott but without Elliott's concentration upon the consequences of particular social attitudes or public policy. Where Elliott avoids moralising, Swain relies on moral indignation for any semblance of coherence. Elsewhere he adopts a less strident tone. 'The Mother's Hand' provides a brief narrative indicating the power of maternal moral influence even from beyond the grave. This poem is superficially more coherent than 'We Live In a Very Strange World'. Rather than attempting a social commentary, it uses poverty as a conventional vehicle to point a conventional moral:

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[207] These difficulties are not apparent when morality is discussed as an individual issue rather than a social one. Swain's poem 'The Mother's Hand' briefly traces the life experience of a vagrant child into adulthood in order to demonstrate the continuing strength of a mother's moral influence beyond the grave. Charles Swain, 'The Mother's Hand', *Family Friend* V, n.s. September 1853, p. 370.

And thus from many an action dread,
  Too dark for human eyes to scan;
The same fond hand upon my head
  That bless'd the boy—*hath saved the man!*

(ll. 29-32)

The poem neatly represents the acculturation of the child in the movement from the moral regulation of behaviour by the mother to the internalisation of a moral code and the practice of self-regulation in adulthood. However, poetic convention introduces confusion and contradiction at the very beginning of the poem. Swain is unable to resist the familiar image of the impoverished 'orphan child' even when this conflicts with the requirements of his narrative.

A WAND'RING orphan child was I—
  But meanly, at the best, attired;
For oh, my mother scarce could buy
  The common food each week required

(ll. 1-4)

Unlike the poems reviewed in *Bradshaw's Journal* those of Swain's selected for publication in the *Family Friend* exhibit a disregard for logical consistency. Unlike Wordsworth's 'recollection in tranquillity' or Keble's emphasis on the calmative uses of regular rhythm, Swain's poems emphasise emotion to the extent of emphasising emphasis itself. Swain follows Elliott in his exclamatory style. Other poets of the magazines, such as Mackley, make similar 'urgent appeals to God'. Moreover, in avoiding any coherent analysis of what Vicinus calls 'concrete consequences' and focusing upon the representation of emotion these poems can be seen to encourage imitation. As 'The Mother's Hand' demonstrates, the model such poems provide is one in which stock images can be arranged with little regard for logical consistency. Although neither of the poems discussed represent Swain's 'first attempt at verse' they indicate how poetry

selected for publication in the magazines reflects the emphasis on conventionality of subject matter and consistency of form demonstrated in their review articles. The poetic conventions that the magazines disseminate are such as to depoliticise ostensibly radical poetry.

The consistent use of the exclamation mark in 'We Live in a Very Strange World' emphasises the swift closure of any discussion on an issue raised in order to move on to the next. In the first stanza, for example, four lines are given to the analogy between false hope and the optical illusion of the hills 'that seem touching on heaven'. This shrinks to three lines highlighting the social role of 'Fashion and Fortune' followed by a single line asserting that of capital. It is only in the second stanza that more than four consecutive lines appear without the exclamation mark and these, like the refrain, reiterate concern with the unfamiliar without defining it. Simultaneously nostalgic for an imagined past and resigned to a problematic present the refrain, 'Once Truth her bright banner unfurl'd— | But we live in a very strange world', follows the pattern of inconclusive juxtaposition that structures Mackley's poem. Where Wordsworth uses the sonnet form to set out evidence in support of opposition to a particular prospective change in communications, the force of Swain's lyric fragments any argument that the poem might otherwise construct. In order to examine this process I will first turn to an example of the Romantic influence upon Chartist poetry by way of comparison.

3. Breaking Voices

The combination of lyric form and juxtapositional structure is noted by Anne Janowitz in her examination of the legacy of Romantic lyricism in nineteenth-century political poetry. The Chartist poet Ernest Jones features in her argument as one example of the accommodation of oral to print culture, the ballad and printed lyric in Chartist poetry.

> The versatility and flexibility of Chartist poetics can be measured by its ability to weave together the forms of print and oral cultures, to integrate the poetics of intervention with those of introspection, and to name itself as both innovation and tradition.[208]

In their use of the departmental heading 'Original Poetry' and their highlighting of their inclusion of poetry contributed by readers, the magazines also represent poetry in terms of innovation and tradition. In naming such poetry, however, they collapse this dialectic of 'innovation and tradition' into 'originality'. Theirs is not a radical poetics of intervention and introspection but one of detachment and speculation: liberal values suited to the magazines as commercial enterprises which represent themselves as able to rise above factional controversy in an effort to provide material of interest to all social classes.

The Romantic legacy is not, however, the preserve of the Chartist poet. Moreover, there are significant similarities between the polemical poetry Janowitz examines and that of the family magazines. Her claim that 'activist Chartist poets and poetical theorists were particularly interested in, even preoccupied with, their inheritance from romantic poetry' (Janowitz, p. 28) is matched by Martha Vicinus's earlier assertion of the importance of Romanticism for poets published in 'journals similar to *Howitt's Journal* (1847-8) and *Eliza Cook's Journal* (1849-54) [which] popularized the Romantic poets, and Romantic ideals, such as the poet as moral guide' (Vicinus, p. 161).

[208] Anne Janowitz, *Lyric and Labour in the Romantic Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 195.

Brian Maidment cites both these magazines as examples of the 'distinct genre of "journals of popular progress"' of the 1840s and early 1850s. He sees these as having an affinity with Chartist publications on the grounds of 'rhetorical and philosophical traditions in common' and their aim 'to bring about dialogue between classes'. They differ because of a preference for 'oblique or even submerged political purposes' as opposed to the 'ardent political orientation' of Chartist periodicals (Maidment, 'Magazines of Popular Progress & the Artisans', p. 83). The aim to provide a medium for dialogue between classes is also shared by family magazines like *Household Words* (which Maidment tentatively includes in the genre he defines) and the *Family Friend* that he does not mention. In the light of Swain's contribution to the *Family Friend*, radical politics, as part of the common 'rhetorical and philosophical tradition', might thus also be expected to surface in the family magazines, albeit obliquely.

Vicinus distinguishes between Chartist poetry and Chartist fiction noting that: 'Unlike Chartist poetry, which often simply asserted a position, in fiction writers could portray characters and situations that brought to life complex political problems' (Vicinus, p. 116). The predominance of lyric and the use of juxtapositional structures rather than extended narratives in the poetry of the magazines prefer the simple assertion to the complex dramatisation. Where Wordsworth's sonnets on the proposed Kendal and Windermere Railway endeavour to combine emotional and argumentative strength within a limited space and thereby indicate both the drama and complexity of social change, the poetry of the *Family Friend* follows the Chartist logic of assertion even while its fiction reflects Chartism's decline:

> *Eliza Cook's Journal* (1849-54), *The Family Economist* (1848-60), *The Family Friend* (1849-1921) and other journals sponsored by religious groups all contained stories and novels that an ex-Chartist could use as a model for his own writings, rather than the inflammatory works of [W.J.] Linton or Jones (Vicinus, pp. 117-118).

Jones and Wordsworth represent very different degrees of participation in popular agitation and pamphleteering which are the examples of political activity that the magazines oppose in their editorials. Janowitz identifies Jones's experimental poem 'The Corn Field and the Factory' with his most intense period of political activity 'when the pages of his diary sizzle with excitement about meetings and speeches and demonstrations'. In her analysis his experiment with form departs from oral tradition juxtaposing 'a first section of varying rhythms, describing a village scene of great merriment, to a second section which shows how factory life blots out the sun'(Janowitz, p. 177).

The poem betrays a similar enthusiasm to Swain's through frequent exclamation points and follows a structure similar to Mackley's 'I Saw a Flower' in its use of asterisks to mark transition. In common with these poems the juxtapositional structure of Jones's verse precludes conclusive argument.[209] Moreover, the central section demonstrates how the distinction between oral and print traditions extends beyond the formal considerations that Janowitz discusses:

> From the wild eye of man flashes forth discontent!
> Say, whence comes the change!—*Whence* the curse has been sent!
>
> * * * *
>
> What is it, next the church tower climbs the sky,
> How more frequented far, and scarce as high!
> What plague cloud rolls along the darkened land,
> And hurls the sun away with shadowy hand!
>
> (ll. 44-48)

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[209] Mary Howitt's poem 'Winter' is a more obvious example of this sterility in following the popular trope of 'Dives and Lazarus': the juxtaposition of 'the rich man, in his jovial cheer' and 'the poor man, 'mid his wants profound' (l. 29 and l. 31). *Family Friend*, II, June 1850, p. 266. A later poem of Howitt's, 'The Winter Fire' also uses this trope but here the domestic hearth functions as a means of reconciliation between 'emperor' and 'poorest beggar'. With an eye to the publication in which it appears, the fire is cast as a familiar friend who does not distinguish between classes in the welcome it provides. *Family Friend*, V, n.s. September 1853, p. 370.

The emphatic style of this poem could be inflected as a series of questions in performance. In print, however, the verses appear as statements not as questions. Where oral rhetoric invites an audience to supply answers and acknowledge the veracity of Jones's representation of contemporary society the printed equivalent merely displays emotion and invites the kind of grammatical criticism that *Bradshaw's Journal* reserves for inferior and effusive poetry.

Jones' departure from the ballad measure in this poem is used by Janowitz as one example of his 'contribution to the poetics of Chartism [that] was his transmuting of custom-based communitarian poetry into more obviously industrial and class-based poems' (Janowitz, p. 183). In distancing himself from ballad measure Jones departs from the narrative tradition of popular song, and more specifically of the Chartist congregational singing to which he contributed (Janowitz, p. 177). Like the versified advertisements discussed in 'Handfuls of Trash' it is the persuasive 'eloquence' identified by Mill as the antithesis of poetry that takes precedence. Like Swain, Jones's lyric presents the reader with a series of images that, whilst described at greater length than in Swain's poem, appeal to the emotions rather than to the combination of emotion and reason that Wordsworth harnesses in his poems for the pamphlet on the proposed Kendal and Windermere Railway. Despite its overt politics, Jones's poem follows Mackley's inconclusive and anodyne verses in lamenting the effects of social change rather than attempting to explore the social processes through which they come into being.

Whilst it lacks the sentimentality of much of the poetry published in family magazines of the 1840s and 1850s, even the political poetry Jones published at the height of his polemical activity has similarities to that appearing in these popular periodicals. For Jones the experiment with politics and poetics is inconclusive if not futile. Like 'I Saw a Flower' and 'We Live in a Very Strange World', 'The Corn Field and the Factory' ends with images of loss and destruction:

> *'Tis this* has still'd the laughter of the child,
> And made man's mirth less holy, but more wild!
> Bade heaven's pure light from woman's eye depart,
> And trodden love from out her gentle heart.
> *'Tis this* that wards the sunshine from the sod,
> And interrupts the very smile of God!
>
> (ll. 79-84)

The poem's last lines are reminiscent of Mackley. However, where Mackley's flower is used as a symbol of innocence and femininity in accordance with the poetics of the *Family Friend* in which it appears, Jones is explicit in identifying the suffering he perceives as human in his poem in the *Northern Star*.[210] In 'The Corn Field and the Factory' the 'still'd [...] laughter of the child' takes the place of the child-like exuberance of the 'little violet' and the downtrodden woman takes the place of the flower crushed under the 'ruthless foot'.

Where Mackley's poem depends upon the absence of a persona, taking the reader in through the lyric 'I', Jones's depends upon its presence. Janowitz cites the *Athenaeum* of 24 May 1856 to illustrate how the liberal establishment accommodated Jones in the late 1850s by distinguishing between his poetics and his politics, the 'solitary lyric speaker' and the representative of the masses:

> [Jones] does not grind with strong torpid force like a street musician, nor shout out stale tropes and measured sentences like a hired mountebank in the marketplace. But you see his brow swell out with full veins, and his lip tremble, and his eye sparkle, as the scene he describes arises before him (Janowitz, p. 191).

