

**PROSE DECLAIMERS: BRITISH ROMANTIC ESSAYISTS AND CLASSICAL
RHETORIC**

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University of Pittsburgh, 2014

Prose Declaimers argues that major romantic essayists repurposed classical rhetoric in their experimental prose. Although they did not identify as rhetoricians, they repurpose practices, such as declamation, to reinvent themselves as “prose declaimers” whose texts resist easy identification with the period’s political agendas. These essayists invest literary writing with the community-building functions of rhetoric even as they differentiate themselves from political orators.

By revealing romantic essayists’ adaptations of classical rhetoric, *Prose Declaimers* complicates rhetoricians’ conversations about epideictic rhetoric, or the rhetoric of community-building and celebration. I argue that the romantic essayists were modern epideictic rhetors who transformed the mode from the celebration of shared ideals into a means of orchestrating competing political perspectives in a modern society. My research demonstrates the versatility of epideictic rhetoric in the nineteenth century and reintroduces its resources for rhetoricians and literary scholars.

The opening chapters situate Romantic essayists in the transformations of rhetoric and literature at the turn of the nineteenth century. The third chapter argues that Coleridge’s *Friend* refigures literary prose as modern epideictic rhetoric. Chapters 4 and 5 trace the development of Hazlitt’s rhetorical theory and practice from his early *Eloquence of the British Senate* to *The Spirit of the Age*. Hazlitt criticizes the corrupt deployments of rhetoric in parliament, schools, and periodicals, and he repurposes the practices of these institutions to develop his politically

oppositional prose. In Chapter 6, I argue that Charles Lamb adapts rhetorical exercises to magazine readers in his Elia essays. Chapter 7 examines De Quincey's rhetorical theory and practice as responses to the innovative *Blackwood's Magazine*. De Quincey's redefinition of "rhetoric" as *bravura* mind-play anticipates Victorian configurations of literature and rhetoric.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION: PROSE DECLAIMERS

The title of my dissertation comes from Charles Lamb's 1798 poem "Composed at Midnight." In this poem, Lamb laments Mary Lamb's matricide and mental illness by questioning conventional literary representations of religious salvation: "The Poet, or Prose Declaimer, on his couch,/...fabricates/ a heaven of gold" and a hell for the "damned sinners" ("Composed at Midnight" 34). Lamb, speaking as a member of a 1790s Dissenter community, pleads the innocence of his sister and objects to the simplified theology of the "Poet" and the "Prose Declaimer."¹ I cite this poem not simply because Lamb complicates Christian commonplaces, but because of that awkward term "Prose Declaimer," an image that juxtaposes a written mode, prose, with the oral mode of declamation: What is "Prose Declaimer"? At a time when "literature" was changing from a body of learned, multidisciplinary texts to more specialized forms of discourse, on what and for whom does he "declaim"?

"Prose declaimer" hints at the changing statuses of rhetoric and literature at the turn of the nineteenth century. On the one hand, the "prose declaimer" recalls the practice of declamation, or the mock debates of classical training; on the other hand, Lamb's epithet recalls the modern, pejorative connotations of rhetoric that emerged at the turn of the century.² In the classical curriculum, schoolboy declaimers argued fictitious cases and argued on both sides of the question. As preliminary training for careers in Parliament, the courts, and the Church, declamation was a powerful practice, and the term "prose declaimer" captures Romantic authors'

professional ambitions for their writing. “Declamation,” however, also connotes manipulative, emotionally overwrought speech at a time when the political and intellectual relevance of classical education were challenged.³ For example, Scottish rhetorician Hugh Blair, in his influential *Lectures in Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1783), rails against the “mere declaimer” and warns of “the dangerous consequences for young practitioners to make trial of this sort of play of Speech” (318, 320). Samuel Taylor Coleridge, in an 1800 *Morning Post* article, blasts prime minister William Pitt for “declamations” that were keeping Britain in prolonged continental wars and attributes these dishonest speeches to Pitt’s classical training (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 3.223). In 1814, *Edinburgh Review* editor Francis Jeffrey likewise calls William Wordsworth's *Excursion* a series of “interminable declamations” because of the poem's stilted debates among characters and celebration of dominant institutions like the Church of England (30). Blair, Coleridge, and Jeffrey associate declamation with rote classical education and inept orators who are out of touch with current audiences and events.

However, I have found that Lamb, William Hazlitt, Thomas De Quincey, and even Coleridge do not so much reject practices of classical rhetoric, like declamation, as rework them for literary purposes. Romantic essayists creatively and critically exploit hackneyed rhetorical exercises to invent new forms of prose even as they criticize the educational and political systems that foster such superficial versions of rhetoric. All of the authors in my study were exposed to classical education, and they apply the skill sets of older professions to the new genres, audiences, and situations of emergent literary periodicals. By repurposing and transforming rote rhetorical practices, these prose authors create texts that, to borrow another of Lamb’s phrases, “tell outside of school” (*Essays of Elia* 123). The Romantic “prose declaimers”

translate and transform classical rhetorical practices for new audiences and situations, and in so doing, they contribute to literature's new rhetorical possibilities in the early nineteenth century.

As literary authors, Coleridge, Hazlitt, Lamb, and De Quincey practice epideictic rhetoric, a category that has long puzzled rhetoricians. In classical rhetorical theory, the epideictic mode is distinguished from the rhetorics of the court and legislature as the rhetoric of "praise or blame" (Aristotle 1.3.3). Whereas judicial and legislative orators persuade audiences to act in specific cases, epideictic orators celebrate commonly-held values through the praise of exemplary people and display their skills with clever performances. Epideictic rhetoric traditionally has encompassed poetry and school curricula, but recent rhetoricians have expanded its purview to account for wider ranges of discourses that affirm or challenge common cultural values. Jeffrey Walker, for instance, asserts that epideictic rhetors address "the formation of opinions and desires on matters of philosophical, social, ethical and cultural concerns" (Walker, *Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity* 10). For current rhetoricians, epideictic rhetors can reaffirm existing communities or create new ones through their examination of cultural values.⁴ Rhetors can use the epideictic mode to address multiple, disparate perspectives rather than simply reaffirm agreed-upon beliefs. Epideictic rhetoric, once a means of celebrating shared values, has been recast as a wide-ranging rhetoric of culture that undergirds and even makes possible more recognizably "rhetorical" forms of political and legal discourse.

Rhetoricians' recent reconfigurations of epideictic rhetoric resemble Romanticists' characterizations of literature in the period. Since the 1980s, scholars of Romantic literature, following theorists like Raymond Williams and Pierre Bourdieu, have characterized the early nineteenth century as a "moment when the relations between culture and politics...were being renegotiated"(Cox 54). Critics such as Marilyn Butler, James Chandler, and Jeffrey Cox and

have mapped the period's intense debates over the dynamics of those relations and have explored how literary texts intervene in political debates while remaining distinct from parliamentary oratory or polemical pamphleteering.⁵ They have examined how Romantic authors use literature both to contain and proliferate competing values. For a later generation of critics, including Andrew Franta and Lucy Newlyn, Romantic authors are sophisticated theorists of discourse invested in the circulation and reception of texts beyond their own work.⁶ Still another group of critics, most recently Andrew Elfenbein and Richard Turley, have examined Romantic authors' critical interventions in language disciplines like English grammar and philology which were reshaped in the early nineteenth century.⁷ For today's Romanticists, literature, along with related language disciplines, was a site for refiguring the relationships between politics and culture in early nineteenth-century Britain.

Like epideictic rhetors, Romantic authors investigated the cultural formations that enabled the circulation and development of political stances. However, with the exception of studies by scholars such as Don Bialostosky, Douglas Kneale, and John Nabholz, classical rhetoric and rhetorical practices have been overlooked by scholars of the Romantic period.⁸ When rhetoricians split from literary scholars in the twentieth century, they left the Romantic period to "Literature" but took away rhetorical resources crucial to understanding the era's literary practices. Romantic concepts of "spontaneity, expression of feeling, and imagination" in literature and Victorian interpretations of "Romantic" literary production marginalized the classical rhetorical practices that authors learned and actively reshaped in their work (Bizzell and Herzberg 995). Through my research on Coleridge, Hazlitt, Lamb, and De Quincey, I have found that these rhetorical practices were both challenged and reworked in early nineteenth-century literary institutions, most prominently the magazine. In the chapters that follow, I do not simply

argue that the Romantic "prose declaimers" invented new models of literature in contradistinction to rhetorical practices but rather that they repurposed those very practices to do so.

Granted, epideictic rhetoric is an anachronistic term to approach Romantic literary prose. No Romantic author uses the word, and eighteenth-century rhetoricians like Hugh Blair and Adam Smith prefer the term "demonstrative" to describe the rhetoric of praise and blame.⁹ Moreover, demonstrative rhetoric, narrowly defined as ceremonial speeches of praise, occupies only a small portion of eighteenth-century rhetorical treatises. For "new" rhetoricians like Smith and Blair, demonstrative rhetoric flourishes in despotic societies when "deliberative oratory decline[s] with the absence of free discussion" (Vickers 69). Consequently, rhetoricians and authors allude to classical epideictic practices when they criticize the aristocracy, Parliament, or the schools. For example, early nineteenth-century complaints about schoolboys' "declamations," the "commonplaces" of an ailing Parliamentary discourse, and the "Birth-day and Thanksgiving Odes" that Hazlitt associates with the poet laureate's duties refer to epideictic practices from the ancient world that were adapted to the modern classical curriculum and courtly ritual (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 4.120).

Epideictic rhetoric may be an anachronistic term for the Romantic era, but I have found that it is a "hopeful anachronism." Jerome Christensen coins the phrase "hopeful anachronism" in a study that examines how Romantic authors "made use of whatever tool was at hand in the face of uncertainties regarding innovation, standardization, and competition" in the early nineteenth century (*Romanticism At the End of History* 188). While Christensen examines how Romantic authors adapted the language of archaic disciplines like alchemy and medieval scholasticism to validate their positions as professional authors in a modern, commercialized book economy, I

argue that classical rhetoric, especially the epideictic practices of the schools, is a similar "hopeful anachronism."¹⁰ At a time when rhetoric's political and civic influence was waning, classical rhetorical practices became an "available means of persuasion" for literary prose writers. Romantic authors, in the face of political, economic, and cultural changes, rework these older rhetorical practices to address new audiences and new situations. They reinvent the essayist as the "prose declaimer," a modern epideictic rhetor who invests literature with critical and community-forming functions.

I find that epideictic rhetoric, as the wide ranging rhetoric of culture, is a relevant term for a period in which literature had not attained the "autonomous" status that Pierre Bourdieu attributes to later nineteenth-century authors.¹¹ Recently, literary scholars have acknowledged the slipperiness of the term "literature" in the early nineteenth century. Ian Duncan, for example, describes the period's literary production as "a succession of attempts to define a separate public sphere, prefiguring though still far from enunciating, a domain of aesthetic autonomy" (Duncan xiii). Matthew Bevis likewise argues that Romantic authors "resisted a 'divorce' between literature and politics even as they attempt to formulate a distinction between aesthetic and instrumental [rhetorical] languages in their work" (Bevis 14). The post-Kantian German model of literature as a reflection of national values, which became popular in Britain after the Napoleonic Wars, epitomizes the tension between the aesthetic and political or rhetorical applications of literature in this era. As I argue in the next chapter, this model, promoted by John Gibson Lockhart's 1818 translation of Frederick Schlegel's *Lectures on the History of Literature* and in magazines like *Blackwood's*, frames literature as epideictic rhetoric, a powerful discourse capable of influencing political life yet separate, and broader in scope than, the discourses of politics.