[210] The *Family Friend* prints an extract from Dryden's 'Eleanora' under the title 'A Pattern Woman' (*Family Friend*, III, n.s. March 1853, p. 267). The passages selected demonstrate the magazine's interest in presenting feminine virtue as a single construct rather than a collection of attributes, 'Her virtue, not her virtues let us call, | For one heroic comprehends them all'. The title, selection and the context in which the poem appears indicate that, if recognized, attempts have been made to distract the reader from the poem's satire (particularly on the poetic representation of virtue). The closing lines 'She did but dream of Heaven, and she was there' reflect the sentiments of Mackley's 'I Saw a Flower' and many other poems published by the magazine including the aspirations of the two poems 'My Philosophy' and 'Some Things Love Me' which appear alongside the extract from Dryden.

Implicit in this distinction is that between two types of poetry: the popular idiom disseminated by a substantial portion of the periodical press of the time (the 'stale tropes and measured sentences' of 'inferior' poetry which is readily imitated and consequently easy for magazines to procure from staff or readers) and that which is evidence of the heightened sensibility of the 'true poet'. The *Athenaeum* can no more conceive of a popular poetic voice distinct from 'inferior' poetry than can Hunt in the *Illustrated Family Journal*, or the reviewers and critics in *Bradshaw's Journal* and the *Family Friend*.

As 'The Corn Field and the Factory' shows, the oral rhetoric of the public meeting, the 'man speaking to men', is rendered inarticulate in print. Even for Jones, the barrister and accomplished orator, the consistent use of emphasis functions not to rouse response in the reader but grinds on as a 'strong torpid force' against which the poem itself has to struggle. As in Swain's poem, in printed form it requires the skills of the compositor rather than the poet to provide the additional emphasis required to highlight its central concern '*The demon god of* FACTORY *and* LOOM' (l. 52). Having asked no questions 'The Cornfield and the Factory' fails to provide the context in which an answer can be coherently articulated. Unlike Wordsworth's lyric it does not weigh 'the mischief with the promised gain' ('Proud were ye, Mountains...' l. 12) in order to make a judgement but merely balances an imagined rural past—the 'merry [...] England in times of old'—against a contemporary industrial landscape of the 'furnace-altars of incarnate hell!' ('The Corn Field and the Factory', l. 74).

In 1846 the *Northern Star* championed Jones as 'A NEW POET!' in the Chartist canon and a prospective candidate for the Chartist Convention. By the time the *Family Friend* published Mackley's poem in 1859 Jones had already abandoned experimentation for a derivative poetic style regressing through imitations of Shelley towards the sentimentalism of his juvenile poems. As Janowitz concedes, 'the narrative of his poetic ends with Jones's return to the sentimentalism of his pre-Chartist oeuvre' (Janowitz, p. 180). Although offering a 'strong element of continuity to the next generation' (ibid.) this trajectory is one

that shifts from the pathetic emphasis of *Verses on the French Revolution* towards polemic and back again:

> O! Beauteous! Murder'd – injured, Martyr'd Queen!
> The heart vibrates to grief o-er thy last scene!
> With pity its inmost core will bleed.
>
> (cited in Janowitz, p. 175)

The failure of Jones's poetical experiment is marked by an inability to break away from sentiment. In poetry his attempts at political agitation are limited to the excitement of sympathy even at the moment Janowitz identifies as the height of his 'poetico-political career' (Janowitz, p. 180). 'The Cornfield and the Factory' presents an apocalyptic 'last scene' of mass destruction as 'The demon laughs, and still his arm he waves, | That thins the villages, but fills the graves' (ll. 77-78). Whilst the poem may elicit sympathy for the migrants and other unfortunate victims of industrial development, it is unable to harness these feelings in its audience: 'the heart vibrates to grief' in silent sympathy rather than stimulating any public reaction.

This inability of popular poetry to address political issues is highlighted by an uncharacteristic poem in the *Family Friend*. 'The Worker to the Dreamer' urges the poet to turn from poetry to more practical and physical action:[211]

> FLING away thy idle fancies,
> They but weaken heart and brain,—
> Break the pleasant dreamy fetters
> Of romance's shining chain.
> Come out from the misty kingdom—
> Thou hast lingered there too long.
> Come out girded as for battle,
> Armour true, and spirit strong.
>
> (ll.1-8)

[211] *Family Friend*, v, n.s., September 1853, p. 253.

As Mill rejected eloquence and 'Poesy and Posies' rejected rhetoric this poem rejects Keble's poetry of comfort as 'pleasant dreamy fetters' and 'idle dreamings' (l. 13). It replaces the pastoral landscape of murmuring waters and 'dreamland's rosy bowers' (l. 28) favoured by the magazines with a sublimely 'steep and rugged' (l.17) mountain and a laborious journey. However, although proclaiming 'life is action; | And to act,—a duty grave' (ll.15-16), as in 'I Saw a Flower' its poetic voice is cut off at the moment of revelation:

> So to thee, when thou has battled
>   Bravely, nobly, for the right—
> Will thy labour, though a burden,
>   Seem, with sweet content, but light.
>
> (ll. 21-24)

The poem establishes the existence of a right but does not disclose it. It reiterates the need for action to oppose poetic indolence but is unclear as to the nature of this laborious activity. Its martial imagery, 'Armour true, and spirit strong' (l. 8) and reference to the conflict between good and evil, 'Truth and error wage a warfare, | Constant in this world of ours' (ll. 25-26), draw on religious motifs.[212] However, this language is also similar to that in Swain's poem 'We Live in a Very Strange World' and that appropriated by Chartist poets. By concealing the 'right' to which it refers it also conceals the authority by which this right is conferred and allows a breadth of interpretation in which 'truth and error' continue to contend. In common with the poetry discussed above, this anonymous poem is unable to break out of the 'misty kingdom' of popular verse. Setting itself up against 'romance's shining chain' (l. 4) which it identifies as constraining the poet, it is similarly constrained by the adoption of the same idiom.

The radical connotation of 'The Worker to the Dreamer' is not lost on the editors of the *Family Friend*. As *Bradshaw's Journal* instructs its readers in their reading of poetic

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[212] See Ephesians 6. 11, Psalms 91. 4.

quotations in 'What is Plagiarism?', so the *Family Friend* counters the distraction of radical sentiment in the form of the poem 'Don't Look on the Dark Side'.[213] This draws the reader's attention back to the act of consumption on which they are engaged in tones of editorial authority even more direct than that of the Addresses and Prefaces: 'DON'T look on the dark side! Turn over the leaf— | See— a beautiful picture awaits you' (ll. 1-2). This anxiety over the intrusion of 'the Worker's' instruction to turn away from the 'idle fancies' or 'vain imaginings' of the poetry pages is finally balanced by the optimism of Christian hope and the reader's attention diverted from earthly concerns as it was in Mackley's poem:

> Don't look on the dark side! Or, if 'tis *all* dark,
> If night and a storm both are given;
> Remember, though clouds veil each luminous spark,
> The stars are yet shining in Heaven! (ll. 12-16)

Where the poetry of the *Family Friend* approximates to the inspirational tones of Chartist verse the magazine glosses enthusiasm and resistance to a climate of oppression in terms of Christian faith rather than radical rhetoric.[214] Like Mackley's 'I Saw a Flower' this poem accepts 'given' conditions without question and quickly turns its attention away from its temporal context.

In Mackley's poem this diversion formed part of the representation: the moment of inattention was marked by asterisks. There it is better analogised as either a voluntary action (a tipping of the wink) or an involuntary reaction (a blink). Whichever reading is preferred (or even if both readings are accepted as supplemental or paradoxical) it indicates a response to stimulus rather than its absence. In 'Don't Look on the Dark Side' the magazine itself is implicated in the diversionary process. Although employing the same

[213] *Family Friend*, V, n.s. September 1853, p. 253.
[214] Swain's 'We Live in a Very Strange World', the last poem on the page, is accompanied by three anonymous and overtly religious poems, 'The Burden of the Desert. A Paraphrase.—Isaiah xxi', 'Morning Hymn' and 'Vision—From Job'.

Christian rhetoric of faith and hope in adversity as 'I Saw a Flower', its metaphor of turning over a new leaf indicates the role of the family magazine in providing a recreational distraction from the world beyond the domestic sphere which threatens both the nebulous instability and impenetrable darkness that permeates the 'dark side' of Jones's 'The Corn Field and the Factory'.[215]

Such distractions would suggest 'Inferior' poets who draw upon their lived experiences do not necessarily fail to express themselves satisfactorily because they are 'ignorant of the laws of poetry' but because these laws govern both form and content in such a way as to exclude full or coherent expression of such experience. Disregard for accepted practice attracts correction in a harsh and public way whether written responses to purely formal offenders, the 'lash' of the reviewer's pen, or more severe punishment for those putting poetry to use in political marches or other Chartist 'congregations'.

Jones's 'The Prisoner to the Slaves' demonstrates the close connection between poetical and legal regulation (*Notes to the People*, p. 339). The imprisonment Jones suffered for his political activity becomes a subject for his poetry. However, the confinement of the prison cell is much like that of the lyric in which he writes.

> They may stifle the tongue with silencing rules,
> They may crush us with cord and with block;
> But oppression and force are the folly of fools,
> That breaks upon constancy's rock.
>
> They shall hear us again on the moorland and hill,
> Again in street, valley and plain;
> They may beat us once more — but we'll rush at them still —
> Again — and again — and again!
>
> (ll. 17-24)

[215] Jones also regards the process of social change as difficult to grasp. However, for him the process is confusing because too slow rather than too dramatic ' we have been struggling through a time of transition—gradual, gloomy, almost imperceptible'. *Notes to the People May 1851 –May 1852* facsimile edn. (London: Merlin, 1967), p. 513. Further quotations will be given in the text.

Jones adopts a similar strategy of 'oppression and force' (l. 19) in both the verbal battery of his lyric and the collective action which he advocates. Jones's lines reinforce the need for periodical reinforcement of the Chartist cause, the painstaking re-honing of the same central argument which is constantly turned by the interests it opposes. Lyric might be seen as a useful vehicle for this process in view of its ability to foreground a single voice and support it in a refrain. However, neither the magazine lyrics, nor Jones's experimental poem 'The Cornfield and the Factory' suggest that such an argument can be sustained. Democratic poetics appears only as a decayed Romanticism: the vital but amoral 'fervid language' of Elliott and the socially isolated poetic sensibility of Mill. Jones's poems are unable to speak coherently to either the interests he opposes or those he supports. The fervid language of the radical poet is consistently interrupted, stifled by 'silencing [em-] rules' which prevent the poem from achieving coherence. The radical voice breaks in its attempt to make itself heard against its opponent just as the physical demonstrations to which it alludes are consistently broken up. Political agitation in poetry is subject to its own combination laws.

As Alan Liu has noted:

> If drama is the discourse of interlocutors, we may say, then lyric transforms drama into a discourse in which there are no true interlocutors, only the locution that is the self and certain mute circumlocutions [...] standing in place of the chorus.[216]

Lyric is unable to prescribe action, to write the drama of the prospective revolution. Its enthusiastic polemic is all too similar to the sentiments expressed in the poems of those publications whose object is to oppose the fiercely controversial discourse that Chartism represents. Conversely, whilst seeking to avoid contentious issues, the consistent publication of often highly conventional and derivative poetry by the family magazines

[216] Alan Liu, *Wordsworth: The Sense of History*, (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1989), p. 309. Further references will be given in the text.

represents a correspondingly insistent lyrical strategy. A similar poetical debate echoes even within their carefully monitored precincts in which issues are repeatedly raised only to be left partially and unsatisfactorily answered.