Because I treat Coleridge, Hazlitt, Lamb, and De Quincey as professional "prose declaimers," I draw upon the work of Romantic scholars of periodicals beginning with Jon Klancher.¹² Klancher argues that "British periodicals [are] a paradigm of audience-making" through their criticism of culture and texts (*The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790-1832* 4). Following Mikhail Bakhtin's theories, he claims that literary periodicals evaluate the diverse strata of British society, thereby shaping the identities of specific classes and the nation as a whole.¹³ For Klancher and later critics like Mark Parker and Mark Schoenfield, periodicals make readers into judges of culture through the juxtaposition of multiple perspectives or "voices." Instead of reaffirming one set of values, Romantic periodicals use the criticism of literature to cultivate what Schoenfield terms "institutional heteroglossia." Schoenfield, extending Klancher's work, argues that periodicals "institutionalized the principle of colliding social languages within [their] writing and production methods" (24). Like the contemporary rhetoricians who assert that epideictic rhetoric can support and challenge commonly-held values, Schoenfield notes that periodicals stabilize disparate voices or let these voices sound off in a carnivalesque display of styles and perspectives. Literary magazines, as forums where cultural values are contested, reaffirmed, and recreated, are crucial to understanding the rhetorical dynamics of the Romantic "prose declaimers'" work. In the next chapter, I argue that literary periodicals broaden the scope and function of epideictic rhetoric in the early nineteenth century.

My argument that Romantic "prose declaimers" repurpose older rhetorics and reinvent themselves as modern epideictic rhetors troubles some narratives about the prose authors as essayists and critics even as it enhances them.¹⁴ These narratives situate Hazlitt, Lamb, and De Quincey within a tradition of the essay as an "experimental anti-dogmatic form" going back to Michel de Montaigne and eighteenth-century periodicals like Joseph Addison's *Spectator* and

Samuel Johnson's *Rambler* (Duff 130). David Duff, for example, observes that Romantic prose authors "defamiliarize the eighteenth-century periodical essay genre" through an "autobiographical, confessional impulse" and a "more natural prose style" that resembles Montaigne's exploratory *essais* (130). By melding Montaigne's confessional tone onto the conversational form of the eighteenth-century essay, Romantic prose authors update older essay forms to address the cultural and political debates of the early nineteenth century. Andrew Elfenbein likewise characterizes the Romantic essay by the stylistic "experimentalism" that differentiated literary prose from more standardized forms of prose writing that emerged around the turn of the century: The work of individual essayists and the institutional ethos of magazines like *Blackwood's* stress the "contrast between a seemingly generalized style that came to exemplify a respectable version of the mode, and an eccentric style that stood for [literary] genius"(178). For these critics, the elaborate periods of Coleridge, the "familiar style" of Hazlitt, the eccentricities of Lamb's Elia, and the dazzling digressions of De Quincey are integral to defining the "essay" as a genre and establishing a distinctly "literary" form of prose.

While critics credit Romantic prose authors with creating experimental literary forms at odds with an emerging "standard" prose marked by perspicuity and argumentative force, I suggest that rhetoric, a discipline that traditionally spans the literary and the political, can enrich our understanding of the essay genre. The Romantic "prose declaimers" positioned themselves as literary rhetors whose texts, unlike those of political orators, "offer more than a straightforward statement of opinion," and in doing so, they also expand the uses of classical rhetoric and situate themselves in a history of classically-educated essayists (Bevis 27). Just as critics stress Romantic prose authors' "back to the sixteenth-century" impulse, it is important to remember that rhetoric, especially the epideictic mode, occupied a significant place in the classical education of

that early modern period. Montaigne and British writers like Thomas Browne, whom the Romantics admire, "translated" classical rhetorical moves not only into the vernacular language but also into new genres that transcended the official uses of rhetoric. Like the earlier writers, the Romantic "prose declaimers" transform static rhetorical practices into dynamic texts capable of addressing new controversies and readers.

Bringing rhetorical history and theory to bear on Romantic prose authors does not mean, however, that I trace tropes and figures in their works. Although critics like Douglas Kneale have recovered Romantic authors' strategic appropriations of classical figures, I focus on the Romantic "prose declaimers'" interactions with practices and institutions of classical rhetoric at the turn of the nineteenth century.¹⁵ Chapter 4, for example, treats Hazlitt's criticism of parliamentary oratory in *Eloquence of the British Senate*, an annotated collection of speeches, and his reworking of the conventions for representing Parliament in print. Chapter 6, likewise, examines Lamb's adaptations of the writing exercises and oratory of Christ's Hospital, a London charity grammar school, at the time when the utility of classical education for middle-class men was being debated. More important than their adaptations of specific moves or figures, the Romantic "prose declaimers" restored persuasive, public purpose to ossified rhetorical practices by reusing them to make literary interventions in the period's political and cultural debates.

While I suggest that a "rhetorical" approach is more than the study of tropes and figures, my Bakhtinian approach to Romantic prose involves close attention to the texts themselves. Close reading the work of Coleridge, Hazlitt, Lamb, and De Quincey with an ear for rhetoric reveals authors' previously overlooked adaptations of rhetorical concepts and practices. For example, Hazlitt in "On Paradox and Common-Place" contrasts an adherence to tradition, which he calls "commonplace," with its radical negation, which he calls "paradox," in order to criticize

the two extreme modes of thinking that dominate early nineteenth-century politics and culture . Commonplaces, which I further discuss in the next chapter, are the "seats of argument" or the shared values that a rhetor uses to appeal to the audience; school exercises called "themes" were short compositions that involved amplifying commonplaces such as the "ship of state" (Quintilian 10.20). Drawing on this definition, Hazlitt redefines commonplaces as the "impenetrable forms and technical traditions" of a rarified Parliamentary discourse that serves the interests of those in power (Hazlitt, *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 8.147). "Paradox," his epithet for Percy Shelley, likewise refers to an exercise in which the rhetor attempts to validate unconventional views by arguing the opposite side of the question (Vickers 72). Rather than distinguish "unoriginal" thinkers who accept the status quo from "original" authors who repudiate it, Hazlitt in "Paradox and Common-place" connects the radical aristocrat Shelley to the conservative ones in Parliament through their shared classical rhetorical training. Shelley, despite his radical views on politics, sexuality, and art, is simply another schoolboy declaimer in Hazlitt's eyes. By cleverly repurposing, or as Bakhtin would say "reaccentuating," two terms from the classical curriculum, Hazlitt criticizes the reductive forms of rhetoric in the early nineteenth century and lays ground for his own prose project.

In short, I argue that Coleridge, Hazlitt, Lamb, and De Quincey reappropriate the rhetorical practices of Parliament and classical education at a time when the relationships between literature and politics were being reconfigured. By examining Romantic authors' creative adaptations of older rhetorical practices, I complicate our understanding of how "literature" and "rhetoric" evolved over the nineteenth century. Romantic prose authors reused rhetorical practices to make their texts politically relevant and to reinvent themselves as modern epideictic rhetors. By bringing classical rhetoric and contemporary rhetorical theory to bear on

the Romantic "prose declaimers," my research on rhetorical practices in the Romantic era demonstrates the continued significance and versatility of epideictic rhetoric in the early nineteenth century and reintroduces its resources for contemporary rhetoricians and literary scholars.

The chapters of this dissertation focus on individual Romantic "prose declaimers" and their adaptations of classical rhetorical practices against the backdrop of post-Napoleonic literary magazines. After a background chapter, I begin with Coleridge's centripetal vision of literary prose as epideictic rhetoric and then examine the centrifugal, multivocal and often politically oppositional, prose practices of Hazlitt and Lamb. I conclude with Thomas de Quincey who blends this polyvocality with the conservative agendas of Coleridge and *Blackwood's Magazine* to create an influential model of "Literature" as the epideictic celebration of national values and timeless, universal themes.

Chapter 2 lays the groundwork for my argument about Romantic prose authors as modern epideictic rhetors by introducing epideictic rhetoric and classical education to Romanticists who may not be familiar with these concepts. Tracing rhetoricians' recent conversations about epideictic rhetoric and the historical practices of British classical education, I demonstrate the centrality of these concepts to Romantic literary prose by comparing them to the practices of the literary magazines that emerged after the Napoleonic Wars.

Chapter 3 examines Coleridge as a prose rhetorician in *The Friend* (1809, 1818). In this experimental publication, Coleridge creates an epideictic model of prose that investigates the "principles" behind current political debates and attempts to change readers' habits of thought. Through *The Friend* and his evolving concept of the "Clerisy," Coleridge invents the "prose declaimer" as a conservative rhetor who teaches the public as a member of a learned elite.

Although they question Coleridge's conservative agenda, Hazlitt, Lamb, and De Quincey selectively adapt Coleridge's rhetorical "principles" in their prose writing.

Whereas Coleridge imagines a prose declaimer who serves and enhances Church and State, Hazlitt provides the most extensive vision of the prose writer as an oppositional epideictic rhetor. **Chapter 4** explores Hazlitt's *Eloquence of the British Senate* (1807), as a Romantic *ars rhetorica*, or philosophy of rhetoric. In this early, annotated collection of parliamentary oratory, Hazlitt addresses the differences between the deliberative or legislative rhetoric of political institutions and the epideictic rhetoric of literary authors; the epideictic mode, though unsuitable for Parliament, allows the literary author to critically assess the effects of political discourse on the wider society.

Chapter 5 extends my argument about Hazlitt as oppositional epideictic rhetor to his famous *Spirit of the Age* (1825). I argue that Hazlitt repurposes the rhetorical techniques of the politicians, poets, and critics that he finds lacking in order to produce multivocal sketches of the "age." Hazlitt not only imitates the figures that he criticizes, as scholars have long noted, but he also adapts classical rhetorical moves, including the practices of quotation and *imitatio*, to produce his signature rhetorical moves. In an age of foolish declaimers, Hazlitt redirects their rhetorical tricks towards an oppositional literary discourse that orchestrates the competing "voices" of British society and fosters new ways of reading that society.

Chapter 6 turns to Charles Lamb's Elia persona as a ludic schoolboy declaimer. I argue that Lamb "translates" the classical rhetorical exercises and ceremonial oratory of Christ's Hospital, a London charity grammar school, to the new situation of the literary periodical and a new audience of middle-class readers. In "The Praise of Chimney Sweeps," "The Defense of Beggars," and "A Dissertation on Roast Pig," Lamb, through the voice of Elia, twists and

recombines the conventions of the classical curriculum to satirize conventional early nineteenth-century attitudes towards charity.

Chapter 7 examines Thomas De Quincey's thinking about rhetoric in his writing for *Blackwood's Magazine*. In his 1828 review of Richard Whatley's *Elements of Rhetoric* and 1840 series on "Style," De Quincey validates the magazine's stylistic experiments by reframing rhetoric as multiperspectival mind-play. Despite his embrace of open questions, De Quincey, in his reworking of classical rhetorical practices for Blackwood's, promotes a closed conception of epideictic rhetoric, in which the mind play takes place against a backdrop of already agreed-upon values and "Literature" comes to reflect timeless, universal themes. De Quincey's revision of classical rhetoric aids the Victorian construction of "Romanticism" and the emergence of "Literature" as a discourse that engages readers in conversations about core values while remaining separate from political institutions and debates.

2.0 CLASSICAL RHETORIC AND ROMANTIC LITERARY MAGAZINES

This chapter addresses three topics that are necessary to understand my argument about Romantic “prose declaimers” and how they adapted rhetorical practices: The concept of epideictic rhetoric; the rhetorical practices of the British classical curriculum; and the rise of literary magazines after the Napoleonic Wars. Since the 1980s, Romanticists have seen periodicals as integral to the reconfigurations of culture and politics in the era. Literary magazines not only repositioned literature’s relationship to political life but also marketed their own writing as literary. I argue that these magazines such as *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* and *The London Magazine*, which adapted Friedrich Schlegel’s concept of literature, invested literary texts with the epideictic, community-building functions of rhetoric and distinguished the work of the author from that of the political orator. By negotiating diverse perspectives, Romantic magazines and the “prose declaimers” participate in a transformation of the epideictic mode from the rehearsal of a unified set of dominant values to a means of orchestrating the era’s disparate political and cultural voices.

2.1 EPIDEICTIC RHETORIC

In *The Eloquence of the British Senate* (1807), William Hazlitt interrupts seventeenth-century MP Edward Coke’s speech to comment on the state of rhetoric in early nineteenth-century

Britain. Coke urges Parliament to "petition the king rather for a *logique* than a *rhétorique* hand," and Hazlitt riffs on this ancient allusion:

This mode of expression seems natural enough to any one who was familiar with Cicero's description of the difference between logic and rhetoric, and who knew that most of his hearers either were or would be thought equally learned. It was a convenient short-hand language to those who were hardly ever accustomed to think or speak but in classical allusions...But this stile, which may be called abstruse or pedantic, is soon exploded when knowledge becomes more generally diffused...when every one who can read is a critic...and it is not necessary to a man's understanding of an eloquent discourse or even to his making one that he should ever had read a definition of logic or rhetoric. (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 1.9)

In his footnote, Hazlitt illustrates the decentering of classical rhetoric amidst the "diffusion of knowledge" and the expansion of print culture in the eighteenth century. Hazlitt mocks the rote classicism of the seventeenth-century elite, but he is equally frustrated with his own age in which "everyone who can read is a critic." This flippant tone towards the diffuse opinions of early nineteenth-century reviews suggests Hazlitt's modified respect for the shared early-modern definitions of "rhetoric" and dismay at their apparent disappearance in early nineteenth-century literary culture.

Hazlitt's satirical, condensed history of rhetoric resembles twentieth- and twenty-first-century rhetoricians' and literary scholars' accounts of the dispersion of a once-powerful classical rhetoric into competing camps of stylistic theories around the turn of the nineteenth century. As John Guillory observes, new theories of discourse, such as the work of Scottish

rhetoricians, "displaced the old rhetoric but never successfully *replaced* it" at the turn of the century (Guillory, "Literary Study and the Modern System of the Disciplines" 23). Historian of rhetoric Wilbur Samuel Howells likewise contends that rhetoric was reduced to a "ceremonial term" in the eighteenth century because the classical art of persuasion was replaced with various arts of logic, style, and communication (*Eighteenth-Century British Logic and Rhetoric* 714). Echoing Howells' charge that rhetoric suffered "discordant and limited interpretations," Jason Camlot characterizes rhetoric in the early nineteenth century in terms of fragmentation and diversification: "a previously coherent tradition of pragmatic rhetoric is shattered and redistributed into the diverse localized sites of individual periodicals" (Howells, *Eighteenth-Century British Logic and Rhetoric* 9; Camlot 14). In addition to their emphasis on the diffusion of classical rhetoric, these critics stress the "literaturization" of rhetoric or the ways in which rhetoric became absorbed by literary discourse.¹⁶ That is, rhetoric in the nineteenth century is gradually reduced to a stylistic, imaginative discourse, a process that had been stripping rhetoric of its persuasive, political power since the seventeenth century.

Hazlitt's description of seventeenth-century Parliamentary oratory as the "pedantic" manipulation of "classical allusions" hints at the devolution of rhetoric into the ceremonial epideictic mode, the mode that recent historians of rhetoric closely identify with "literaturization." In his treatise on *Rhetoric*, Aristotle defines the epideictic mode as the rhetoric of "praise or blame" or the "ceremonial oratory of display" (Aristotle I.3.3). He associates the epideictic mode with funeral orations, in which the orator praises an exemplary individual and urges the audience to emulate his virtue. In the ancient world, epideictic manuals, such as Menander's *The Division of Epideictic Speeches*, Pseudo-Dionysus's *Peri Epideicticon*, and Aelius Aristides's *Hymns to the Gods*, cataloged orations for occasions such as birthdays,

weddings, and religious festivals.¹⁷ For these speeches, orators amplify and tailor formulaic conventions to suit specific events. In the Roman Empire, epideictic orators disseminated imperial culture to distant provinces, and the epideictic mode became the basis of training orators in the school curriculum.

In addition to its serious civic uses, ancient epideictic rhetoric encompassed clever, often light-hearted, genres in which rhetors showed off their skills. Epideictic rhetors cultivated word-play and riffs on cultural allusions in written and oral performances. For example, Lucian's "The Fly" (c. 150 AD), which I will discuss more in chapter 7, argues the virtues of this pest and describes the insect's beauty. Lucian participates in the paradoxical encomium or the epideictic "praise of things without honor" in which rhetors dignified low subject matter with their words.¹⁸ In the Roman Empire, the "ceremonial oratory of display" was courtly entertainment. Even declamation, the arguing of fictional cases used to train orators, became an entertaining end in itself during a period in which the powers of judicial and legislative institutions were severely curtailed.¹⁹ Professional declaimers argued "difficult cases and fantastical subjects" for paying audiences (Pernot 154). According to Laurent Pernot, a declamatory performance was "a spectacle, where the resources of intelligence and fine language were on display, combined sometimes with demonstrations of virtuosity, like improvisation on a theme offered by the audience, or...an entire oration with a double meaning" (155). The utility and ethics of epideictic rhetoric as virtuoso performance were debated in the ancient world, and this ambivalence towards rhetorical play continued in the modern, pejorative connotation of "declaimer." Despite the charges against the "ceremonial oratory of display," it made inroads as a rhetoric whose purpose was to dazzle and entertain audiences.

Because it encompasses written and oral genres, epideictic rhetoric is the genre most associated with literature in the modern sense of imaginative, stylistic discourse.²⁰ In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle notes that "the epideictic style is especially suited to written compositions, for its function is reading" (Aristotle III.12.5). Epideictic orators often wrote speeches in advance of delivering them, and professional Roman declaimers published their most successful performances.²¹ Medieval and renaissance rhetoricians treated poetry as part of epideictic rhetoric. Philip Sidney in the "Apology for Poetry" (1581), for instance, notes poetry's and rhetoric's shared "affinity in... wordish considerations" and suggests that a courtier-poet might use his literary art to "direct a prince" (360, 336). As Brian Vickers observes, "epideictic...is the most important [genre] for literary purposes" and "became dominant within rhetoric" in early modern Europe (69). In my dissertation, I examine how Romantic authors transform this formulaic ancient mode into texts capable of addressing the political and cultural debates of a modern society.

Aristotle further differentiates epideictic rhetoric from the deliberative and judicial rhetorics of the legislature and courts by the role of the audience. The audience members of an epideictic speech are *theoroi*, or observers who judge the speaker's skill and the qualities of the individual being discussed.²² Unlike the senators or judges in deliberative and judicial speeches, the *theoroi* do not make a decision or judgment as a result of the epideictic speech; rather epideictic speeches tend to reaffirm the values of the polis. Epideictic rhetoric is a rhetoric of community-building, but in its classical and early modern forms, it is a rather centripetal or "conservative" one. Historians of rhetoric associate the epideictic mode with authoritarian societies, such as imperial Rome or the courts of early modern Europe, where opportunities for deliberative and judicial rhetoric were limited.²³ Hazlitt, too, evokes this sense of the epideictic

mode in the *Eloquence of the British Senate* when he argues that the House of Commons “has become a theatre for wrangling disputants to declaim in the scene of noisy impertinence and pedantic folly,” abandoning its mission of making political decisions on behalf of the British people (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 1.383).

However, when I frame Romantic authors as epideictic rhetors, I invoke twentieth- and twenty-first-century rhetoricians’ definitions of epideictic rhetoric as a wide ranging rhetoric of culture. The Romantic “prose declaimers” adapt classical epideictic practices, like school exercises, but in this transformation, they take epideictic rhetoric beyond its traditional, centripetal uses. The recent interpretation of the epideictic mode, while anachronistic, helps us to describe the messy relationships between literature/culture and politics in the early nineteenth century. Although no Romantic author uses the term, epideictic can help us account for the diverse ways in which authors and periodicals position literature as a discourse that shapes public opinion while differentiating their work from that of political orators.

Moving beyond Aristotle’s formula of “praise and blame,” recent rhetoricians have re-envisioned epideictic rhetoric as a foundational mode that addresses “the formation of opinions and desires on matters of philosophical, social, ethical, and cultural concerns” (Walker, *Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity* 10). Because it treats the values that undergird specific political debates and institutions, epideictic rhetoric “establishes the very traditions that make deliberative rhetoric possible,” or the common values to which an orator might appeal (Hauser 16). The ceremonial functions of epideictic are essential to the legislative and judicial institutions that cultivate rhetoric with more immediate, tangible decisions. As Bruno Latour might say in *Reassembling the Social*, epideictic rhetoric constantly performs the “social” in which judicial and deliberative decisions operate and their decisions are received.²⁴

Recent rhetoricians expand the range of epideictic genres beyond the ceremonial discourses listed in ancient manuals. Drawing on the diversity of ancient and early modern rhetorical practices, they define epideictic rhetoric according to the situational dynamics of the discourse. Walker describes epideictic rhetoric in terms of the audience and setting: “What distinguishes...epideictic is the nature of the audience and the forum to which the discourse speaks and the function of the discourse for that audience in that forum” (*Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity* 8). Whereas judicial and deliberative rhetors address audiences who occupy institutional positions of power (i.e. senators, judges, jury members) and who are capable of making binding political decisions, epideictic rhetoric does not imagine its audiences with such capacities or positions. Discourses intended as deliberative rhetoric become epideictic rhetoric when they are re-presented for new audiences and situations. For example, a deliberative speech delivered in Parliament in the eighteenth century becomes an epideictic one when it is transcribed and published in newspapers, history books, and oratory textbooks for extraparlimentary readers. When it is removed from the immediate situation, the speech becomes a statement of an orator’s patriotism, a display of cultural values, or an example of good style. As I discuss in my reading of Hazlitt’s *Eloquence of the British Senate* in Chapter 3, the speech is transformed from a pragmatic rejoinder in a political debate into a text for readers to discuss and admire.

Like Walker, Dale Sullivan expands the purview of epideictic rhetoric by assigning it four functions or situations: “preservation, education, celebration, and aesthetic creation” (Sullivan, “The Ethos of Epideictic Encounter” 5). Epideictic rhetors “preserve” or affirm cultural values. They “celebrate” people or events that exemplify these ideals in order to “educate” audiences. They emphasize the stylistic or “aesthetic” aspects of the discourse beyond

what is needed to persuade audiences to action; because epideictic audiences judge the speech itself as well as the person being celebrated, epideictic rhetors often reflect on their own speaking and the situation they address. Scholars like Richard Lockwood have extended this self-reflexive, “aesthetic” dimension of epideictic rhetoric to the theory and teaching of rhetoric itself.²⁵ By defining epideictic rhetoric in terms of its situational dynamics and functions, current rhetoricians connect diverse practices—from sermons to school curricula to literary criticism—as rhetorics of culture that underwrite judicial and deliberative decisions.

Whereas classical rhetoricians like Aristotle suggest that epideictic rhetoric reaffirms a unified set of values, recent rhetoricians acknowledge that epideictic rhetors adopt a wider range of orientations vis a vis a society’s dominant values. While she agrees that epideictic orators address shared cultural values, Cynthia Sheard argues that they can be “conservative or revolutionary” in their orientation towards these values (766). Like Walker, who asserts that epideictic rhetors may “work to challenge...conventional beliefs” in addition to affirming them (Walker, *Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity* 9), Sheard defines epideictic’s dual orientation as “closed” or “open” rhetorics: Closed epideictic rhetoric, such as a state funeral oration, is a “dogmatic rhetoric of display” that rallies an audience around a unified set of values, while open epideictic rhetoric addresses “situations that call for stirring things up,” criticizes the status quo, and proposes alternative values (Sheard 787). By redefining epideictic rhetoric as a means of both affirming and challenging the “basic codes of value and belief by which a society or a culture lives,” the rhetoricians of recent decades create an opening for reading Romantic literature as modern epideictic performances (Walker, *Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity* 9).

Edmund Burke’s *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1791) and Percy Shelley’s “England in 1819” exemplify the political extremes of “closed” and “open” epideictic rhetorics

in the Romantic era. Burke represents the conservative, anti-Jacobin reaction to the French Revolution in the 1790s, and his solution to protect Britain from revolutionary excess lies in epideictic rhetoric as a practice and theory. In his artful rhetorical performance, Burke argues that "traditional" English values like monarchy, primogeniture, the patriarchal family, and the Anglican Church ought to unite the nation.²⁶ *Reflections*, despite Burke's claim to address a young Frenchman, is an epideictic reminder to British audiences of their history and values. Redefining the concept of government by social contract from John Locke and Jean Rousseau, he explains that

Society is indeed a contract. Subordinate contracts for objects of mere occasional interests may be dissolved at pleasure—but the state ought not to be considered as nothing better than a partnership agreement in trade of pepper and coffee....It is to be looked on with other reverence; because it is not a partnerships in things subservient only to the gross animal existence of a temporary and perishable nature. It is a partnership in all science; a partnership in all art; a partnership in every virtue, and in all perfection.(260–261)

In this *bravura* passage of antitheses and strategic repetition, Burke argues for the values—"science," "art," virtue"—that undergird the British government and set membership in this society above mere "agreements in trade." These values unite the British people as a community across time, "a partnership...between those who are living, those who are dead, and those are to be born" (261). Burke concludes the *Reflections* with an appeal to the importance of epideictic speeches delivered outside of Parliament: "I do not wholly condemn the little arts and devises of popularity" because these performances "keep the people together" (412). Complimenting his

own rhetorical performance, Burke promotes epideictic rhetoric as a means of reinforcing a common national identity and maintaining order in the midst of chaotic continental revolution.