4. 'A Travelling of Shadows'

Liu's dramatic metaphor casts the lyric poet as an isolated speaker surrounded by mimes. This suggests that the lyrical expression of self requires the conflation of supporting cast and audience. Liu's analysis is therefore particularly pertinent in the case of the poetry of the family magazines because these are periodicals which rely upon a sleight of hand in which their readers are represented as both consumers who require the valuable information and entertainment they provide, and valued contributors. Moreover, as the examination of Mackley's poem and of the derogatory reviews demonstrated, the conventional lyrics favoured by the magazines empty poetry of personal reference and poems which offend against poetic convention, such as those by Hawkins and Slater, attract specific criticism for their idiosyncrasy. The 'locution that is the self' is rejected in favour of 'circumlocutions' in the form of the circulation of a limited selection of redundant phrases and imagery without facilitating expression. As 'I Saw a Flower' has been shown to demonstrate, these conventional circumlocutions occupy the poet and reader with the words of others, muting their ability to express themselves in their own words or silencing them altogether. Where Mackley's poem shows the traces of such circumlocution in the line of asterisks that mark the event about which it cannot speak directly and those discussed above exhibit smaller but more frequent elisions, in poems which fail to address social concerns no such traces of censorship are visible.[217]

In Mackley's poem the anonymous 'ruthless foot' represents a destructive intervention into a world of pious contemplation and happy reverie. Despite the poem's apparently anodyne content it indicates the temporary nature of both poetic observation and innocent pleasure. Whereas an act of observation may remain private and not necessarily impact upon the observed, the gaze of the poet draws its subject into the public domain and shatters any illusion of privacy. By focusing upon the destruction of the flower the poem

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[217] Sinnema identifies both 'a conflict between words and pictures' and the elision of trauma in the *Illustrated London News*'s representation of the railways (p. 145).

represents itself as existing at the expense of that which it describes rather than in harmony with it. Poetry has its own 'ruthless' feet.

By contrast, John George Thompson's poem 'Stanzas' avoids the tension and consequent fracture of Mackley's poetic engagement with the world by representing the poet as distinct from it.[218] The poem is at once a locution that comments on the self-as-poet and a circumlocution of the social role of the poet. Where Mackley's use of the first person acknowledges the connection between poet and poem and the responsibility attending publication, Thompson, writing in the third person, distances himself from the poetic character he sketches:

Stanzas

Around the Poet's daily path
A wondrous light for ever is,
The strange, strange gladness that he hath
Was cradled in the world of bliss.

To him the flowers that deck the sod
Are sacred, and he sees in all,
Above, beneath, a present God,
Who watcheth sparrows when they fall.

The Poet's day-dreams glorious are,
On fancy's wings he oft doth soar,
To that high land from earth afar,
Where sorrow vexeth nevermore.

(ll. 1-12)

Here the poet's limited vision is represented as a protective cocoon. The 'wondrous light' that surrounds him is a selective form of illumination that exposes only the pious and decorative. For Thompson there is no 'ruthless foot' to disturb this orderly scene. The poet has a predetermined path separate from the earth that the flowers decorate. All he

[218] *Family Friend*, XVII, n.s. October 1859, p. 242.

sees signifies God and God only. The other significations that Mackley introduces through the anthropomorphic 'little violet' are excluded. This 'poet' is the abstraction of poetic sensibility rather than any kind of writer. He is a producer of 'day-dreams' and not poetry, of personal visions rather than imaginative insight. In his 'strange, strange gladness' he does not see himself as a potential agent of change but, abstracted by 'fancy's wings', loses himself in reverie. This poet is also different from Keble's therapeutic poet who writes in order to obtain relief from intense emotion. For Keble, personal expression through poetry effects a literary closure of troubling experience. Thompson's poet cannot achieve this because nothing is actually expressed and the process requires frequent repetition as 'On fancy's wings he oft doth soar'. The soothing rhythms that for Keble assist the emotionally agitated reader to return to a balanced state and resume their social function, are reduced to a regular pattern of escape in Thompson's 'Stanzas' to 'Where sorrow vexeth nevermore'. The poem represents a poet who, rather than progressing, is caught within a diurnal routine. Isolated from society he walks a 'daily path' through a familiar and unchanging internal landscape defined by divine immanence in a natural world that (unlike that described by Mackley) is in stasis. Where Stodart warned against the moral consequences of reading poetry, including ostensibly religious verse, because of its ability to cloud moral judgement through an appeal to the senses, Thompson's poem is a demonstration of how the writer may be beguiled into sterile detachment by the 'GOD-WRITTEN Poetry of Nature'.

Unlike 'I Saw a Flower', 'Stanzas' rigidly conforms to the poetic ideal upheld by the magazines. It is formally consistent. It does not offend against grammatical rules or conventions of propriety in its choice of subject matter. It quotes and confirms rather than interrogating or problematising religion or other controversial topics – in this case confirming divine omniscience and beneficence as demonstrated by the natural world. However, through its title and highly restricted frame of reference the poem also indicates its own detachment. 'Stanzas' does not follow the Romantic model of the occasional title. It is not 'Stanzas on ...' a subject, like the poet it describes it does not establish an explicit

connection with the world beyond itself and forms one of the 'mute circumlocutions' of the magazine in which it appears.

Both 'Stanzas' and 'I Saw a Flower' portray the poet as one who reads and communicates a message of Christian hope in natural symbols. Although also representing a 'mute circumlocution' in that it remains silent on the subject of social change, the difference between 'I Saw a Flower' and 'Stanzas' highlights that which the poetic of the magazine censures. Where 'Stanzas' is a faultless example of poetic self-regulation, 'I Saw a Flower' demonstrates its resistance by showing itself to be at fault. As contributors of poetry to the *Family Friend* both Thompson and Mackley stand silently with other readers and contributors 'in the place of the chorus'. Both poems potentially displace works that take up a more challenging stance such as Swain's 'We Live in a Very Strange World', although they each represent silence differently. In each case there are 'no true interlocutors' as poetic convention prevents the illicit communications which concerned Stodart. However, whereas 'Stanzas' is an example of the absence of communication, 'I Saw a Flower' is an example of silence used as an alternative channel of communication. Like the coded 'language of flowers' in which the type, orientation and combination of floral tokens may be used to continue communication beyond accepted limits, Mackley's poem delineates the limit set by the poetics of the magazine by symbolic means. Where Thompson represents the poet as fanciful dreamer rather than imaginative writer and as consequently unable to connect with the social world beyond the scene poetic convention sets for him, Mackley's poetic persona addresses itself to the limits of the poet's visual field and shows how easily the social world can cast a shadow across that comfortable vision. In this way the poetry of the family magazines demonstrates an ability to address issues of poetic communication and to comment, albeit obliquely, upon the poetics, the 'silencing rules', that govern its popular expression in the family magazines.

In his discussion of Wordsworth Liu argues that:

> Seriality reduces at base to duplication, the substitution of one point-scene for another. By point-scenes I mean precisely the pictures Wordsworth sketches: landscape paintings of the mind [...] The point-scene [...] assumes the petrification of the perceiver: motion has to be projected outward into landscape itself as the 'travelling' of shadows (Liu, p. 6).

The poetry pages of *Bradshaw's Journal* and the *Family Friend* provide a similar set of substitutions, a variety of poetic 'scenes' which, with occasional interruptions, continue to associate floral imagery with the theme of loss. In this they follow the pattern that Rachel Crawford identifies with the Romanticism of Wordsworth and Hemans. These poems 'like Wordsworth's *Prelude*, [and Hemans's] longer narrative poems [they] are constituted by a series of lyric moments; [and] unlike the *Prelude*, virtually every scene is a bower'.[219] The lyric moments provided by the magazines are identified with the poetics of the bower both through the white space in which they are often enclosed and the consistent use of imagery such as shade, water (dew), grass or flowers which is all that lyric requires to activate the 'connotations of the bower' (p. 256n). For Crawford the women writers she discusses use the bower in order to identify themselves as 'knowledgeable practicing artists' (p. 277) and their modifications of the convention 'illuminate invisible assumptions that give those conventions coherence' (p. 279). The content, editorial matter and literary criticism of *Bradshaw's Journal* and other magazines would indicate that the poetics of the bower continues to be used to establish a writer's artistic credentials during the 1840s and 1850s and that this is recognized by many contributors. Crawford's indication that such poetry may also rearticulate the convention so as to highlight, if not actually interrogate, the assumptions which underly it would support the suggestion that superficially conventional poems such as Mackley's 'I Saw a Flower' may indeed represent a challenge to the poetics of these magazines.

The succession of floral images and religious sentiments that flow through the poetry pages of magazines like the *Family Friend* can be seen to construct a poetic landscape

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[219] Rachel Crawford, 'Troping the Subject: Behn, Smith, Hemans and the Poetics of the Bower', *Studies in Romanticism*, 38 (1999), 249-279 (p. 271).

similar to that described by Thompson. However, whilst in this sense the magazine lives up to its assertion that there is 'consistency even in [its] changes', the differences between the poems of Thompson and Swain suggest that there are important distinctions in the ways in which such scenes are used and that despite Wordsworth being held up as the model for popular poets such as Swain or John Gibson, these differ from Wordsworth in a way that the poetry of Jones does not.[220]

In 'The Corn Field and the Factory' Jones depicts two contrasting scenes representing a movement in time rather than in space. The first represents a pre-industrial landscape in which work, recreation and worship maintain an integrated community with a sense of the stability of its own past and future. In this scene interpersonal communication is shown to establish affective bonds that are communitarian because not necessarily prescribed by the hierarchical relations of the workplace or family.

> Oh! What is so calm as the old man's joy
>   When he walks by the field in its pride,
> And talks of his feats in that field when a boy,
>   To the young boy who walks by his side!
>
> ('The Corn Field and the Factory' ll. 25-28)

Here pleasure is derived not only from an identification with one's work but from the ability to communicate a sense of continuity of community and place. Whilst the scene may be represented as viewed from a fixed point, a momentary halt in the peregrinations of the perceiver, it does not project movement onto the landscape as a 'travelling of shadows' but as the activity of an inhabited landscape and a cycle of regeneration. As the old man and the young boy walk and talk and thereby establish a connection between past and future, so the landscape is shown not as a passive background, a canvas on which shadows travel, but rather, like Wordsworth's mountains, 'in its pride', that is, as a sentient part of the community.

[220] *Family Friend*, I, n.s. September 1852, p. iii.

The second part of the poem depicts a ravaged and insensate landscape in which the fear that human sentiment might be extinguished that Wordsworth expresses in 'On the Projected Kendal and Windermere Railway' is confirmed. Jones represents industrialisation as a 'plague cloud' rolling over a pastoral landscape and a 'shadowy hand' interposed between God and humanity:

> His sable banners through heaven's glory roll
> The shades that blast the heart and reach the soul
> Care-stricken forms the streets' long darkness fill,
> Embodied dreams of misery and ill!
>
> ('The Corn Field and the Factory, ll. 61-64)

For Jones, industrial development has its own dynamic of despair. Not only are those directly affected by the changes reduced to barely discernible shapes, 'care-stricken forms' and 'embodied dreams' caught up in the cloud, but the spectacle is itself enough to 'blast the heart and reach the soul' of the observer. The act of observation destroys the compassion that prompted it and threatens to transform the observer into one of the 'care-stricken' and insubstantial denizens of the 'streets' long darkness'. For Jones writing poetry harbours the same dangers that Stodart identified in reading it. Social observation contaminates the observer and threatens to reduce him to the state of those observed.

No such shadow intrudes upon Thompson's 'Stanzas' in which the poet is not ultimately defined by the writing of poetry but, like Mill's 'true' poet, by the nature of his sensibility. Isolated from social contact, Thompson's poet is unable to perceive any threat to his communion with God. Swain's 'We Live in a Very Strange World' does not concern itself with the role of the poet but instead attempts to identify the causes of a perceived social unease. By focusing upon the abstractions of 'Fashion and Fortune', however, it fails to engage with the material consequences of social change or to use the universally acknowledged power of poetry to forge sympathetic connections between reader and

writer. It provides instead a series of juxtaposed views. The poem consequently approaches the moral and intellectual vacancy of those it attempts to criticise: both appear 'equally hollow'.