Written in protest of the Peterloo Massacre, Shelley's "England in 1819" is an example of "open" epideictic rhetoric in the Romantic era. His sonnet begins as a harangue or dispraise with its list of grievances:

An old, mad, blind, despised, and dying King;
Princes, the dregs of their dull race, who flow
Through public scorn,--mud from a muddy spring;
Rulers who neither see nor feel nor know,
But leechlike to their fainting country cling
Till they drop, blind in blood, without a blow.
A people starved and stabbed in th' untilled field;
An army whom, whom liberticide and prey
Makes as a two-edged sword to all who wield (1–9)

Shelley detests the irresponsible leaders and oppressive policies of Regency England, but he does not specify a course of action. These ills, he asserts, "Are graves from which a glorious Phantom may /Burst, to illumine our tempestuous day" ("England in 1819" ll. 13–14). As James Chandler observes, "the terms of the times in Shelley's catalogue...are not simple evils and are not simply overcome by the arrival of an enlightening 'deus ex machina'" that would render the readers passive observers of events (Chandler 30). Chandler points out the clashing connotations in Shelley's critique, noting, for instance, that the "leechlike" leaders invoke the medicinal as well as the parasitical qualities of leeches in the early nineteenth century. Shelley dramatizes his argument through the sonnet form: "it is in the instability of Shelley's fine formulations that ...the

conditions of his day become the occasion" for their own undoing (Chandler 32). He challenges the status quo and invites readers to do the same through the reading of the poem itself, through re-naming the sociopolitical evils and exploiting the double-voicedness of his epithets. Shelley resists persuading readers to take specific action but instead works to change their attitudes through participation in the rhetorical performance. To borrow Shelley's observation from "A Defence of Poetry," poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world" because they are epideictic rhetors who evaluate and attempt to recreate the values that undergird the laws of political institutions ("A Defence of Poetry" 850).

Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* and Shelley's "England in 1819" are two sharply partisan examples of Romantic epideictic rhetoric, but I spend the next few chapters examining Romantic authors' more nuanced redeployments of epideictic rhetoric and their complex political values. What I want to stress here is the utility of epideictic rhetoric for studying the literature of the Romantic period, an era in which the relationships between literature/culture and politics were being debated. By approaching Romantic literature as epideictic rhetoric, something neither rhetoricians nor Romanticists have done, we observe how classical conceptions of epideictic rhetoric as a monologic ceremonial discourse gave way to more recent conceptions of this mode as a wide-ranging rhetoric of culture. In the face of modern partisan politics and an expanded print economy, Romantic prose writers criticized residual epideictic practices, such as classical school exercises and the reductive speeches of Parliament, even as they refashioned these moves into new forms of literary prose. These "prose declaimers" extend the community-building functions of epideictic rhetoric by producing texts capable of negotiating the period's multiple constituencies and competing perspectives.

Before I explain how Romantic authors and periodicals envisioned literature as modern epideictic rhetoric, I must explain some of the older rhetorical practices that the "prose declaimers" rework in their texts. Although a complete history of epideictic rhetoric in Britain is beyond the scope of this dissertation, I turn to the written and spoken exercises of the classical curriculum as important "prior utterances" in the work of Coleridge, Hazlitt, Lamb, and De Quincey; I frequently return to these concepts in subsequent chapters where I examine Romantic prose texts more closely. These practices, which became rote and ossified exercises by the eighteenth century, become fertile sources of invention in the hands of the Romantic "prose declaimers."

2.2 CLASSICAL EDUCATION

Brian Vickers notes that the rhetorical exercises of the British classical curriculum have "important consequences for literature" (Vickers 48). He refers to sixteenth and seventeenth-century authors like Shakespeare, who make copious use of classical tropes and figures, but the rhetorical training of classical education was also a tool at hand for the Romantic prose writers in my study: Coleridge and Lamb attended Christ's Hospital, a London charity grammar school that taught Greek and Latin to financially struggling middle-class boys; Hazlitt studied classical rhetoric at Hackney New College, a London Dissenter seminary; and De Quincey received a classical education at Manchester Grammar School and Oxford, as he discusses in *Confessions of English Opium-Eater*.²⁷ As John Nabholz observes, classical education was "a persistent resource for the Romantic writers and its presence is felt in the most unexpected places"(Nabholz, "Romantic Prose and Classical Rhetoric" 76). In this section, I briefly explain

major rhetorical practices of the classical curriculum and the challenges to classical education at the turn of the nineteenth century. In a period when classical education was losing public, political relevance, its writing and speaking practices proved a dynamic resource for literary authors who translated classical moves to a new language, English; to a new medium, the printed magazines; and to new audiences of middle-class readers.

Classical education, based on Quintilian's *Institutes of Oratory*, became the dominant form of education for men beginning in the early sixteenth century. According to Richard Clancey, "a classical education was highly rhetorical" in sixteenth and seventeenth century grammar schools, which men attended before university (*Wordsworth's Classical Undersong* vi). Although the curricula of grammar schools varied according to local needs, schoolmasters emphasized the trivium of logic, grammar, and rhetoric.²⁸ The learning of Latin and Greek grammar was thus intertwined with training in argumentation. Rhetoric was important because elite students and charity boys "were trained for the law, church, public service" as well as "banking, trade, and commerce" (Clancey, *Wordsworth's Classical Undersong* vii). To learn rhetoric, boys in grammar schools mastered the *progymnasmata*, or exercises from the late Roman Empire.

Progymnasmata are exercises in description, narration, and argumentation that formed "the common basis for teaching composition in western Europe for several centuries" (Kennedy ix). Using myths, historical incidents, and fictional cases, *progymnasmata* trained elite young men for future careers in government and law. Rhetoricians have identified fourteen widespread *progymnasmata* that persisted in the early modern European curriculum: *Fable*, a fictional elaboration on a moral statement; *Narrative*, an account of an action; *Chreia*, commentary on a saying by famous author; *Maxim*, commentary on an anonymous adage; *Refutation* of a

narrative; *Confirmation* of a narrative; *Common-place*, a sketch of a criminal character type; *Encomion*, a speech of praise; *Invective*, a speech of denunciation; *Syncrisis*, a comparison; *Ethopoeia*, an imitation of a fictional character's speech; *Ecphrasis*, a vivid description of a place; *Thesis*, an argument about a philosophical claim; and *Law*, an analysis of hypothetical legislation.²⁹ Each of the *progymnasmata* exercises represents a part of the longer orations that students were expected to compose in their mature careers. The sketch of a criminal type, for example, might be used within a longer courtroom speech to denounce the accused.

As preparation for legal and political careers, *progymnasmata* teach students to manipulate shared values and appeals known as *topoi* or “commonplaces,” which were also the stock in trade for ancient epideictic orations. *Topoi* consist of allegedly universal values and the verbal conventions that convey these appeals. For example, the “ship of state”, the beauty of the countryside over the city, and the appeal to humility are typical classical *topoi*.³⁰ As Quintilian observes, *topoi* are the “seats of argument”, or prompts that help rhetors organize the speech and select the appropriate moves for a given audience and situation (V.10.20). To reflect students’ mastery of *topoi* as the grounds of argument, *progymnasmata* books, such as Aphthonius’s widely-circulated *Preliminary Exercises* (4th century AD), begin with descriptive and narrative genres and proceed to the argumentative *thesis* and *law*. *Progymnasmata* are thus epideictic means to judicial and deliberative ends, and young rhetors were expected to recombine the moves and topics of these exercises to produce more complex discourses.

In England, *progymnasmata* became popular in the sixteenth century. Introduced by Erasmus at St. Paul’s school, Aphthonius’s *progymnasmata* were used to improve advanced students’ Latin style, while English translations, like Richard Rainolde’s 1563 *Foundacion of Rhetorike*, were used to teach younger students still learning Latin.³¹ Although they reinforced

the dominant, elite values, these exercises “open[ed] up a space for linguistic play” where students practiced arguing both sides of the question and reinterpreting well-known narratives (Mack 9).³² For example, Richard Rainholde includes a harangue against “Kyng Richard the Thirde, the cruell tiraunt (sic)” as an example of an “historicall narrative”(D.ii). Because they trained orators to argue both sides of the question, *progymnasmata* were a forum for debating cultural values, judging past leaders, and rehearsing competing interpretations of texts.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge's 1789 school poem "Quae Nocent Docent" exemplifies a *progymnasmata* exercise at Christ's Hospital from the late eighteenth-century. When Coleridge attended Christ's Hospital, the grammar master, James Boyer introduced classical exercises in English. "Quae Nocent Docent," which was copied into Boyer's notebook, is a *chreia*, or an amplification of a famous saying.³³ Coleridge begins with a quote from Virgil's *Aenied*: "O! mihi praeteritos referat si Jupiter annos!" ("If only Jupiter would restore those lost years to me"). He translates this Latin quote in the poem's first line as "Oh, might the ill-past hours return again!" ("Quae Nocent Docent" 7). He develops this topic of lost time by lamenting his "Sloth" (stanza 1), proposing an antithesis in which he vows to read more "scientific lore" (stanza 2), and offering a moral lesson, "Tis vain to wish, for Time has ta'en his flight" (stanza 3). Coleridge ends by contemplating the "painful lessons" of the poem's title and accepting his loss with maturity. As Coleridge's schoolboy poem suggests, *progymnasmata* rehearse the dominant values of classical education, such as a strong work ethic and the importance of ancient texts.

In addition to the written *progymnasmata*, oral declamations were another form of argumentative training in the British classical curriculum. From the Latin word "to shout out," declamations were an ancient Roman oratory of display used as school exercises and as public entertainment in the ancient world. "The content of declamations was fantastic" as student

orators exaggerated the details of real court cases (Vickers 73). By the sixteenth-century, declamations had been transformed into school exercises with a set format. M. L. Clarke defines school declamations as a performance of competing arguments by several speakers: "The declamation was... concerned with some controversial subject, which could be answered in the affirmative or the negative; it was delivered orally, with one boy upholding a thesis; another controverting it; and sometimes a third summing up" (Clarke 16). Like the written *progymnasmata*, declamations dealt with fictional cases or philosophical topics (like whether marriage is beneficial to society), and students practiced arguing both sides of the question. Declamations, also called "disputations," continued at the universities where they were still "requisite qualifications for degrees" in the late eighteenth century (Knox, *Liberal Education* 2. 136).

Although rhetorical exercises persisted in similar forms across centuries, classical education had lost its rhetorical thrust by the late eighteenth century. Due to the influence of the French Port Royal school, rhetoric beginning in the late seventeenth century transformed from an art of persuasion into the study of style.³⁴ These theorists, under the influence of Peter Ramus, relocated the rhetorical canon of invention, or generating a speech's content, to the domain of logic, leaving rhetoric with the arrangement and ornamentation of discourse. Classical schools and universities also faced the decline of Latin and the rise of French as international *lingua franca* as well as the subsequent growth of vernacular print cultures. In response to these changes, grammar schools and universities turned inward: they focused upon grammar and ancient poetry rather than prose composition and the teaching of argument. Eton, the leading grammar school, adopted a curriculum focused on poetry, translation, and grammar rules in the 1720s, and other schools followed suit.³⁵ Because elite men no longer needed to write Latin

prose for scientific or political purposes, the composition of Latin and Greek verse was touted as the hallmark of a classical education and a sign of the “gentleman’s” status.³⁶ Classical education became a form of symbolic capital in which the mastery of ancient grammars, the appreciation of poetry, and the arguing of hypothetical cases were signs of elite masculine status.