Chapter 5

1. Communicative Networks

In 'The Corn Field and the Factory' Ernest Jones demonises modern technology and represents industrialisation as an invasion of the rural landscape and a disruption of the network of communication operating within that landscape and community, and a perversion of language. The casual conversation and knowing glances are superseded by '*Oaths upon infant lips*' (l. 69) and 'curses and groans' (l. 59) which are indistinguishable from the mechanical noises of the factory, 'Where quivering engines groan their horrid mirth | And black smoke-offerings, crimes and curses swell' (ll. 74-75). In Jones's industrial landscape the inhabitant, old or young, is represented as devoid of feeling and merely mimicking the sounds around him. Even 'The laugh of youth [is] a gibbering of art' (l.71) and not expression of joyful good humour. In the second section of the poem the 'flash of discontent' in the 'wild eye of man' (l. 45) has become a reflection of the glare of the factory furnace as 'The fever flashes, not of life, but hell' (l. 68). Women and children are similarly effected. The 'demon' of industrial progress has 'Bade heaven's pure light from woman's eye depart, | And trodden love from out her gentle heart.' (ll. 83-84) and 'The eyes of childhood [are] without childhood's light' (l. 70). For Jones, new technology impacts upon language and non-linguistic forms of communication turning it from a mechanism of social contact into one of social disjunction. The inhabitants of this landscape are neither capable of the spontaneous expression that Mill associates with poetry, nor autonomous users of everyday language in the mould of the Wordsworthian poet. They are bearers of signs and not users of them. These signs are specifically those of their own distress and lack of self-control: 'A more than Cain-like mark their foreheads bear, | For ale's their only answer to despair' (ll. 65-66). Jones represents the process of social change as an industrialisation of the mind as well as the landscape. This is a tranformation in which people are 'blast[ed]' internally and 'mark[ed]' externally by

industrial processes. They are reduced to raw material for the smoking 'furnace-altars' (l. 76) where spiritual and physical labour, worship and work, are no longer distinguishable. Despite his different perspective on rural life, Hood also identifies change in the form of the 'March of Mind' with a lack of self-control and a mimetic and derivative use of language in his satire on the provincial poetess. Swain, too, in highlighting the detrimental effects of 'Fashion and Fortune' connects commercial interests with a society that is simultaneously hollow and full like the burning eyesockets of the operative that Jones describes in 'The Corn Field and the Factory'.

In representing the working class as enthralled by modern methods of manufacture Jones also shows them to be inarticulate. This inability to communicate is represented as a limited and inappropriate use of language similar to the defects identified by the critics of 'inferior' or 'poor' poetry writing in the magazines. Jones, the Chartist spokesman and editor of *Notes to the People*, positions himself with respect to his working-class constituency much as Mill does in relation to the poet, as the 'Logician-in-Ordinary' who ultimately legitimises expressions of private feeling by rendering them into a recognisable public discourse. The concern with communication that his poem displays is, however, in part a recognition of his own problematic class position in relation to the workers for whom he claims to speak. According to the internal logic of the poem the sympathetic poet-observer of 'The Cornfield and the Factory' cannot remain detached from the spectacle he describes but must become one of the 'care-stricken forms' of the 'street's long darkness' and is consequently rendered equally inarticulate. For Jones, the class advantages that give him a public platform and legitimate his public pronouncements on behalf of the casualties of industrialisation are insufficient to sustain his privileged position. In a world of increasing technological change and developing lines of communication it is not only gender distinctions that are becoming blurred but also those of class. Engaging in popular discourse also threatens the 'undifferentiated sameness' discussed by Mermin: particularly in periodical journalism 'speaking for' is not necessarily distinguishable from 'speaking as'.

Jones's poem links problems of class identity in contemporary society with difficulties of public expression. In the poetics of the family magazines such difficulties are associated with attempts to address the social issues surrounding industrialisation described by Jones in 'The Corn Field and the Factory'. To use Hughes' language of turbulence, Jones's Chartist poetic is disturbed by the 'contradictory flow' of a poetic of sympathy similar to that relied upon by Stodart, Mill, Keble and the family magazines.

Wordsworth and Jones express an anxiety over new channels of communication. Wordsworth addresses the problems of the expansion of physical networks explicitly through an established medium, the political pamphlet. Jones addresses the problem of political expression but does so more obliquely using the more recent technology of the popular periodical. Both appear to suggest that new technologies of communication threaten to stifle expression rather than facilitate it. Wordsworth's 'On the Projected Kendal and Windermere Railway' expresses the fear that 'if human hearts be dead' sections of the public may already be unable to speak for themselves. In 'The Corn Field and the Factory' Jones wrestles with the conviction that this is, indeed, the case.

In 'Literary and Literal' Hood represents the 'March of Mind' as encouraging literary redundancy. Grayley and her circle fail to synthesise the literature they acquire and only succeed in the production of poor imitations whether this is represented by the joint endeavour of the Hog's Norton Athenaeum or Grayley's personal exercise in self-aggrandisement, the 'Love Lays and Lyrics'. This view of the excesses of popular literary activity is supported even by magazines encouraging popular contributions such as *Bradshaw's Journal*: a magazine which Vicinus considers as established in order to encourage working-class writers and promote a literary culture in 1840s' Manchester:

> When a periodical publication which professes to have 'a local habitation' presents its claims to public notice, a host of indigenous poets, [...] suddenly springs into life, each vying with another to prove the existence of 'native talent' by

> transmitting their effusions to be inserted for their own gratification in particular, and for the benefit of the public in general.[221]

The editors, 'anxious to discourage this poetic mania', publish a selection of rejected verse together with criticisms of its subject matter and grammatical construction similar to those subsequently levelled at Slater and Hawkins. For the editors of *Bradshaw's Journal* the mere existence of their magazine stimulates a popular desire for self-expression which in turn requires strict regulation. Poetry threatens not to calm the enervated individual in the manner advocated by Keble but to excite the masses. This anxiety concerning popular forms of communication contrasts with Jones's: where Jones fears the loss of the ability to communicate, the editors of *Bradshaw's Journal* fear an excess of communication. Despite these differences, each regard popular communicative networks as debased and a threat to established rules of discourse whether this takes the form of Jones's wild-eyed workers and cursing children or the infringement of rules of composition or 'incoherency' of '"maudlin poetesses"' ('Rejected Rhymes', *Bradshaw's Manchester Journal*, 17 July 1841, p. 186). In this chapter I will examine these anxieties in relation to the development of the new technologies of communication of which the proliferating periodical press forms a part.

In *Powers of the Press* Aled Jones connects the expansion of the periodical press in the early part of the nineteenth century and the development of the internet in the late twentieth century. He considers both as 'new and untested' forms of communication and characterizes the newspaper as the 'information highway' of the mid-nineteenth century.[222] The limitations of the description of modern systems of electronic data exchange as the 'information highway' is probably more readily apparent at the time of writing than it was when Jones applied it to nineteenth-century newspaper publication. The notion of the 'highway' is one of a privileged line of communication in comparison to

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[221] 'Rejected Rhymes', *Bradshaw's Manchester Journal*, 17 July 1841, pp. 184-186 (p. 184).
[222] Aled Jones, *Powers of the Press: Newspapers, Power and the Public in Nineteenth-Century England* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996), p. 5. Further references will be given in the text.

'byways' and other more obscure parts of the road network. In the context of the internet the redundancy of the terminology becomes apparent with the later introduction of the term 'information superhighway'. The analogy of electronic communications and the road network raises questions as to the validity of the network's apparently privileged status as popular routes become overcrowded. The complexity generated by the proliferation of sites and users is alone sufficient to make the highway analogy problematic. For the internet user the 'information highway [or superhighway]' may just as easily become a maze of minor routes and byways leading to information backwaters as a means of privileged access to knowledge. The linear analogy of the highway soon gives way to a more complicated system of non-linear connections: the world-wide web.

Jones's analogy captures the ideas of novelty and expansion common to the emerging technologies of the nineteenth-century newspaper and the twentieth-century internet. He considers that 'the chronology of the newspaper itself [...] should be placed firmly in the contexts of other chronologies [including] the demographic and infrastructural (which outline the growth of urban centres connected by improved road and rail communications)' (Jones, p. 5). This emphasises the new periodicals as extensions of existing networks which serve as conduits for distribution.[223] This is a similar perspective to that Hood takes in 'Literary and Literal' in which the 'March of Mind' is represented as a progressive dissemination of literature through the English counties. For Jones the periodical is a discursive extension of the physical infrastructure. The growth of mass culture is facilitated by the expansion of periodical publication and therefore directly linked to the extent of geographical access allowed by infrastructural improvements (Jones, p. 7). Whilst changes in the physical infrastructure are clearly important in the dissemination of periodical literature other historical developments are also significant. As Aled Jones's internet analogy suggests, locating nineteenth-century periodical publication

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[223] A similar connection is made by Raymond Williams in 'The Press and Popular Culture: an Historical Perspective' in *Newspaper History: from the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day*, ed. by George Boyce, James Curran and Pauline Wingate (London: Constable; Beverly Hills: Sage, 1978), pp. 42-50 (p. 47).

in the context of the physical infrastructure cannot be read solely as a linear process of extension. Moreover, as the poetry of Wordsworth, Ernest Jones, Swain, Mackley and others demonstrates, new lines of communication may also impinge upon those already established.

Regarding the development of communications in late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Britain, Greg Laugero has argued that:

> the arrangement of those parts and wholes [that is, the geography of Britain divided into the administrative units of the turnpike trusts] was not only geographical: the circulation of individuals, commodities and information through new channels of communication and exchange, particularly the literary, brought about new kinds of individuals for a new kind of society.[224]

The map of Britain that Laugero delineates is one increasingly fragmented by the technology that seeks to unite it. Roads are shown to connect certain settlements yet neglect others thereby segmenting the map of Britain. The function of the turnpike extends beyond the creation of individuated administrative areas to the regulation of movements of people and goods through the introduction of a scale of fees. Legitimate movement, that is movement that does not offend against the laws of private property by cross-country travel, becomes subject to capital. In this respect the 'new individuals' and the 'new society' emerging in the nineteenth century are bound by a physical infrastructure that confers a greater freedom of movement on some sections of society and inhibits the movements of others. Although the developing toll-road network may facilitate commercial traffic, as Thomas Paine and others saw, it impedes local travellers and, for some, may prevent travel beyond one's immediate community if no toll-free thoroughfare is available. Laugero comments upon Paine's view of the 'succession of barriers' and the 'wilderness of turnpike gates' which impedes the circulation of people and information (Laugero, p. 48). However, it is not road barriers that are of themselves a

[224] Greg Laugero, 'Infrastructures of Enlightenment: Road-making, the Public Sphere, and the Emergence of Literature', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 29 (1995), 45-67 (p. 45). Further references will be given in the text.

new phenomenon, but their provenance and function that is new. Similar barriers were already a feature of the rural landscape:

> Before the parliamentary enclosures, when so much of the countryside was open field and common land, roads were as often as not unfenced, and to prevent the widespread straying of stock there were gates across the roads at [...] strategic points [...] These gates sometimes became important landmarks and as such were often named and used as meeting places but they had no direct relation with the turnpikes.[225]

These gates, designed for stock control but also used as focal points for verbal interaction and navigation at the local level, are replaced as landmarks by the developing system of toll-gates which, whilst locally administered, are established through Act of Parliament primarily in the interest of national communication. It is not only state institutions, the monarchy, the military, the clergy, that are favoured with toll-free circulation but those propertied individuals participating in elections or others involved in the maintenance of the road network and the land itself.[226] Communications extending beyond what Raymond Williams has called the 'knowable community' are favoured with minimal regard for those within its boundaries *(Country and City*, pp. 1-2).[227]

As Enclosure Acts continued to place common land in private ownership during the eighteenth century, so the development of the turnpike trusts places the channels between them in private hands. In this process both the state and other owners of land retain certain privileges of access in return for the right for individuals to profit from their investment of capital. This progressive 'privatisation' of the British landscape suggests an accommodation between landed and capitalist interests in which the precise and extensive

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[225] Ronald Good, *The Old Roads of Dorset*, new edn (Bournemouth: Horace G. Commin, 1966), pp. 122-3.

[226] The movement of manure, agricultural implements and produce not for sale was generally exempted. For details of exemptions see Mark Searle, *Turnpikes and Toll-Bars*, 2 vols (London: Hutchinson, 1930) I, pp. 156-159 and William Albert, *The Turnpike Road System in England 1663-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), p. 82. Further references will be given in the text.