Charles Valentine Le Grice’s *General Theorem for a *****Coll. Declamation* (1796) satirizes the state of classical education in the late eighteenth century, when the Romantic “prose declaimers” were in school. Le Grice, a clergyman and satirist who attended Christ’s Hospital with Lamb and Coleridge, crafts a mock “how to” guide for Cambridge University declaimers:

Carry on in the infinitive mood for the first two minutes; employ the two next in stating the subject, and in pointing out that it will be necessary to take a view of the times relative to it; in the course of doing which introduce at least four similes from the Theorem; through the next six minutes talk about and about your subject; (something of this kind any book on your shelves will supply) but never come close to the point...During the last stage, I should recommend the use of the Antithesis only, thus H. was the better so and so, N. was the better so and so; if N was so and so, H was so and so. With sentences of this kind tugging on each side like two oars, your subject, your declamation, and yourself may ride safely to oblivion. (LeGrice 6)

In this passage, Le Grice satirizes how a classically-trained student deploys the reduced exercises of the *progymnasmata*: Topics are chosen at random from a “book,” and the declaimer simply draws them out with *periphrasis*: “talk about and about your subject... but never come close to the point.” The speaker also engages in “antithesis” or a simplified compare and contrast of

famous individuals: "H was better than so and so." Political issues are empty props in the declaimer's hands, as Le Grice explains that the rhetor must appeal to "barbarian hordes," "liberty," "burst chains" and other "newspaper" jargon in order to hold the audience's attention (LeGrice 8). He concludes that declamations suit speakers "who are ambitious...of 'astonishing the weak intellects' of the many" (LeGrice 13). In this cynical gloss of Book I, section 1 of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, Le Grice blasts declamations for their dangerously vapid content; for him, classical education has become little more than a status symbol that perpetuates privilege and manipulates the masses.³⁷

In addition to criticism from insiders like Le Grice, British classical education was losing ground to the rhetorical theories and practices of the Scottish universities that experienced an intellectual revival in the eighteenth century. These schools, including the Universities of Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and St. Andrews, were dedicated to the practical communication of knowledge and the study of vernacular texts. Through widely circulating treatises, rhetoricians such as Hugh Blair and George Campbell shaped attitudes toward rhetoric and literature across the English-speaking world.³⁸ While the influences of eighteenth-century Scottish rhetoricians on Romantic authors are well-documented,³⁹ I would like to emphasize their criticism of classical education as an excessively "literary" training because the Romantic "prose declaimers" repeatedly address this charge.

As historians of rhetoric have noted, eighteenth-century Scottish rhetorics have an ambivalent attachment to classical rhetoric. On the one hand, Scottish rhetoricians reframed classical concepts to fit the expanded range of genres that their theories addressed.⁴⁰ Blair and Campbell, for instance, transform persuasion into "operating on the soul of the hearer" to account for the many ways in which a rhetor could move audiences with speech or writing (G. Campbell

1.vii). On the other hand, Scottish rhetoricians reject classical rhetoric as it was taught in the eighteenth century and stress its irrelevance to a modern society. Adam Smith, who was one of the earliest “new” rhetoricians, repudiates the “usefulness” of Oxbridge classical rhetoric in his *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (c. 1762) due to its vain “ostentation,” taxonomies of figures, and reliance on empty commonplaces (63). For Scottish rhetoricians, the classical training of the *progymnasmata* and declamations is ineffective because it produces excessively literary dispositions. Blair, for instance, calls declamation a “dangerous... play of speech,” suggesting at once the superficiality and dire political consequences of arguing hypothetical cases (290). Declamations, for Blair, are imaginative exercises that are more suitable for writing fiction and poetry than for delivering speeches in Parliament.

Francis Jeffrey’s *Edinburgh Review*, a nineteenth-century periodical inspired by the innovations of the Scottish universities, condemns classical education as an excessively pedantic and poetic enterprise at odds with governing the nation. In addition to a series of attacks on the elite “Public Schools of England” from the 1810s to the 1830s, an 1809 review of Richard Edgeworth’s *Essays on Professional Education* asserts that “[t]he present state of classical education cultivates the imagination a great deal too much,” producing men who are unfit for “public life” as Members of Parliament (“Essays on Professional Education [Review of Richard Edgeworth’s *Essays on Professional Education*]” 49, 52).⁴¹ The classically-educated gentleman is “principally conversant with works of imagination. His feelings are quick, his fancy lively, and his taste good” (“Essays on Professional Education [Review of Richard Edgeworth’s *Essays on Professional Education*]” 49). Classical education, in the reviewer’s and Edgeworth’s opinion, is a “romantic” enterprise due to its lack of practical argumentation skills and over-emphasis on poetic “works of imagination” (“Essays on Professional Education [Review of Richard

Edgeworth's Essays on Professional Education]" 50). During the political unrest at home and abroad in the wake of the French Revolution, classical education is "useless" because it elevates the study of grammar and poetry over the art of persuasion ("Essays on Professional Education [Review of Richard Edgeworth's Essays on Professional Education]" 51).

The *Edinburgh Review's* description of the classically-educated man's imaginative disposition may recall the stereotypical "Romantic" poet: superior imagination, a penchant for composing verses, intense emotions. However, I show in subsequent chapters that Romantic prose authors repurpose this overly literary mode of rhetoric to more intellectually and politically serious ends. Even as they, like the Scottish rhetoricians, protest against the irrelevance of classical training in a modern society, these authors adapt classical rhetorical practices to the new enterprise of literary magazines. "Prose declaimers" like Hazlitt and Lamb reverse the stigma of the literary when they creatively deploy rhetorical school exercises to address new audiences and situations. They combine these revamped classical practices with an emergent conception of literature as a means of influencing public life in order to reinvent the magazine author as a modern epideictic rhetor or "prose declaimer." Below I discuss this emergent concept of literature as theorized by German philosopher Frederick Schlegel and applied by British literary magazines of the 1810s and 1820s.

2.3 ROMANTIC LITERARY MAGAZINES

This section focuses on the literary magazines of the 1810s and 20s where the work of the Romantic "prose declaimers" was published and reviewed. These magazines, like *The New Monthly Magazine* (1814), *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (1817), and *The London Magazine*

(1820), were "the main initiators of a culture to which we might agree to give the word 'Romantic'" because they elevated the poets who became the canonical Romantics (Butler, "Culture's Medium: The Role of the Reviews" 143). Furthermore, all of the authors in my study had substantial engagement with these publications: Hazlitt, Lamb, and De Quincey wrote for *The London Magazine*. Hazlitt also wrote his famous "Spirits of the Age" sketches for *The New Monthly*, and De Quincey wrote for the politically conservative, yet stylistically experimental, *Blackwood's*. Coleridge also wrote briefly for *Blackwood's* in the early 1820s, and in *The Friend* (1808, 1818), he adapts some magazine techniques in the service of his own philosophical project.⁴²

I argue that literary magazines frame literature as a modern form of epideictic rhetoric. Most of these periodicals were founded after the Napoleonic Wars, when the roles of literature and the literary author were changing: Such magazines attempt to "constitute" literature as a "socially unifying force, positioned beyond politics," but they are marked by diverse styles that dramatize the political conflicts of the era, and their connections with political parties (e.g. *Blackwood's* and the Scottish Tory party) further complicate the relationship between literature and political institutions (Richardson 266). This "institutional heteroglossia," as Mark Schoenfield terms the magazines' mixture of political affiliations, transforms epideictic rhetoric from the rearticulation of unified values into a means of rearranging and hence evaluating the disparate voices that struggle to define early nineteenth-century British society(26). Magazines like *Blackwood's* and *The London* participate in this struggle through their experimental prose styles and authors who develop distinct personae associated with these styles. As Duncan observes, post Napoleonic literary magazines arrived at this orchestration of competing voices through their applications of post Kantian German philosophers, most notably Friedrich

Schlegel, whose *Lectures on the History of Literature* (1812), were translated by *Blackwood's* contributor John Gibson Lockhart in 1818.⁴³ Before I discuss Schlegel's theory of literature in detail, I briefly situate the post Napoleonic magazines in the history of nineteenth-century periodicals.

Early nineteenth-century periodicals practice epideictic rhetoric because they seek to shape cultural practices and values through the praise and blame of texts. These publications evolved from eighteenth-century periodicals, like Addison's *Spectator*, Samuel Johnson's *Rambler*, and Edmund Cave's *Gentleman's Magazine* where contributors and readers, often using personae, debated a variety of cultural trends. After the French Revolution, a new generation of editors refined the older periodicals' miscellaneous coverage of topics and participatory dynamics to suit the expanded print capitalism at the turn of the nineteenth century. By stressing the division between producers and consumers, these publications, including *Edinburgh Review* and *Quarterly Review*, market themselves as arbiters of culture through their criticism of texts.⁴⁴ As Jon Klancher observes, they intend to train middle-class readers as judges of culture: Periodicals "interpret[ed] the nineteenth-century world in a peculiar, but ultimately powerful way," and "middle-class writers intimated to their readers an unparalleled power of reading itself," or the appreciation of texts as cultural capital crucial to forming the right values (*The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790-1832* 49). In rhetoricians' terms, early nineteenth-century periodicals attempt to form the middle-classes into the *theoroi* of epideictic discourse. By mapping the entirety of cultural production, periodicals created a new form of rhetor, the professional critic, and new forms of audiences, middle-class readers who realize their identity through the process of reading the periodicals themselves.

After the Napoleonic Wars, a new periodical form, literary magazines, redefined literature's scope in order to reaffirm national values in the face of the Regency political crisis and socioeconomic unrest. I borrow here Thomas De Quincey's 1821 distinction between "reviews" and "magazines" to distinguish the older publications like the *Edinburgh Review* from those like *Blackwood's* and *The London Magazine* that were founded in the late 1810s and 1820s. The earlier reviews fashion themselves as a "tribunal of criticism" that evaluates books on variety of topics (Chilcott 14). While reviews mold cultural values through the appraisal of texts, the newer magazines, De Quincey explains, "unite with [reviews'] offices of criticism those of original production." Magazines "contribute to the joint stock of the literature" because their contributors focus on the performance of their own writing more than the earlier reviewers did. Magazine authors develop new styles and distinct personae who are identified by these styles. Literary magazines endow their stylistic experiments with rhetorical power through their embrace of Frederick Schlegel's philosophy of literature. By adapting a theory of literature that "exert[s] its influence on active life, on the fate of nations, and on the progressive character of the age," these magazines grant literature rhetorical power while distinguishing it from political oratory and institutions (Schlegel 3).

Translated by Lockhart in 1818, Schlegel's *Lectures on the History of Literature* was adapted by literary magazines seeking to assert the influence of literature on politics. Schlegel argues for the political relevance for literature as a discourse that "influenc[es] the affairs of active life"(22). Literature, which Schlegel limits to poetry, narrative, philosophy, and written orations, shapes politics because it unites people around shared values: Literary texts convey "patriotic feelings and associations peculiar to the people in whose language it is composed and on whom it is to exert its nearest, most powerful influence"(Schlegel 6). He frames literature as

both a reflector and an active shaper of “national character,” or the common values that define a nation but transcend specific political institutions. The similarities between Schlegel’s author as a “man of elevated thoughts” who shapes national values and Romantic magazines’ framing of the author as a “genius” are well known, but I would like to stress the epideictic dynamics of Schlegel’s model (6). He explains that literature evolved from ancient “songs calculated to rouse national feelings... sung at festivals of their religion,” genres akin to the hymns and ceremonial speeches of the classical epideictic mode (28). As I explain below in the section on *The London Magazine*, the modern literary author emerges from these codified genres but gains power over them and hence a greater role in defining cultural values. Schlegel’s literature is a form of epideictic rhetoric that rearticulates and even creates commonly-held values. After the Napoleonic Wars, British literary magazines expand and modify his model of literature that teaches “the exalted inspiration of national feeling and religion” (362).

Schlegel’s theory also helps post-Napoleonic magazines alter the scope of literature in order to maximize literature’s rhetorical powers. On the one hand, Schlegel has a broad definition of literature as texts “which have human life, and man himself, for their object” and “display intellect as embodied in written language”(10). Schlegel, by defining “literature” as written texts that communicate ideas or “intellect,” hints at an eighteenth-century conception of literature as a body of all learned texts.⁴⁵ On the other hand, Schlegel narrows this eighteenth-century model of literature by limiting it to texts that address “human life” and emotions. Literature should comprehend

The art of poetry and the kindred art of narration or history; next, all those higher exertions of pure reason and intellect which have human life and man himself as their object, and which have influence upon both; and last of all, eloquence and

wit, whenever these do not escape in the fleeting vehicle of oral communication, but remain display in the more substantial and lasting form of written productions.

(11)

In this configuration of literature, which excludes scientific writing, Schlegel includes subjects, such as poetry, history, philosophy (“exertions of pure reason”), and rhetoric that we associate with the humanities curriculum today. Historically, his selection of genres recalls the *literae humaniores*, or the “humanizing letters” that Coleridge treats in *On the Constitution of Church and State* (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 10.54). While I discuss Coleridge’s adaptation of *literae humaniores* in the next chapter, it is important to point out here that post Napoleonic magazines follow Schlegel’s definition when they make poetry and history the main objects of their coverage. *The London Magazine*, for instance, focuses on contemporary poetry, while *Blackwood’s* positions itself as a “repository” for articles on Scottish history, obscure primary sources, and fiction.⁴⁶

As Schlegel’s emphasis on “national character” suggests, he envisions literature as a centripetal discourse that unites readers:

It is necessary that the different natural circumstance and situations of the various classes of mankind, should, in a certain degrees, work together, before we can either attain, or enjoy excellence in the productions of mind....Even the tenderness of womanly feeling must not be excluded from exerting its due influence on the works of literature....That the formation of a national character requires a combination of all those powers and faculties, which we but too often keep distinct and isolated, is a truth which has at last begun to be felt. The learning of the philosopher, the acuteness and promptitude of the man of business,

the earnestness and enthusiasm of the solitary artist, that lightness and flexibility of mental impression...in the intercourse of society; all these are brought somewhat into contact with each other. (6–7)

In this passage, Schlegel asserts that literature brings together men and women, readers of different social classes and professions. These diverse constituencies in turn form national values as they compose and read literary texts. The British literary magazines likewise implement Schlegel's theory through "institutional heteroglossia." The "voices" of their contributors, authors under review, political sponsors, and readers are submitted to the unifying institutional *ethos* of the publication. As Parker and Schoenfield observe, literary magazines permit the play of multiple perspectives but attempt to resolve this play to varying extents.⁴⁷ *Blackwood's*, for instance, tempers its wild stylistic experiments with the conservative values of the Tory party and, despite its playfulness, derides oppositional voices as in the 1818 "Cockney School" attacks on John Keats and Leigh Hunt. *The London Magazine* features the disparate voices of personae like Lamb's Elia and De Quincey's English Opium Eater but promotes a metropolitan worldview in which literary production and value emanate from London to the rest of the British Empire.

As Mikhail Bakhtin explains, the heteroglot word is always "half ours and half someone else's," and the tension between the centrifugal play of voices and the centripetal institutional *ethos* of literary magazines never resolves (345). It is for this reason that I term British magazines' adaptations of Schlegel's literature "modern" epideictic rhetorics. Both Schlegel and the magazine editors frame literature not as the passive celebration of widely recognized values but as an active shaper of values. Unlike the rehearsal of shared values in a classical epideictic oration, literature becomes a forum for judging and orchestrating the various constituencies of a modern society in order to (re)define the values that might unite these groups. In relation to

politics, literature becomes a site for teaching and debating the values that underlie political institutions, influence specific decisions, and shape readers' attitudes towards these decisions. I suggest that the play between centripetal and centrifugal forces in literary magazines enables the Romantic "prose declaimers" to synthesize older classical rhetorics with the period's other "means of persuasion." Hazlitt, for instance, has the most densely polyvocal prose because he juxtaposes classical epideictic moves, the politics of his Dissenter upbringing, and the "Romantic" poetics of Wordsworth and Coleridge. While I discuss the styles of individual authors in subsequent chapters, I now will focus on the dynamics of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* and *The London Magazine*, two influential post Napoleonic magazines.

2.3.1 Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine

I begin with *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* because I will end with it in Chapter 7. *Blackwood's*, also called *Maga*, outlived the other Post Napoleonic magazines, just as Thomas De Quincey, a significant *Blackwood's* contributor, outlived the other Romantic authors. As I explain in the last chapter, De Quincey and *Blackwood's* influenced later nineteenth-century conceptions of literature and retrospective interpretations of "Romanticism." *Blackwood's* was founded in 1817 by publisher William Blackwood as a Tory alternative to the Whig *Edinburgh Review*.⁴⁸ As Duncan observes, the *Blackwood's ethos* is "politically revanchist but culturally avant-garde" (Duncan 21). On the one hand, the magazine became notorious for its aggressively conservative politics in the 1820s; on the other hand, it was an innovator in literary prose. *Maga* promoted Tory values and followed the practice of its English Tory predecessor, the *Quarterly Review*, by launching anonymous *ad-hominem* attacks on leading authors. Despite its political connections, *Blackwood's* promoted stylistic innovations and became a "crucible for literary

achievement beyond" the earlier reviews (Schoenfield 101). *Maga's* contributors including Lockhart, "Professor" John Wilson, William Maginn, and James Hogg experimented with personae, spurious translations, and plagiarisms that mocked the conventions of reviews even as they extended the older publications' missions to teach cultural values.

Because *Blackwood's* promotes Scottish history and literary achievements, its institutional *ethos* is based on "aesthetic nationalism" (Duncan 48). *Maga's* editors grant literature political influence to compensate for Scotland's loss of real political power since the Acts of Union, and they appropriate Schlegel's theories of literature to do so. For example, in "On the Revival of a Taste for Our Ancient Literature" (December 1818), Wilson asserts that "The living and creative spirit of Literature is its nationality," or its influence on "national character" ("On the Revival of a Taste for Our Ancient Literature" 265). Moreover, the "Shepherd," a character based on James Hogg in the *Noctes Ambrosianae* dialogues, borrows from Schlegel when he enumerates the topics of a literary magazine: "You should hae mair [more] leetature—mair creetishism...mair philosophic estimates o' the genius o' the age...in poetry, eloquence, paintin', music, the playhouse, and the all the fine arts" (Wilson, "Noctes Ambrosianae No. XXXVIII" 526). The "Shepherd" playfully supplements Schlegel's list of written genres with "playhouses," "music" and "paintin'," extending the media under *Maga's* critical authority. *Blackwood's* thus proposes to position literature amid the period's changing media for cultural production and investigate its ability to transmit cultural values.

To examine closely the Schlegelian model of literature in *Blackwood's*, I turn to Wilson's "On the Sculpture of the Greeks" and Lockhart's "Remarks on Greek Tragedy" (April 1817), two of the magazine's foundational articles.⁴⁹ Both critics frame literature and the arts as imaginative, philosophically serious discourses that both shape the broader society and reflect its

political and economic conditions. Wilson in “On the Sculpture of the Greeks” argues “the undisputed superiority” of ancient Greek statuary over “the productions of the moderns” and turns the ancient world into an allegory for early nineteenth-century Britain (“On the Sculpture of the Greeks” 9). Surveying the histories of ancient Greek city states, Wilson argues that politics, “commerce [,] and the fine arts are inseparably connected”: “The arts...are necessary in commercial countries, not only in respect to their manufactures, but for the enlightening and direction of the taste, but in a moral point for view for the animation of virtue and patriotism” (“On the Sculpture of the Greeks” 13). Like Schlegel, Wilson sees art as a repository of values that inspire “virtue and patriotism.” His descriptions of the Greek city-states most conducive to great art—trade-based coastal cities governed by elected elite citizens—correspond to early nineteenth-century Britain as a capitalist, parliamentary monarchy with an expanding overseas empire (“On the Sculpture of the Greeks” 14).

Lockhart in “Remarks on Greek Tragedy” places written texts in a Schlegelian light. In this review of a translation of Aeschylus’s *Prometheus Bound*, Lockhart, writing as “Z”, extends Schlegel’s vision of the literary author as a cultural rhetor. Lockhart argues that *Prometheus* is not a play of actions, but of speech and ideas. It is a representation of “the character of Prometheus alone,” and his speeches exemplify “the soul of man” just as Schlegel asserts that literature represents the human condition (41,40). Lockhart further explains that Aeschylus is a “man of genius,” who treats allegedly universal questions in his plays (39,42). Anticipating Thomas De Quincey’s model of “publication” as the interaction of author and audience, Lockhart observes that Aeschylus taught Greek cultural values that united the Athenian masses and that his works continue to teach complex philosophical concepts to readers.⁵⁰ In their

foundational articles, Wilson and Lockhart use Schlegel's theory to propose a new model of the literary author who is one part inspired poet, one part epideictic rhetor.

The writers at *Blackwood's* also apply the Schlegelian concept of literature to periodical prose. For example, William Stevenson's 1824 meta-review of "The Reciprocal Influence of Periodical Publications and the Intellectual Progress of this Country" shores up *Maga's* position as a producer of literary discourse that influences national values. Here Stevenson echoes Schlegel because he defines literature as "that which is conversant about man, his intellectual and moral constitution of his duties, feelings, and character"(520). He argues that magazines, like literature, shape "the force and direction of the public mind" and serve "as a sure index of the state and progress" of society (519). Magazines, especially *Blackwood's*, influence the formation of cultural values and encourage serious thinking about the human condition. Through their critical work, magazines shape the values that underlie political institutions and parties but their stances and literary experiments are not reducible to them.

By extending Schlegel's theories of literature to the magazine itself, *Blackwood's* provides a model for individual Romantic prose writers to claim authority as modern epideictic rhetors. De Quincey, as I explain in chapter 6, uses this model to frame the prose writer as an independent literary producer. *Blackwood's* imported Schlegel's model of literature to British audiences in order to evaluate what Wilson, writing as Christopher North, described as a "stirring, productive, active age" ("Noctes Ambrosianae No. I" 361). Through its interplay of Tory conservatism and literary experiments, *Maga* produces an influential model of literature as a modern form of epideictic rhetoric—that is, a means of (re)building the cultural values underlying political processes and institutions.

2.3.2 The London Magazine

Blackwood's rival, *The London Magazine*, likewise adapted Schlegelian concepts to endow literature with the community-building powers of rhetoric while distinguishing its persuasive powers from those of political discourse. Founded by John Scott in 1820, *The London* was the home of Lamb's Elia essays, some of Hazlitt's "Table Talks," and De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*, and like *Blackwood's*, it became known for experimental prose and fictional personae. The magazine's title is a gesture to the eighteenth-century *London Magazines*,⁵¹ and Scott explains that its goal is to represent "the Metropolis....whose vast pulsations circulate life strength, spirits throughout this great Empire" ("Prospectus of the London Magazine" iv). However, unlike its eighteenth-century predecessors, the *London's* vast ambitions are predicated upon its ability to judge literature. Scott praises Schlegel's "excellent Lectures on the History of Literature" in the magazine's first review of foreign scholarship (January 1820), and his vision of literature as an influence on "national character" also resembles Schlegel's conception of literature ("Gleanings from the Foreign Journals" 73). In this section, I focus on two of *The London Magazine's* foundational essays, the Preface and "The Influence of Religious and Patriotic Feeling on Literature" (January 1820) to illustrate how Scott, like Schlegel, invests literature with a distinct rhetorical function.

In the January 1820 Preface that introduces the aims of *The London Magazine*, Scott applies Schlegel's theory of literature to post Napoleonic Britain. He frames the magazine as a response to the "crisis" of Regency British politics and corruption of "national character": "Every thing conspires to intimate that the kingdom is now arrived at a crisis in its history, which will decide whether this national character...is to be essentially metamorphosed, or to remain such as it has been heretofore" (Scott, "Prospectus of the London Magazine" vii). In order to preserve the

“English character” of society, *The London Magazine* teaches “the Principles of sound Philosophy in Questions of Taste, Morals, and Politics, with the Entertainment and miscellaneous information expected from a public journal” (“Prospectus of the London Magazine” iv). The magazine will mold readers’ “taste” and “philosophical morality” by focusing on the values that ought to unite British society in a period of political and economic upheaval (“Prospectus of the London Magazine” v).