[227] Whilst making the distinctions between country and city and knowable and unknowable communities Williams insists that they should be regarded as what amounts to dialectic forces: 'our actual history is one of constant and increasing interaction between them' (p. 15).

commodification of land allows landed interests to participate more readily in the emerging market: the exchange-value of land may be 'realized' and capital may acquire property and the social and political rights associated with it.[228] As toll-exemptions indicate, the introduction of the turnpike trusts removes some of the vestiges of feudal relationships and a personalised and devolved system of government to a more centralised model in which the privileges of property shade into those of capital with the appearance firstly of 'toll-farmers' and later 'railway barons'.[229]

A significant result of the development in physical communications is to establish new privileges and systems of regulation that build upon existing structures of privilege and disrupt or ignore popular lines of communication. For example, developments in road communications may provide new opportunities for a few less privileged men to communicate, as indicated by the intentions of the London Corresponding Society (L.C.S.) to establish correspondence between the capital and the provincial centres of Sheffield, Norwich and Manchester. However, other groups, for example, women; the illiterate, are generally excluded from such organizations.

New literary channels erect other barriers. Like the turnpike trusts, the Corresponding Societies exact their toll: fellow-travellers in these 'new channels' must pay their way in the form of subscriptions. For example, those unwilling or unable to pay the '"penny a week" subscription' (Laugero, p. 58) to the L.C.S. would not be included amongst its members and would thus be excluded from that particular channel of information. Like the road and rail networks, textual lines of communication require a corresponding flow of cash to ensure their maintenance.[230]

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[228] The toll-road network can be seen as one of the physical traces of the process by which the landscape, as well as the individuals and goods that move through it, is made subject to capital. Similarly, privileges once ultimately reliant upon patronage begin to acquire a cash value independent of such concerns.

[229] Individual 'toll-farmers' such as Thomas Brown and Lewis Levy are discussed by Albert (Albert, pp. 85-87).

[230] Laugero notes that the 'subscription specified in the constitution formed the basis for the LCS's revenue, which was used for postage on its internal and external correspondence and for its publications' (Laugero, p. 58).

Overall the 'new channels' do not represent additional public freedoms but a system of selective channelling of the public between private enclosures and a tax upon most non-pedestrian travel. The interpersonal discourse facilitated by the stock control methods of the farmer has been replaced by one that sets up commercial barriers to popular communication on a national scale. The developing infrastructure of Britain in the early-nineteenth century can thus be seen not only as providing new opportunities for travel but as a system of restrictions upon communication. With the expansion of the railways in the second quarter of the century these restrictions become more acutely visible in their impact upon the centres of population that they ostensibly connect.

John R. Kellett has discussed the significance of the development of the railways in changing the urban landscape in Britain, a process that he considers largely completed by the end of the 1860s.[231] In addition to the processes of demolition which disrupted the existing infrastructure he notes that the railways 'increased the degree of overcrowding and compressed the mid-Victorian city rather than assisting it to expand' and that their own complex networks of lines, yards and so forth '*suggested* areas where [...] the overflow might accumulate' (Kellet, p. 342 and p. 345).

As Kellet also observes, the railways had a significant impact upon the growth of cities as well as upon their boundaries:

> By the time the inevitable Boundary Question arose (in 1888, in the case of Birmingham and Saltley) the population had reached over 8,000 [from 400 around 1838], 'a compact district with a growing population, clearly divided from the borough of Birmingham', as the Chairman of the Saltley Local Board pointed out, 'by the Midland Railway, the river and the canal.' (Kellett, p. 133).

The 'railway mania' of the 1830s and 1840s, having initially threatened sections of the middle class with the prospect of destitution in the volatile market of railway investment

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[231] John R. Kellett, *The Impact of Railways on Victorian Cities*, Studies in Local History, ed. by Harold Perkin (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul ; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), p. 18.

subsequently becomes naturalised as a means by which growing suburbs can be differentiated from their urban origins.[232] By the end of the nineteenth century that which had been perceived as a threat to social stability had been transformed into a sign of stability as the modern infrastructure merged with the natural landscape and existing transport system in the minds of local dignitaries. River, canal and railway become seen as a single network rather than as competing lines of communication as they take on an explicitly political function in the context of parliamentary boundary changes.

As in the case of the road system, the imposition of one arrangement of communicative networks upon another both problematises existing distinctions and forms the context in which new structures emerge. However, as the continued building of canals and roads during the nineteenth century demonstrates, there is a persisting tension between the older and newer lines of communication and between the established and emerging commercial and political interests. The national infrastructure emerges as the means both by which these interests compete and by which they are culturally and geographically distinguished.

Where technological progress in the eighteenth century established a publicly visible 'succession of barriers' it would appear that its influence in the following century is to erect less easily distinguishable lines of demarcation. Kellet suggests that the 'immediate results of this pressure of overcrowding can be seen in the subdivision of existing tenements' as well as re-occupation of empty and 'temporary' housing (Kellet, p. 342). Although providing the possibility for efficient communications over longer distances, the mid-Victorian rail network (itself divided amongst many competing companies and interests) is not only an 'interdiction of [public] communications' (Kellet, p. 343) but, for the urban poor at least, of domestic ones as well. In the inner cities of Britain the extension of rail communications is a disruptive and destructive experience that extends even into the privacy of the home.

[232] Albert notes a similar period of 'Turnpike Mania' between 1751 and 1772, p. 49.

In Laugero's article lines of physical communication are read as a sign of 'progress', a picture in which a web of connections is formed between the areas of greatest population density. The maps he uses represent a United Kingdom in which urban centres are shown in communication and rural areas are separated from one another. The development of new communicative networks also establishes new internal divisions. These extend beyond the distinction between the well-connected towns and cities and the isolated rural areas. As Kellet's analysis of the railways indicates, this process of partition and concentration takes place on smaller scales, within towns and cities and within the network of streets and houses.

For Laugero, the extension of regulatory structures is not limited to the development of the physical infrastructure:

> The spread of improvement across space in the form of these new legal apparatuses —Parliamentary enclosures and turnpike trusts— became at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries the penetration of new forms of knowledge into more minute, and deep, areas of the landscape (Laugero, p. 51).

The impact of the new communicative networks of the nineteenth century goes beyond the issues of land ownership that Wordsworth addresses in his poems on the proposed Kendal and Windermere Railway. The physical changes the railway causes are accompanied by modifications to ways of thinking: 'the penetration of new forms of knowledge'. Wordsworth's concern is explicitly linked with the development of periodical publishing in the sonnets 'Composed After Reading a Newspaper of the Day' and 'Illustrated Books and Newspapers'.[233] In the latter poem, written in 1846 and published in 1850, he inveighs against both the poverty of contemporary writing and the reliance of the popular press on visual rather than literary imagery:

[233] *Poetical Works*, IV (1947), p. 128 and p. 75 respectively. Sinnema cites the poem in its entirety as an illustration of Wordsworth's 'fretful' response to technological change and notes that it was composed in response to reading the *Illustrated London News* (Sinnema, p. 144). He does not discuss the poem in any detail.

> Now prose and verse sunk into disrepute
> Must lacquey a dumb Art that best can suit
> The taste of this once-intellectual Land.
> A backward movement surely have we here,
> From manhood—back to childhood; for the age—
> Back towards caverned life's first rude career.
>
> (ll. 6-11)

The 'gibbering of art' in Jones's 'The Corn Field and the Factory' is simultaneously artificial and animalistic. It is a debased language of linguistic scraps such as might be gleaned by an indiscriminate and ill-educated reader like the fictitious Isabella Grayley but would be unlikely to be considered suitable even for the expression of 'shreds and patches' of information of the kind Stodart identifies with the *Saturday Magazine* and the *Penny Magazine*. For Wordsworth the modern forms of popular communication endanger society because they threaten to silence existing forms of discourse altogether and to supplant them with the non-discursive representations of 'a dumb Art'. Jones's poem represents one class reduced to infantile incoherence through oppression. Wordsworth's vision of society is superficially similar in the sonnet 'Composed After Reading a Newspaper of the Day' of 1831:

> While all lie prostrate, save the tyrant few
> Bent in quick turns each other to undo,
> And mix the poison, they themselves must drink.
> Mistrust thyself, vain Country! Cease to cry,
> 'Knowledge will save me from the threatened woe.'[234]

This representation of social conflict is, however, more subtle and complex than Jones's in its identification of the struggle for power within social strata as well as between them in its references to the competition of both the 'tyrant few' and the 'rash ones' seeking to empower themselves through the acquisition of 'Knowledge'. It avoids the lengthy

[234] *Poetical Works*, IV (1947), p. 128 (ll. 6-10).

descriptions of Jones's poem which is, by comparison, more closely allied to the visual economy that Wordsworth subsequently criticises. The earlier sonnet indicates that those appealing to 'Knowledge' will 'provoke a heavier penalty' (l. 14) than those destined to be poisoned by their own hand. The later one explains not only what this punishment entails but that its implementation is already in progress. Where Jones uses a literary form to illustrate the debasement of a class in an oppressive society in the hope that this may stimulate a response in his readers, Wordsworth fears the abandonment of discourse may have already gone too far and that therefore civil society is irretrievable. There are, however, several aspects of the reader's relationship to periodical publishing that he fails to consider in these poems. Firstly, that illustration does not preclude, and may often rely upon, associated text, and secondly, that such publications may stimulate discourse, not least of the literary kind with which he responds. The editorial correspondence of the *Family Friend* and *Treasure* discussed above demonstrates the existence of the latter and gives some indication of the conventions regulating its publication. Although connecting the social impact of the developing physical and discursive lines of communication in these poems, Wordsworth does not address other regulatory procedures governing the circulation and consumption of the popular periodical texts that concern him.

Like the physical network of toll-roads and railways access to periodical publications is in part governed by cost. David Morse notes that although newspapers (priced at around 4½d - 5d) were probably beyond the individual working-class pocket until the 1860s, a variety of pamphlets, chapbooks and similar material had long been sold at modest prices and from the 1830s a new form of periodical became available that intended to include the more impoverished sections of the community amongst its readership: the weekly penny miscellany.[235] Founded in 1832 the most widely circulated of these, the *Penny Magazine*,

[235] David Morse, *High Victorian Culture* (London: Macmillan, 1993), p. 2. Further refrerences will be given in the text.

carefully communicates its promotional message of affordability in its title and was quickly followed by a burgeoning of competitors.[236]

Earlier titles, such as the *Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction* (1823) discussed by Jon P. Klancher, might be regarded as having priority over *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal* or the *Penny Magazine* in the introduction of cheap, weekly, instructive magazines.[237] However, the appearance of the *Penny Magazine* in 1832, is regarded as marking the advent of the mass-market magazine in Britain.[238] Even Klancher concedes that:

> in the early 1830s, the mass journal turns to the steam press already employed by daily newspapers, harnessing its expansive power that will shoot out cheap publications to all provinces and classes (p. 164).

On grounds of circulation and price (the *Mirror*, for example, cost 2d) it is the 1830s that sees the full impact of this new style of publication.[239] With the introduction of cheap and regular periodicals (rather than occasional broadsides and chapbooks) that appeal to a large section of society (in Patricia Anderson's view actually a cross-section) a written mass culture can be said to emerge that is linked to the practice of regular reading.[240] The regularity of periodical publication is important because unlike the often local and

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[236] Walter Graham, in *English Literary Periodicals* (New York: Octagon Books, 1966, first publ. Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1930), lists nine weekly penny magazines first published in 1832 in addition to the *Saturday Magazine*, *Penny Magazine* and *Chambers's Journal*. He considers this a response to an increase in popular demand caused by 'The political agitation of 1831-2' (p. 296n) which was a likely source for the anti-establishment pamphleteering identified by the *Saturday Magazine*. He also notes that 'Only the *Penny Magazine* deserves notice as a periodical of literary merit' (ibid.).

[237] Jon P. Klancher, 'From "Crowd" to "Audience": the Making of an English Mass Readership in the Nineteenth Century', *ELH*, 50 (1983), 155-173.

[238] Scott Bennett notes that '*The Penny Magazine* was different [from earlier magazines] in being the first mass-market periodical published in Britain' (Scott Bennett, 'The Editorial Character and Readership of *The Penny Magazine*', p. 127).

[239] Richard Altick identifies 'cheap books —or relatively cheap ones—' as alternative precursors of Britains 'first cheap literature craze' as exemplified by the launch of *Chamber's Edinburgh Journal* and the *Penny Magazine*. Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public 1800-1900* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 332.