For Scott, as for Schlegel, these values are best taught by literature. Scott praises literature's ability to influence political events because it can ameliorate the “national character.” He defines “literature” as “an examination of the various questions that arise out of the great distinctions of national character, age, public circumstances, and personal disposition” (“Prospectus of the London Magazine” v). Although literature is above the ordinary political fray with its lofty ideals, Scott argues for its influence on political affairs. He explains the relationship between the cultural values, or “Public Manners,” that literary authors address and “Politics”: “they are in their nature intimately connected” just as Schlegel argues literature's “connection to active life” (Scott, “Prospectus of the London Magazine” vi; Schlegel 7). As in Schlegel's theory of literature, literary authors, according to Scott, have power to (re)define cultural values and unite politically disparate groups of readers.

Like Lockhart and Wilson at *Blackwood's*, Scott applies Schlegel's theory to the business of *The London Magazine* itself. He first differentiates the magazine from its eighteenth-century predecessors: “The days are passed when Vindex could be suffered to dispute with Eudorion, through various successful Numbers, which is most eligible—a married or a single state?” (“Prospectus of the London Magazine” iv). Mocking the declamatory topics and stilted pseudonyms of readers who contributed to the older periodicals, Scott explains that readers’

opinions in the early nineteenth-century have become more disparate and controversial, and the magazine must tackle "more venturous themes." *The London Magazine* will accomplish its goal through a "literary" scope that highlights the seriousness of the era's political and cultural debates: Scott asserts that the post Kantian German "theories and progress of the Fine Arts" are needed in order to mold middle-class readers into competent judges of competing values. *The London Magazine* also devotes specific attention to poetry, which is currently "exercising her powers with an activity, perfectly unprecedented" in Britain ("Prospectus of the London Magazine" vi). By "analyz[ing] the properties and weigh[ing] the merits" of poetry as an index of cultural values, *The London Magazine* aspires to "a respectable rank in Literature" ("Prospectus of the London Magazine" viii). The magazine achieves literary status through its selective focus on poetry as well as its Schlegelian ambition to promote and create national values.

Scott's "The Influence of Religious and Patriotic Feeling on Literature" (January 1820) further appropriates Schlegelian concepts to define literature and the position of the literary author. Scott in this essay puts forth a "Romantic" conception of the author as an inspired individual but frames literature as a modern form of epideictic rhetoric. He presents authors including Milton and the French preacher Bossuet as rhetors who appeal to "the most powerful principles of human feeling, and most active agents in the excitement of noble ambition...we mean RELIGION and PATRIOTISM" ("The Influence of Religious and Patriotic Feeling on Literature" 35). The "most powerful appeals of eloquence" and "the most melodious songs of the Muse" are complementary genres that enlist audiences in the celebration of political and religious values (Scott, "The Influence of Religious and Patriotic Feeling on Literature" 41). For

Scott, literary authors treat the values behind immediate political controversies, and their performances transcend the limited political or religious positions they occupy.

In "The Influence," Scott explains that literary writers' authority migrates from official institutions, like the Church and poet laureate, to individual authors:

The force of these mighty instigations is chiefly exercised and directed, in the infancy of society, by political institutions; but when these latter have lost much of their direct bearing on personal disposition, the former still remain...to strengthen the impulse of the most gigantic minds; to constitute a common source of inspiration, from which men may draw the virtues and the enthusiasm that adorn and cement their social union... ("The Influence of Religious and Patriotic Feeling on Literature" 36–37)

In modern societies, Scott explains, leading authors' "gigantic minds" take on the functions of declining institutions because they provide a "common source of inspiration," foster "social union" and "give to nations an imposing air of strength, solidity, and moral grandeur" ("The Influence of Religious and Patriotic Feeling on Literature" 36). In other words, literary authors (re)invent unifying cultural values in the face of corrupt institutions and a partisan society with clashing sets of values. Because they take on the community-building functions of political institutions while remaining outside of them, literary authors are modern epideictic rhetors.

By charting a movement away from institutions and towards individual "minds," Scott seems to evoke the stereotypical "Romantic" notion of the author as a solitary genius, but for him, literary authors are integral representatives of the nation. Scott echoes the German nationalism that drives Schlegel's theory by advancing his own nationalist agenda. In "The Influence," he pits British literary talents against the French, who are "the most unpoetical nation

in Europe,” in a display of post Napoleonic nationalism (“The Influence of Religious and Patriotic Feeling on Literature” 37). Scott explains that British literature will prevent “Jacobinism of the worst species” and associates literature with somewhat Burkean *topoi*: “what... would come of poetry, if she were stripped of all she owes to patriotic affection, and to religious sentiment?” (“The Influence of Religious and Patriotic Feeling on Literature” 40–41). Scott separates a true (British) literature from what he sees as soulless, politically dangerous foreign discourses, and this nationalism becomes an organizing conceit of *The London Magazine*.

Despite Scott’s fervent nationalism in these early articles and the centripetal model of literature that it suggests, Romanticists regard *The London Magazine* as a centrifugal, carnivalesque, mixture of political perspectives and prose styles. The *London’s* attachment to unified, “patriotic” values is held in constant tension with its desire to represent the real totality of metropolitan life: On the one hand, Scott believes that authors should promote “the preservation of social honour and order,” and that critics should “examine how far the privileges of talent can secure impunity for the sallies of imagination when they trespass beyond the regular fences of society” (“The Influence of Religious and Patriotic Feeling on Literature” 36; “Prospectus of the London Magazine” vi). On the other hand, diverse authorial *personae* flourished in *The London’s* pages and presented clashing political views. De Quincey’s English Opium Eater, for example, reflects throughout his *Confessions* essays on how his drug habit and intimate style transgress the “regular fences of society.”⁵² Like its competitor *Blackwood’s*, Scott’s *London Magazine* balances the centripetal functions of literature with a mixture of styles in order to serve as a forum of competing perspectives. Rather than simply adopt “patriotic” or

“moral” values beforehand, the magazines are invested in debating and recreating these values through the processes of composing, reading, and evaluating literary texts.

The London Magazine became known for a progressive *ethos* that disturbed the Tory-influenced Scottish magazine. Karen Fang, for example, notes that “*The London* was known to be one of the most fair-minded periodicals” and provided a haven for outspoken liberal authors like Hazlitt alongside conservative ones like De Quincey (Fang, *Romantic Writing and the Empire of Signs* 35). Scott’s commitment to showcasing competing political views leads to series advertising wars with *Blackwood’s* over each publications’ power to define “British” values. As scholars of Romantic periodicals know, these culture wars culminated in Scott’s 1822 death in a duel arranged by *Blackwood’s* editors.⁵³ *The London Magazine* declined in popularity following Scott’s death and collapsed by the end of the decade, but it remains a significant influence on the Romantic “prose declaimers” who also seek to position their work within the era’s competing political and cultural perspectives. Scott’s “fair-mindedness,” for example, is echoed in the work of Hazlitt and Lamb who use older rhetorical practices to represent and criticize the period’s disparate social voices. As I show in **Chapter 4**, Hazlitt orchestrates competing voices to reinvent the critic as a politically oppositional epideictic rhetor. Although it was short-lived as a periodical institution, *The London Magazine* provided a reworking of Schlegel’s philosophies that resonated with Romantic prose authors.

While it may be tempting to conclude that Romantic authors chose between a more conservative centripetal “*Blackwood’s*” model of literature and a centrifugal “*London Magazine*” one, I have found that individual authors often borrow from both models. Lamb, for instance, is just as versed in classical rhetoric and allusions as *Blackwood’s* “Professor” John Wilson, but he adopts *The London’s* more open-minded attitude towards politics in his Elia

essays. De Quincey, meanwhile, started his career by echoing *The London Magazine's* Schlegelianism in his 1820-21 "Letters to a Young Man" but ended by adapting *Blackwood's* Tory vision of literary nationalism. What I want to stress here is that post Napoleonic literary magazines collectively altered the relationship between politics and culture through their appropriations of Schlegel's literary theories, which invested literature with immense power to shape cultural values while differentiating literary authors' work from that of politicians. These magazines, I suggest, frame literature as a modern form of epideictic rhetoric that evaluates and reorders competing sets of values. Literary magazines provided a crucial forum for the Romantic "prose declaimers" to invent themselves as modern rhetors and to translate older classical practices to new audiences and situations. In the chapters that follow, I show how Coleridge, Hazlitt, Lamb, and De Quincey redeployed classical rhetorics in the emergent enterprise of literary periodicals, situated these rhetorics among the period's other "voices," and even criticized the operations of periodicals themselves.

2.4 CONCLUSION

Romantic authors repurposed older classical rhetorical practices to create new literary genres at a time when rhetoric's civic, political influence was waning. As historians of rhetoric observe, rhetoric as a classical discipline and political discourse was fragmenting at the turn of the nineteenth century, but this fragmentation meant new opportunities for literary authors to shape public opinion in a society characterized by disparate political and cultural values. Rather than simply declare an "autonomous" literature, magazines—from the conservative *Blackwood's* to the more progressive *London*—framed literary authors as rhetors capable of uniting diverse

readers and (re)defining the cultural values that hold them together. These magazines also secured their own rhetorical power by positioning themselves as literary forums for negotiating and evaluating competing perspectives, forums distinct from those of political orators. By working within these emerging enterprises, Romantic authors participated in the transformation of epideictic rhetoric from the rehearsal of a unified set of values to the means of representing and assessing the period's disparate social "voices."

Literary magazines, which appropriated Schlegel's philosophy of literature's influence on "active life," provided the forum for Romantic prose authors to transform stale classical rhetorics into fresh literary texts. These "prose declaimers" translate the once-powerful, elite practices of the classical curriculum to a new medium, the printed magazine, a new language, English, and new groups of middle-class readers. They recover the serious persuasive power of epideictic rhetoric by redeploying classical conventions to address the period's political and cultural controversies. The rise of the Romantic "prose declaimer" is predicated upon the magazines that granted literature broad rhetorical powers and a distinct political influence by reframing it as a discourse that teaches cultural values and builds communities of readers. In the chapters that follow, I will examine how Coleridge, Hazlitt, Lamb, and De Quincey reappropriated classical rhetorics and responded to the institution of literary periodicals.

Although magazines invested literature with great rhetorical power in decades following the Napoleonic Wars, the "Declaimer" as a concept fared worse. Classical education was still attacked for its increasing elitism and political irrelevance. As Kevin Gilmartin has discussed, this was also an era in which radical reformers sought to reinvent rhetoric as a means of direct political action, bypassing the debates about cultural values and orchestration of disparate voices that characterized magazines like *Blackwood's* and *The London*.⁵⁴ Coleridge and Hazlitt, as I

show in the next few chapters, were also concerned about the diffuse or indirect political results of literary discourse in the early nineteenth-century. They also feared that their work would degenerate into mere declamation or the rehearsal of empty commonplaces with little real effect.

Although written nearly four decades before the rise of literary magazines, Edmund Burke's treatment of the declaimer in *Reflections on the Revolution in France* captures anxieties towards epideictic rhetoric. Burke caricatures the French National Assembly as a disorganized band of epideictic rhetors: The new French politicians are declaimers who play with "school paradoxes which exercised the wits of the junior students in stoic philosophy"(343). To Burke, the National Assembly wastes its time in fruitless epideictic performances, and he dismisses them with a snide paraphrase of Juvenal's *Satires*: "It was in the most patient period of Roman servitude that themes of tyrannicide made the ordinary exercise of boys at school—cum perimet soevos classis numerosa tyrannos!" For Burke, the painted "tyrannicides" of an assembly versed in philosophical ideals cannot compensate for the real violence overtaking the country. The Assembly of declaimers has failed to take control of the government and establish new values that ought to unite French society.

As James Mulvihill observes, Burke "subverts the very elements whose subversive analytical techniques [he] at once appropriates and condemns" by adopting a theatrical, *pathos*-rich style in *Reflections*, most famously in his depiction of Marie Antoinette's arrest, to condemn the revolutionary pageantry of the French National Assembly (90). Burke plays the declaimer in his conservative defense of British monarchy, but his *ethos* is compromised and his own epideictic performance risks the same problems as the schoolboy "tyrannicides" satirized in Juvenal's quote. Nearly three decades later, Coleridge in *The Friend* confronts the same dilemma when he attempts to distinguish his periodical from the leading early nineteenth-century reviews.