[240] Patricia J. Anderson, '"Factory Girl, Apprentice and Clerk"—The Readership of Mass-Market Magazines, 1830-60', *VPR*, 25 (1992), 64-72 (p. 64). Further references will be included in the text.

sporadic distribution of pamphlets it has a greater regulatory impact upon the readership, whether this is in the form of patterns of purchase, reading or merely the anticipation of publication and the 'week-end "rush"' to which Anderson refers (p. 64). The emergence of a mass market in periodicals can thus be seen as the establishment and consolidation of a national structure with some bearing upon the habits of 'all provinces and classes'.

The connection that Paine makes between physical and literary traffic in the case of the turnpikes is for Laugero more than metaphorical. Paine's usage is shown to mark (apparently *sous rature*) the ideological connection between the making of roads and the making of literature in the late eighteenth century.[241] Such '~~Erasure~~' recalls the graphic division of Mackley's poem and its representation of non-discursive intervention as a necessary condition for narrative progress. That his discourse is both 'interrupted' and logically organized through its division into two sections suggests that its own literary making, its *poesis*, is both informed by a similar ideology and a process in which that world view and its inconsistencies are made explicit.

In common with other periodicals the magazine in which Mackley's poem appears is in a similar way, through a series of temporal or graphic divisions, the intervals between issues and the columns, departments and illustrations that make up its pages. Periodical literature as a whole, as well as aspects of its poetic content can thus be seen as an extension of the communicative networks examined by Laugero in which 'as infrastructure, roads and the written and printed texts of the public sphere share a similar function as well as a similar construction' (p. 60).

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[241] The term '*sous rature*' is taken from Jacques Derrida. Here I am using it in the sense of 'under erasure' in order to accommodate the notion that communicative networks both facilitate and impede communications. 'Translator's Preface' in Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, [1977]), pp.vii-lxxxvii (p.xiv). Laugero considers that 'Paine's use of the turnpike gates as a metaphor simultaneously highlights and obscures the relation between road-making and the effectivity of writing under consideration in this essay' (p. 48).

In discussing similarities between the circulation of ideas in texts and those of bodies in space the mutual reliance of each is, to use his language of 'foundations' and 'infrastructure', of fundamental importance. Paine himself, whether advocating a form of 'through-ticketing' (as in Laugero's analysis) or the eradication of barriers to textual and bodily circulation, bases his remarks neither upon that which is circulated nor its means of circulation in isolation, but upon the regulatory conditions which govern the relationship between the two. It is this relationship that connects the apparently disparate physical and discursive infrastructures that characterize the mid-nineteenth century: the expansion of the railway and the proliferation of cheap popular literature.

Both rail and popular journalism use the increasing accessibility of modern technologies to build upon existing infrastructures with a view to combining social benefits with private profit. Rail both overruns and interconnects with the networks of road and waterway and marks these intersections with displays of engineering and architectural achievement in the form of bridges, viaducts and rail termini. Similarly, in the field of popular publishing, the steam press and stereotype plate allow greater volumes of print to be produced at lower cost and the magazines and newspapers display their superiority to existing forms of cheap publication such as the pamphlet and broadside through regular production, variety of presentation (as unbound numbers, bound parts, and volumes), copious illustration and special issues of posters and supplements.[242] Unlike the occasional pamphlet the magazine distinguishes itself at least in principle as an integrated network, its print running, like the railways, to a strict timetable and providing different packages to suit the pockets of different classes of customer.

Paine's Bill of Rights and the Chartist Movement exemplify the continuation of attempts to codify what are seen as natural human rights within a system that has redrafted and

[242] Chittick associates advances in print and railway technology with a shift from a geographically dispersed 'literary life of Britain' after the Napoleonic wars to one centred upon the metropolis: the new technology of steam presses and railways meant also that the London newspapers could more easily dominate the reading matter in the provinces' (Chittick, p. 123).

modified the complex system of rights previously held. As Laugero also notes, such radical movements do not merely use the 'new channels' but rely upon them:

> As their primary political tool, the circulation and dissemination of written and printed texts was to be the infrastructure for a new kind of social order—one based upon a more adequate representation of "the people" (Laugero, p. 55).

However, as Scott Bennett suggests, '"the People" was a protean term in early nineteenth-century Britain', a term central to the competing rhetorics of a wide range of political interests (Bennett, 'Revolutions in Thought', p. 225). The remoulding and development of the landscape in the process of social change is thus accompanied by a struggle to redefine its inhabitants. His analysis of the circulation and dissemination of one significant part of the printed infrastructure, the *Penny Magazine*, demonstrates that conservative as well as radical voices sought to take advantage of these new communicative channels and to develop them yet further:

> [Charles] Knight knew what every other publisher for the common reader in the 1830s and 1840s knew, that cheap publications required 'more than the usual means & channels' of distribution if they were to find their readers [...] The S.D.U.K., though not involved in an illegal trade [like the unstamped newspapers], nonetheless felt strongly the need to create its own, new, channels of distribution (Bennett, 'Revolutions in Thought', p. 242).

Bennett's subsequent quotation from Knight, in which he defends the Society for the Dissemination of Useful Knowledge against radical critics, suggests an acceptance of 'progress' and its 'new channels' together with a contradictory desire to avoid change. The critics

> 'quarrel with us for leading the people into trains of agreeable thought [...] and insist that we have no right to persuade them that they can find any sources of enjoyment while Tithes and Corn Laws exist.' (Bennett, 'Revolutions in Thought', p. 249).

It would appear that the 'trains of thought' set in motion by Knight's publications for the S.D.U.K. are mostly vehicles circling within a limited perimeter bounded by problematic political issues.[243] Where the roads and railways reinforced existing class distinctions through differential ticket pricing and through the ghettoisation noted by Kellet, the new literary channel provided by the *Penny Magazine* makes a more overtly ideological distinction. It defines a domain of 'agreeable thought' which is itself a barrier set against the consideration of the political issues explicitly addressed by Chartism.

Despite the occasional partisan publications, which for Bennett are 'neither representative of its [S.D.U.K.'s] output nor [...] very numerous' (Bennett, 'Revolutions in Thought', p. 248), contemporary criticisms of the 'empty irrelevance of the Society's "gingerbread dolls", [and] its fascination with kangaroos and dromedaries' (ibid.) appear valid.[244] That the S.D.U.K., in Bennett's words, 'was looking for a common ground in ideas and interests, not for ideological victories' (Bennett, 'Revolutions in Thought', p. 249) is a self-contradiction. Although the S.D.U.K. may not have recognized its ideological motivations and thus not regarded its achievements as equivalent to 'ideological victories' it nevertheless operated at an ideological level when attempting to define such 'common ground' and to direct the public gaze away from matters of national fiscal policy towards exotic animals and domestic cookery.

One of its early imitators, the *Saturday Magazine*, exemplifies this focus upon 'agreeable trains of thought'. In its editorial matter, however, it appears anxious that 'common ground in ideas and interests' whilst socially desirable is also problematic. Whilst a passive reader may be carried along by 'agreeable trains of thought' a more active, interrogative

[243] Conversely, the political potential of Romanticism was limited by the extent of its focus upon the individual, and the individual poet in particular. For Wordsworth the occupation of the poet appears as a process in which circulation is less a matter of public dissemination of poetry and ideas than of repeated private (re)visions of them.

[244] Bennett's discussion recognizes contemporary reactions to the exclusion of politics in the publications of the S.D.U.K., from radicals such as Harriet Martineau. His position is that such criticism is misplaced because Knight's aims developed from those of popular education with a social function to those of the establishment of a mass market for non-fiction reading matter.

reader represents a threat in that their reading may use the 'common ground' of a magazine to establish their own platform. This anxiety, like those current at the time of writing concerning the 'new channel' represented by the internet, is couched in terms of the relationship between representation and action.

The *Saturday Magazine*'s view of the relationship between representation and action appears to be a straightforward one. In his history of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (S.P.C.K.) W.K. Lowther Clark declares that:

> The available literature was harmful. The sale of penny weeklies in London alone was nearly 300,000. Not one supported the established religion; they taught rebellion, sedition, and hostility to the Church of England.[245]

This is itself a paraphrase of the analysis put forward by an S.P.C.K. report of 1832. In 1841 the *Saturday Magazine* looked back upon the circumstances of its founding in a similar way, providing a reprint of a section of the report as a footnote and stating that:

> It must be in the recollection of our readers, that at the time when we commenced our undertaking the humbler classes of the community were largely supplied with cheap pamphlets, of the most dangerous and deplorable tendency; — writings in which the most holy things were lightly treated of, — the most endearing of human ties derided, — and our revered institutions held open to scorn and contempt.[246]

Here popular literature is seen as extremely powerful. Moreover, its power is regarded as necessarily translating into agitation with a frighteningly physical component: it is 'harmful' as well as derisive and teaches 'rebellion, sedition, and hostility' not merely 'scorn and contempt'. The literature available to the 'humbler classes' is seen to provide a channel of communication in which representation is unproblematic. It is a literature in which interpretation plays no part, in which communication is perfectly transparent. Popularly affordable writing is seen as injurious not only to public institutions like the Church but to 'the most endearing of human ties', that is, to bonds of a more personal

[245] William Kemp Lowther Clark, *A History of the S.P.C.K.* (London: S.P.C.K., 1959), p. 182.

[246] 'To Our Readers', *Saturday Magazine*, 'Supplement for December 1841', pp. 257-258 (p. 257).

nature and familial bonds specifically. The threat of controversial literature extends beyond the stability of the class structure to that of the family itself. From this perspective there is no practical difference between words and things, literature and action: if language is controversial it is an incitement which entails action. It is as if wounding by criticism is merely the precursor of physical damage.

This rhetoric elides important distinctions and is as familiar today in discussions of the popular media although some points of reference have changed. More importantly, however, it relies on notions either of conditioning or of sympathy. In the case above, it is assumed that politically charged material has an immediate effect upon the reader. For the magazines readers of mass-market material are deemed to be incapable of understanding the problematic nature of representation, their initial reaction to such stimulus is to act rather than interrogate. Such entailment is a partial and inaccurate view of causality.

For both Keble and Stodart the sympathetic connection established in the process of reading can be such that the identities of writer and reader become confused. The early instructive magazines perceive their textuality much as Keble and Stodart perceive poetry. In common with Keble they see it as serving a useful social purpose in that it soothes the agitated and facilitates a process of recreation in which aberrant individuals are brought back within the bounds of acceptable behaviour. Like Stodart, however, its sympathetic power is also seen as dangerous because it may prevent readers from establishing a critical distance from the text and therefore subject them directly to the influence of the writer.

2. Channels and Obstructions

In Richard D. Altick's discussion of the unstamped press no distinction is made between the legal status of Henry Hetherington's radical paper, the *Poor Man's Guardian* (an unstamped penny weekly) and Knight's *Penny Magazine* Altick notes that 'if it were a question of the stamp, according to the strict letter of the law the *Penny Magazine* was as taxable as any radical print' (Altick, p. 340n).

Knight's 'new channels' (including the possibility of extending distribution through itinerant salesmen) are those being utilised by the welter of radical periodicals which the *Penny Magazine* wishes to supplant. Not only is the *Penny Magazine* part of the tide of unstamped periodicals but it attempts to compete with the radical press through the same distribution network. As Altick's note suggests, its dubious legal status is tolerated by the legislature because of its content and this toleration extends even to advocacy:

> On at least one occasion a magistrate sentencing a boy to prison for hawking a radical paper recommended that on his release he could find safer employment selling the *Penny Magazine* and similar wholesome works. (Altick, p. 340n)

It is not the mode of distribution, nor merely the legal status of the printed matter that is at issue but its politics. The strict editorial regulation of content allows a like-minded competitor such as the S.P.C.K. to boast that the *Saturday Magazine* is not only useful but 'safe' to both its individual readers and to society as a whole. This regulatory structure is supported by the legal system. Periodical circulation is not controlled solely by the vagaries of popular taste or pressures of commercial competition as the editorial material of the *Penny Magazine*, the *Saturday Magazine* and later titles such as *Bradshaw's Journal* and the *Family Friend* might suggest. Circulation is regulated by the legal system in favour of the magazines which avoid controversial material:

> Within three and a half years [of the publication of Hetherington's paper], over eight hundred vendors of these papers were arrested, and five hundred were fined or jailed or both—many on the charge of 'obstructing the public thoroughfare' (Altick, p. 339-40).

Although by no means immune from prosecution, the propertied bookseller sits (literally and figuratively) back from this public channel. The connection between physical and ideological lines of communication is embedded in the juridical system. Justice is blind but the blindness is selective. The wholesome *Penny Magazine* may replace the unwholesome radical press in the public thoroughfare because it cannot be seen as an obstruction as it is ideologically congruent with the views of those in authority. Like the inhabitants of Ernest Jones's 'street's long darkness', its hawker lacks sufficient substance to form a recognisable obstruction unless his wares are identified as controversial. Although the physical infrastructure facilitated the dissemination of periodicals it did so differentially with the law emphasising the need to minimise the flow of periodicals such as the Chartist newspapers which contradicted the view that social stability relied upon the maintenance of existing class divisions and the furtherance of commercial interests.

However, as the continued popularity of sensational literatures in both regular and irregular systems of publication shows 'cheap' forms of association are not necessarily 'improving' in the way in which the instructive magazines and institutes intend to be. As Edward Jacobs demonstrates, rather than maintaining the authority of literary textuality the popular forms (such as the penny theatre) cut and undercut the literary forms on which their performances are based.[247] Rather than 'improving' their audience they 'improve' the material to suit the tastes of their audiences. Conversely, the magazines see themselves as arbiters of taste and like the 'Victorian social critics' discussed by Jacobs they set themselves against the culture of the pamphlet and the broadside (Jacobs, p. 321). That in the 1840s titles like *Bradshaw's Journal* complain of the same malicious influence of other forms of cheap literature as did the *Penny Magazine* and *Saturday Magazine* in the 1830s suggests the continued popularity of such material. Operating within an environment of significant political tension these magazines regarded the existing lines of popular communication, in the form of the cheap literature, not merely as expressing

[247] Edward Jacobs, 'Bloods in the Street: London Street Culture, "Industrial Literacy," and the Emergence of Mass Culture in Victorian England', *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, 18 (1995), 321-347.

dissent but as exacerbating it.[248] The *Saturday Magazine* represents this danger not as a matter of education *per se* but of education of a particular kind and like Stodart sees the young as particularly susceptible to pernicious influences. The propensity for literature to stimulate undesirable activity:

> has been the case more especially with *cheap* periodical literature, and with works of education. Books intended for the instruction of the rising generation have, in some cases, been made instruments for teaching the doctrine of Materialism under the guise of scientific principles' ('To Our Readers', *Saturday Magazine*, Supplement for December 1841, p. 257).

By associating periodicals low enough in price to be accessible to a broad readership with educational books the magazine makes a connection between 'the rising generation' of young people likely to be corrupted by materialist educationalists and the 'rising generation' of strikers, political agitators and pamphleteers. In doing so it begins to elide class distinctions between those in receipt of some formal education (predominantly middle and upper class) with those active in public demonstration (predominantly working class). In this view all social groups are threatened by social change and by the technological progress that facilitates the circulation of cheap literature amongst the poor and that encourages secular materialism in their social superiors.

The young and the poor are highlighted as vulnerable and potentially dangerous social groups. They are vulnerable because impressionable and likely to fall victim to the new materialist rather than the established Christian ideologies. They are dangerous, because as 'rising generation[s]' they are both untutored and physically active. Moreover, these subversive features of ignorance and impressionability are considered characteristic of an otherwise apparently unthreatening element of society: the 'Young Lady' whose conduct

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[248] Andrew McCann notes that 'the Pitt administration [...] saw organizations like the London Corresponding Society (LCS) as potentially violent threats to property and domestic stability', 'William Godwin and the Pathological Public Sphere: Theorizing Communicative Action in the 1790s', *Prose Studies*, 18 (1995), 199-222, (p. 199).

and education is prescribed in manuals such as those written by Stodart and whose later domestic responsibilities are the concern of many magazines.

Conclusion

Exclusion and the 'dumb Art'

By the mid-nineteenth century Britain had developed new channels of communication which established both new connections among, and new barriers between, its inhabitants. Physical networks such as road and rail regularised communications between population centres yet also divided communities, separating city, suburbs and countryside and establishing new physical boundaries which cut across the old. Serials encouraged continued and regular patterns of purchase and reading, whilst miscellanies in particular brought disparate topics together under a single editorial authority with the intention to forge new connections between individuals across spatial and class divisions without disturbing existing social structures.

Laugero's examination of lines of communication in the British Isles claims that physical networks impose procedures of exclusion upon the circulation both of certain discoursing subjects and certain written materials.[249] The capital, the archetype of the British urban environment, is located at the point in literary circulation where this net is tightest. The road network converges upon the centre not only of government but of literary production and dissemination. As Chittick notes in her discussion of the increasing concentration of 'literary life' in London: 'Britain began to look round itself, this looking-round meant a gradual intensification of the focus on government and the metropolis' (Chittick, p. 123). From a Foucauldian perspective it forms part of the necessarily fragile and temporary structure of competing discourses.

Patricia Anderson's discussion of the consumers of the *Penny Magazine* highlights the extent to which purchase was seen as an event, certainly for the more enthusiastic readers

[249] The distinctions between public and private space, the thoroughfare and the enclosure, the street and the home, are also distinctions between discourses.

(Anderson, "Factory Girl, Apprentice and Clerk'", p. 64 and p. 67). Serial publication in itself contributes to the marking of certain days or dates of purchase and consumption. Saturday publication of weeklies, like the special Christmas supplements of some titles, both connects consumption with the Christian calendar and provides a possible substitute for Sunday bible-reading or other forms of religious observance. Stodart's observations on the miscellanies suggest the varied 'shreds and patches' of information they provide oppose the Christian view of the world as ordered according to divine intention by representing it as disparate parts arranged to satisfy the human desires of readerly pleasure and commercial gain. To this extent they fulfil something of the ritual that Foucault regards as a regulatory function of discourse. The way in which the editorials construct the relationship between the magazine and the reader as primarily didactic also suggests this ritual definition of the qualifications of speakers 'who must occupy such-and-such a position and formulate such-and-such a type of statement, in the play of dialogue, interrogation or recitation'.[250]

Periodicals as a genre constantly and visibly struggle to master chances and events, their 'ponderous materiality' *en masse* dissolves (often literally) in their individual insubstantiality (vulnerability to fire, water, and other agents of disintegration), and in their treatment as ephemeral texts which exist momentarily only to be replaced. This is particularly appropriate to newspapers although magazines frequently suffer similar treatment. However, the common practice of publishing weeklies in monthly parts and annual or half-yearly volumes in the 1840s and 1850s demonstrates an affiliation with the comparative permanence of the book rather than with the newspaper. In the context of Stamp Duty this relationship can be seen to be one that is influenced by the state if not wholly regulated by it.

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[250] Michel Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse' in *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*, ed. by Robert Young (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981) pp. 48-78 (p. 62). Further quotations will be given in the text.

Foucault's description of the function of 'societies of discourse' could have been derived from an examination of the early instructive magazines:

> [Societies of discourse] function to preserve or produce discourses, but in order to make them circulate in a closed space, distributing them only according to strict rules, and without the holders being dispossessed by this distribution. An archaic model for this is provided by the groups of rhapsodists who possessed the knowledge of the poems to be recited or potentially to be varied and transformed. (Young, p. 63).

In the case of the early nineteenth-century periodical 'strict rules' apply to the kind of material in circulation. These range from the distinctions between newsbearing (and consequently political and potentially controversial) periodicals and non-newsbearing ones made by the state to the poetics that informs the selection of the poetry regularly appearing in the majority of the family magazines. Indeed, the advent of cheap periodical publishing with the appearance of the *Penny Magazine* indicates how closely this type of magazine is connected with the ideas of a regulating body (the S.D.U.K.) a particular discursive community (the existing and potential consumers of S.D.U.K. publications) and the institutions of the state (through Lord Brougham). Towards the end of the 1840s the *Family Friend* adopts a similar position by drawing attention to the editorial function through comments on the expertise of its regular contributors, the commercial success of its distinctive selection and organization of material and by reference to what might now be called the 'virtual' group formed by its readership:

> The Editor thanks very warmly those Ladies and Gentlemen who have contributed various useful matters to his pages. He hopes that every one [*sic*] having a tried and approved Receipt will forward it for the general good of our "Family," always stating that it has been tested, and giving the particulars as simply and concisely as possible.[251]

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[251] 'Preface', *Family Friend*, I, n.s. September 1852, p. iv.

This editorial paternalism establishes a hierarchy ranging from the public role of the editor, the subordinate but genteel role of the 'Ladies and Gentlemen' who contribute and the classless domestic privacy of the anonymous 'Family' of those who are solely consumers. The editor not only controls the publication and organization of 'his' magazine but represents himself as doing so to the readership.

As a non-newsbearing periodical the *Family Friend* is not 'driven', to use Hughes's term, by contemporary social and political events. As it is expressed in the preface to its first volume, the editor's function is to attempt to match its content, 'the varied miscellany combined' in the volume, to the requirements of 'miscellaneous society'.[252] The minimal changes in the magazine's overall style and content despite changes in frequency and the inclusion of supplementary material such as 'Our Family Council' during the 1850s together with the editorial insistence that there is 'consistency even in our changes' suggests that the information it disseminates is limited. Variety is a function of editorial rearrangement like the rhapsodists' poetic 'knowledge [...] to be recited or potentially to be varied and transformed'.

More generally, Raymond Williams's 'lively but typically disconnected flow' (*Country and City*, p. 2) of the popular periodical press follows that of rhapsodic composition. The constraints imposed by the poetics of the family magazines, in particular, ensure that their poetry represents the effusion of sentiment rather than a coherent argument or series of connected ideas. In Foucault's example this lack of variation is directly related to the exercise of authority:

> But though the object of this knowledge was after all a ritual recitation, the knowledge was protected, defended and preserved within a definite group by the often very complex exercises of memory it implied. To pass an apprenticeship in it allowed one to enter both a group and a secret which the act of recitation showed but did not divulge; the roles of speaker and listener were not interchangeable (Young, p. 63).

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[252] 'Preface', *Family Friend*, I, December 1849, p. iii.

The editorials of the magazines boast of the editor's ability to protect their readers within a literary environment safe from the malign influence of controversial ideas. In doing so the magazines represent their section of the popular readership as a privileged group: the purchase of the magazine in question being the means of access to this circle. Within this circle the contribution of poetry has the role of a discursive apprenticeship or ritual of initiation. It is represented as readily accessible to the reader, even to the uneducated or intellectually deficient, but governed by strict rules of composition. Adherence to these rules permits acceptance within the circle of published contributors, disregard for them ensures either exclusion or, as in the case of *Bradshaw's Manchester Journal*'s 'Rejected Rhymes', inclusion for the purpose of reinforcing the requirement of conformity. The roles of speaker and listener are interchangeable on condition that they are 'exercises of memory' such as 'I Saw a Flower' and clearly represent 'ritual recitation' rather than appearing as the relation of life experience of the kind offered by John Allen Slater or Susannah Hawkins. The poems held up to ridicule in 'Rejected Rhymes' exhibit similar idiosyncrasies. The article shows surprise that '"The Soldier's Dream" is not after Campbell, but "after viewing a picture"' (*Bradshaw's Manchester Journal*, 17 July 1841, pp. 185-186). The '"lunatic prose"' contributed by '"Plough Boy"' travels through a variety of beautiful and sublime landscapes returning at the end of each stanza to 'my Emma' and concludes:

> I love to trace on each leaf, each sod,
> The Wisdom, the Mercy, the Majesty of God;
> But more, (is it sin?) I love to trace
> The smile of love on my Emma's face.
>
> (Untitled, ll. 29-32, cited in 'Rejected Rhymes', *Bradshaw's Manchester Journal*, 17 July 1841, p. 185.)

The offence of this contributor is considered self-evident in the context of his mis-spelt and obsequious covering letter from which the article quotes '*verbatim et literatim*': no explanation is considered necessary. Not only does 'Plough Boy' confess to having sent

his poems to other periodicals prior to *Bradshaw's Journal* but is evidently aware of the rules of composition that he fails to satisfy in asking the editor to make any corrections of spelling and grammar he considers necessary prior to publication. The poem's recognition of its error in preferring the personal (and sexual) pleasure of 'The smile of love on my Emma's face' over that of the 'GOD-WRITTEN Poetry of Nature' similarly condemns it.

The derivative nature of much of the poetry of the magazines would support the view of them as demonstrations of allegiance to a particular discursive community. Poetic recitations, whether internalised or in the form of performance to an audience, locate and identify the reciting subject as subjected, albeit momentarily, to a discourse governed by the editors of the magazine in which it appears which is in turn subject to the legislation that regulates the distribution of periodical literature.

Foucault's 'four notions' of analysis, 'the event, the series, the regularity, [and] the condition of possibility' (Young, p. 67), are to some extent foregrounded by periodical publishing in general and magazines addressed to a domestic audience in particular. In their editorial matter these magazines identify purchase and consumption as events, they emphasise the regularity of their publication, even if, as in the case of the *Family Friend*, the frequency of publication changes. Addressing 'all classes' the editorial prefaces of the magazines are predicated upon the need to unify a socially and politically divided state: in Foulcault's terminology their 'condition of possibility' is the existence of these divisions.

The development of the physical infrastructure and the dissemination of instructive magazines can be regarded as an extension of this process and as one in which discursive possibilities are regulated through the imposition of both physical and ideological boundaries. The former appear in the landscape as national lines of communication cutting across existing local networks and the latter represented in the magazines as a desire to replace the tensions between disparate individuals with a 'national mind' that precludes controversy. Through the medium of the instructive magazines the world is presented to

'all classes' of reader not as a discordant whole in which they play an active role but as a series of distinct and harmonious parts already arranged. Literature in general, and poetry in particular, is seen as an example of such consonant arrangement by those magazines that comment upon it. The connection between the organization of the miscellany and the ideology that informs it is sometimes explicit as it is in the case of a review of William Gaspey's *Poor Law Melodies, and Other Poems*:

> The miscellaneous verses are better suited to the tastes of general readers [than those of political poetry], and afford evidence of the author possessing both a sound ear and correct judgement.[253]

The poetic of the family magazine associates 'correct judgement', the ability to discern the truth, not only with a 'sound ear' which is able to detect the '"lunatic prose"' of irregular expression, but with a preference for a selection that has no discernible principle of organization. The miscellaneous '*Other Poems*' are preferred to '*Poor Law Melodies*'. A similar preference for the absence of organizing principles to those of political principles of organization is evident in the way *Bradshaw's Journal* addresses the work of Elliott. In 'Random Readings from the Poets of the Nineteenth Century' Prince considers Elliott the poet as distinct from Elliott the politicized individual: 'with his peculiar political views and doctrines we have nothing to do. I shall speak of him as a poet and not as a partizan'.[254] In the context of *Bradshaw's Journal* Elliott's poetry is seen as most attractive when it addresses domestic themes:

> I must confess I like Ebeneezer Elliott better in what he would consider to be his minor or occasional productions, for in them we find much less strength and grandeur, perhaps, but more gentleness and sweetness, and soul-softening pathos. He never rivets our attention and sympathy so much as when he talks of pleasant memories, of household hopes, sorrows and affections, or laments the loss of some loving, great, or good human being ('Random Readings', *Bradshaw's Journal*, 10 September 1842, p. 302).

[253] 'Critical Notices', *Bradshaw's Journal*, IV, April 1843, p. 311.
[254] John Critchley Prince, 'Random Readings from the Poets of the Nineteenth Century [...]', *Bradshaw's Journal*, 10 September 1842, pp. 300-303 (p. 300). Further quotations will be given in the text.

The poetics of the family magazines is one in which soundness of judgement and and accuracy of scansion are closely connected. Flaws in composition have a relevance that extends beyond mere poetic competence. Even spelling errors such as those confessed by 'Plough Boy' represent a challenge to the authority of the editor in the sense that such mistakes offend against the 'strict rules' of literary composition (that which differentiates the 'writing of writers' in Foucault's terms) and also shows the limit of an editor's control: such errors are those most typically appearing in the finished product through the negligence of the compositor.

'Inferior' or otherwise 'poor' poetry is a reminder of the complex nature of discourse, evidence that it cannot always be regulated successfully. Poems as diverse as Mackley's 'I Saw a Flower' and Jones's 'The Corn Field and the Factory' demonstrate the 'contradictory flows' of the discourses of domestic ideology and Chartist social criticism. This tension is represented at a variety of scales ranging from the level of the sentence, through the poem to the organising principle of the magazine itself. In the case of the *Family Friend*, for example, the discursive rules that inform the selection of material, contemporary poetics, the avoidance of controversial subject matter and domestic ideology conflict with the social criticism implicit in its 'social mission'.[255]

Despite the exercise of editorial control the poetry published exhibits signs of what Foucault considers:

> the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy'.[256]

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[255] 'Preface', *Family Friend*, VI, n.s. December 1853, p. iii.

[256] Michel Foucault *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, trans. by Robert Hurley (London: Penguin, 1990), p. 101.

The proliferation of such magazines in the mid-nineteenth century can be seen as a development of the communicative network associated with the industrialization of Britain to the extent that these 'new channels' reconfigure the communicative network by introducing new impediments to, and opportunities for, communication. Editorial control and the influence of contemporary poetics restrict these opportunities for communication within the magazines as the state attempts to regulate the periodicals themselves, by imposing conditions of access to the network. As the poems of Mackley and others have demonstrated, resistance to these restrictions takes an oblique form: unable to articulate its opposition it marks the limits of permissable expression.

In the introduction I noted how the volume and variety of periodical publishing in the early nineteenth century has been seen to exhibit features of the 'orderly disorder' that Gleick associates with a chaotic system. In particular I drew attention to Gleick's definition of chaotic complexity as a 'pattern with disturbances' in which 'the repetitions [are] never quite exact'. I also suggested that Hughes' argument for the application of these ideas to the study of periodical publishing could be extended from the statistical analysis of circulation figures to the discursive analysis of literary content and therefore that the notion of a 'pattern with disturbances' formed a useful framework for consideration of the poetry published throughout the 1840s and 1850s by family magazines such as the *Family Friend* and *Bradshaw's Journal* because they exhibit not only regularity of publication but a notable consistency of theme and imagery.

The poems published in these magazines repeatedly incorporate floral imagery and exhibit evidence of discursive 'disturbances' such as fragmented argumentation, the interruption of narrative, and the curtailment of expression. Disruption is most prevalent where poems attempt to engage with social issues and this is consistent with the editorial intention to avoid controversy expressed in these magazines. Where poems avoid divisive issues, such as in Thompson's 'Stanzas', there is little or no evidence of these inconsistencies. This disruption is not, however, limited to the poetry of these magazines. It is also a feature of

poems published by periodicals with a declared political agenda such as *Notes to the People* and cannot therefore be attributed to editorial preferences alone. Foucault's analysis of discourse demonstrates that any discourse necessarily incorporates elements of its antithesis and the contradictions within the poetry of the magazines provide evidence of this in the popular family periodical. This suggests that resistance to the poetics of these magazines need not be intentional on the part of the poet. Deviation from poetic convention or logical incoherence in itself establishes grounds on which the prevailing poetic may be subverted.

In the poetry of *Bradshaw's Journal* and the *Family Friend* such moments of inarticulacy appear as poems attempt to address social issues, that is, as they begin to establish connections between the domestic sphere and the world beyond thereby blurring the distinction between the public and private, masculine and feminine, spheres which is seen to underpin social relations. For the magazines the threat posed by popular poetry is similar to that outlined by Stodart and Mill. Unlike other literary genres, poetry does not rely upon eloquence for its effectiveness, it bypasses the intellect and consequently moral judgement and communicates immediately at an emotional level and consequently has the potential to establish affinitive connections between 'all classes' which are beyond the scope of the existing systems of regulation.

Vicinus cites Elliott's comment that the 'impassioned truth' of poetry should be uttered 'in the shape that touches our condition most closely – the political' (Vicinus, p. 94). In the magazines the 'shape' of poetry is a fragmented one that represents a society reliant upon a complex network of political, gender and class divisions and therefore also touches upon the political. The poems demonstrate the existence and extent of censorship through non-discursive means, by showing rather than divulging. Between 1840 and 1860 the poetry of magazines intended for a domestic readership repeatedly reconstructs 'the things said and those concealed, the enunciations required and those forbidden' (Foucault, p.

100). This is the extent of its resistance to both the conservatism of the poetic in which it is located and the wider system of restrictions regulating popular communication.

Whilst the editorials of magazines such as the *Penny Magazine* the *Family Friend* and *Bradshaw's Journal* represent these periodicals as providing the common ground, or level intellectual playing field, suggested by Wordsworth's sonnet, it is their poetry that represents this levelling most clearly in its equal treatment of both major and unknown poets of both genders. In some respects the poetry represents a feminised, if not actually feminine, discourse. For example, the frequent use of floral imagery associates it with the fashion for floral decoration, paticularly in the home, and with popular floral names. Shairp considers 'home-feeling' to be one of the four important characteristics of Keble's poetry. The association of a male poet with the domestic sphere is sufficient for a contemporary academic critic like Shairp to feel the need to defend even a prominent public figure like Keble from the charge of effeminacy:

> Yet in all the tenderness there is no trace of effeminacy. True, the woman's heart everywhere shows itself [...] They, however, must be but blind critics, insensible to the finer paths of human life, who have on this account called Keble's poetry effeminate [...] Hardly any modern poetry breathes so firm self-control, so fixed yet calm resolve, so stern self-denial. If these qualities be consistent with effeminancy, then Keble's poetry may be allowed to pass for effeminate (Shairp, p. 96).

Here the critical language of nineteenth-century academia approaches that of Stodart in her discussions of a specific Christian femininity in which self-control is coupled with the 'firmness that is consistent with gentleness'. Here too, those features common to popular poetry begin to break down both religious and gender boundaries threatening the 'undifferentiated sameness' discussed by Mermin. In Stodart's terms, in the mid nineteenth century the menace of the 'English Poets' appears as a threat to both the 'scaffolding' and the 'foundations' of society. The poetic that informs the magazines,

however, also distances the writing of the unknown, and consequently 'inferior', poet from that of the established and consequently 'true' poet.

In 1831 Wordsworth warned of the dangers he perceived in the growth of a popular journalism that threatened to silence the discourse of 'the People'. The opening lines of the sonnet 'Composed After Reading a Newspaper of the Day' suggest he saw this as being achieved through a rhetoric that promised progressive emancipation without effort, without significant mental or physical activity:

> 'PEOPLE! Your chains are severing link by link
> Soon shall the Rich be levelled down—the Poor
> Meet them half way.'
>
> (ll.1-3)[257]

Without such activity the 'language really used by men' ('Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*', p. 386), in the sense of a public voice, the 'Vox Populi which the Deity inspires' of the 'Essay Supplementary to the Preface', would be unable to exist, because, in the terms of the 'Essay', unthinking, 'the People' cannot distinguish their interest from that of the small but vocal and politically active section of society that forms the privileged and competing factions of 'the Public'.[258] The poetic of the magazines also invokes a popular poetic voice in the Wordsworthian manner. Confined within the boundaries of poetic convention it is regulated by the notions of taste disseminated according to the competitive requirements of editors and publishers of the magazines rather than enabled in the creation of its own. However, as the evidence of the poems of Mackley, Swain and others have demonstrated, it is nevertheless able to resist the conservatism of contemporary poetics to a limited extent. It provides evidence of the need for increased

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[257] *Poetical Works*, IV (1947), p. 128.
[258] 'Essay Supplementary to the Preface [to the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*]', *Poetical Works*, II (1944), pp. 409-430 (p. 430).

activity through the 'dumb Art' of visual representation: unable to articulate ideas through the discourse of 'true poetry' it displays the continuing integrity of its 'chains'.

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