He must adapt periodicals' techniques for "entertaining" readers in order to educate them, but he risks becoming the declaimer or "sophist" that he condemns. In the next chapter, I will discuss how Coleridge invents the "prose declaimer" as a conservative epideictic rhetor and the problems he confronts with this model. Although they object to the political ends and institutional networks that Coleridge proposes, Hazlitt, Lamb, and De Quincey reappropriate the theories of prose writing and stylistic moves that Coleridge discovers in his quest to make the prose writer into a learned expert who serves Church and State.

3.0 THE "PROSE DECLAIMER'S" *FRIEND*: COLERIDGE'S RHETORICAL PRINCIPLES

Hazlitt, Lamb, and De Quincey borrow from Samuel Taylor Coleridge's prose practices and theories, which are most thoroughly discussed in his experimental *Friend*. First published as a series of periodical essays in 1809 and revised as a book of essays in 1818, *The Friend* proposes a model of literary prose as epideictic rhetoric—that is, Coleridge examines and assesses the cultural values behind early nineteenth-century political debates.⁵⁵ For Coleridge, literary prose is a centripetal discourse that unites readers around a common religious and political vision, but other “prose declaimers” selectively adapt his theories and techniques to create more decentralized forms of literary prose.

Coleridge frequently discusses the literary authors' moral and political duties, but during and after the Napoleonic Wars, he thought extensively about the position of the prose author, the purposes of literature, and its relationship to politics. In *The Friend*, which purports to teach “principles in all things: in Literature, in the Fine Arts, in Morals, in Legislation, in Religion,” he envisions the prose writer as an epideictic rhetor who shapes early nineteenth-century society (Coleridge, *Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 4.2.13). The prose author assesses the cultural values that undergird political institutions and influence specific decisions. Although he does not use the term “epideictic rhetoric,” Coleridge, who studied in Germany, was versed in Schlegel’s theory of literature as a discourse that “exerts its influence the affairs of on active life”

(Schlegel 3). Coleridge's desire to shape cultural values while differentiating his work from political oratory exemplifies modern epideictic rhetoric. Unlike the classical epideictic orator, who reaffirms widely-acknowledged values, Coleridge addresses readers with disparate political views, and he focuses on leading readers to the "right" values.

Coleridge's thinking about the prose writer in *The Friend* and other books participates in what Ann Frey calls the "State Romanticisms" of the 1810s and 20s. Romantic authors "asked whether literature could carry out any of the state's tasks" in accordance with Schlegel's model of the literary author as a shaper of "national character" (Frey 2). Frey terms these post Napoleonic models of authorship "State Romanticisms" because then-conservative leading authors like Coleridge and Wordsworth investigated the author's role "during a period of imperial expansion, rising nationalist sentiment, and increasing bureaucratization" (3). In rhetoricians' terms, "State Romanticisms" are forms of epideictic rhetoric because authors examine the values that underwrite political, religious, and educational institutions. They "ask not whether their work expresses opinions that serve existing authority but whether literature performs any of the state's functions of cultivating individuals and shaping communities" (Frey 4).

In *The Friend*, Coleridge asserts that the prose writer does not directly praise or blame national values but models a process of inquiry that the readers co-create. Like Schlegel and the editors of British literary magazines, he invests literature with the community-building functions of epideictic rhetoric, as the means of articulating a new unity from the disparate "voices" of early nineteenth-century society. Coleridge also questions eighteenth-century Scottish rhetorical theories that emphasize the "communication" of facts and feelings to audiences.⁵⁶ Although his model of the prose writer as a "cleric" resembles "High Eloquence," the rhetorical mode that

Hugh Blair associated with preaching, he distrusts the Scottish rhetoricians' theory that rhetors can directly convey the "truth" to audiences. In keeping with his broader philosophical project to reconcile empiricism and idealism, he examines the impossibility of communicating "truth" in writing and experiments with indirect means of leading readers to "truth."

Although they object in various ways to Coleridge's conservative goals, Hazlitt, De Quincey, and Lamb share a set of rhetorical theories that I term Coleridgean rhetorical principles.⁵⁷ Coleridgean rhetorical principles include a model of argument as inquiry, the innovation of commonplaces, the cultivation of active readers, and the admiration of seventeenth-century styles. I focus on the *Friend* in this chapter because Coleridge most thoroughly articulates these ideas here, however, he was interested in some of these concepts, like the need for unifying cultural principles, since his published lectures *Conciones ad Populum* (1795).⁵⁸ While the *Friend* represents Coleridge's most comprehensive thinking about prose style in relation to rhetoric, the other "prose declaimers" were engaging with his ideas before then. Coleridge's 1800 *Morning Post* critique of William Pitt's oratory, for instance, inspired Hazlitt's sketch of Pitt and thinking about parliamentary oratory in *The Eloquence of the British Senate* (1807), which I discuss in **Chapter 4**. Although the 1810s iterations of *Friend* are Coleridge's most sustained discussion of literary prose, authors responded to his "principles" of argument as inquiry, the innovation of commonplaces, the figure of the active reader, and the revival early modern prose styles, since the turn of the nineteenth century. Hazlitt, Lamb, and De Quincey both admire these qualities in others' work and practice them in their own writing. More importantly, they free these rhetorical "principles" from Coleridge's conservative agenda in order to craft their own prose rhetorics and imagine alternative relationships with the institutions that circulate and evaluate their texts.

Before I discuss how the Romantic “prose declaimers” adapt Coleridgean rhetorical principles, I situate Coleridge's project in the *Friend* within his evolving concept of the Clerisy. Coleridge envisions the literary prose author as a serious, centripetal epideictic rhetor by first making him a “cleric” and later by placing him within a network of such preacher-scholars called the “Clerisy.” I then turn to *The Friend* and argue that Coleridge's failed attempt at a periodical becomes rhetorical theory through Coleridge's attention to his own writing. Questioning the eighteenth-century rhetorical paradigm of communication, Coleridge revises a civic model of classical rhetoric to advance his conservative religious and political agendas. From Coleridge's thinking about rhetoric in *The Friend*, I deduce several rhetorical “principles” that Hazlitt, De Quincey, and Lamb selectively adapt in their writing.

3.1 COLERIDGE'S “CLERKLY” PROSE WRITER

The Friend, a guide to Coleridge's “whole system in Religion, in Morals, and in Literature,” is one of Coleridge's efforts to shape middle-class readers into competent judges of British culture and politics, a project that culminates in his concept of the “Clerisy” (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 4.2.8). As Jon Klancher observes, Coleridge intends to teach the “truth” of his religious and political principles, but the “minds of the middle-class audience would now have to be *formed* to know the Truth shaped in those deliberate ways he would begin to essay in *The Friend* and would not complete until *On the Constitution of Church and State*” (*The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790-1832* 38). *The Friend* inaugurates Coleridge's attempt to “produce and enlighten the spirit of public zeal” by teaching “habits of reflection...equal to [their] opportunity for leisure,” as he puts it in the *Lay Sermon* (Coleridge, *Collected Works of Samuel*

Taylor Coleridge 6.124). Coleridge intends to prepare the emerging “leisure” classes for their increasingly influential political and economic roles by training them as judges of British culture. This middle-class constituency will be led by “men of clerkly acquirements,” a group of classically educated authors and scholars (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 6.36).

Coleridge describes the “men of clerkly acquirements” in the *Statesman’s Manual* (1816) and in the *Lay Sermon* (1817). Continuing his longstanding complaints about the “non-existence of a learned and philosophical public,” Coleridge in the *Lay Sermon* proposes the clerkly class as a “counterweight” to “overbalance of commercial spirit” in British society (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 6.197, 170). He inaugurates a group of learned authors dedicated to cultivating “a pre-occupation of the intellect and the affections with permanent, universal and eternal truths” in the middle classes, or educating them to become better judges of British values and by extension, better political and commercial leaders (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 6.171). The “men of clerkly acquirements” are rhetors who persuade their audiences to accept the political and religious principles that ought to unite the nation. For Coleridge, the education of the middle-classes would protect Britain from violent insurrection during the transition to a peacetime economy after the Napoleonic Wars.⁵⁹ Through the teachings of the learned class, members of the middle class would learn “the outward means of knowing their essential duties and dignities...as free men,” or the cultural values that undergird their civic duties (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 6.217).

In *Biographia Literaria* (1817), Coleridge elaborates on the “clerkly” author’s work. Reflecting on the failure of the 1808 *Friend*, Coleridge reinvents the prose writer as a “scholar”: “Would that the criterion of a scholar’s utility were the number and moral value of his truths, which he has been the means of throwing into the general circulation; or the number and value of

the minds, whom by his conversation or letters he has excited into activity and supplied with the germs of their aftergrowth!" (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 7.1.220). Coleridge's model of the scholarly prose writer resembles Blair's concept of High Eloquence. In *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, Blair defines High Eloquence as a discourse of "good sense and solid thought" in which the speaker presents "some point...of public utility or good" (289). High Eloquence is a superior rhetorical genre in which the speaker's "power is exerted over the human mind" and "we enter into all of his emotions" (Blair 267). Just as Blair compares High Eloquence to the intensity of poetry, Coleridge's description of the prose author echoes his description of the poet who "brings the whole soul of man into activity" (Coleridge, *Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 7.2.15).

For Blair, preachers are the ideal practitioners of High Eloquence, and Coleridge's learned prose writer likewise speaks with the institutional authority of the pulpit. Coleridge, disgusted with the pressure to produce economically profitable books, looks to the Anglican Church as a haven for serious prose authors: "the church presents to every man of learning and genius a profession, in which he may cherish a rational hope of being able to unite the widest schemes of literary utility with the strictest performance of professional duties" (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 7.1.226)⁶⁰. Coleridge's Anglican priest "combin[es] weighty performances in literature with full and independent employment" because the preacher speaks from an authoritative position (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 7.1.225). For Coleridge, literary texts and vocational duties are intertwined because the preacher teaches cultural values in addition to religious instruction, a mandate that he stresses in *On the Constitution of Church and State*.

In *On the Constitution of Church and State* (1830), Coleridge places the "clerkly" prose writer within the fold of the Clerisy, an imagined institution of learned professionals, and highlights the importance of literature, or the *literae humaniores*, in the Clerisy's work. The Clerisy will consist of "the learned of all denominations...in short of all the so-called liberal arts and sciences, the possession and application of which constitutes the civilization of a country as well as the Theological" in a return to a "seventeenth-century model" of academic disciplines and institutions (Coleridge, *Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 10.46; Klancher, *The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790-1832* 165). Coleridge's Clerisy is both an institution of consecration charged with "cultivating and enlarging the knowledge already possessed" and an institution of dissemination whose members are "distributed throughout the country" as teachers (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 10.43). The Clerisy curates "literature" in the eighteenth-century sense of a multidisciplinary body of texts, but Coleridge notes that the "literae Humaniores," or "humanizing letters," are the strongest means of teaching the populace (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 10.54). Members of the Clerisy employ the "literae Humaniores" because these imaginative and philosophical texts "have an immediate and positive value... on the national interest." By tying literary texts to "the national interest," Coleridge grafts Schlegel's model of literature onto older models of disseminating knowledge in order to give the Clerisy an influential role in public life.

Coleridge has a conservative vision of literature's rhetorical functions: He wants a throwback to early modern organizations of knowledge and modes of disseminating texts. He projects a top-down model in which an educated "few" diffuse ideas among the "many" in order to unify the nation around a set of conservative religious and political values (Coleridge, *Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 10.48). His mission is "producing and reproducing,

in preserving...the necessary sources and conditions of national civilization" (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 10.54). Because of their centripetal tendencies and nostalgic appeals, Coleridge's clerical prose author and later institution of the Clerisy recall twentieth-century rhetorician Cynthia Sheard's concept of the "closed" epideictic mode.⁶¹ Sheard explains that this type of epideictic rhetoric "lends closure to a crisis" and "allows speaker and audience to feel good about themselves" through a reaffirmation of allegedly shared values (787). Coleridge, facing the economic crisis and cultural fragmentation after the Napoleonic Wars, likewise hopes to re/assemble readers around a common set of "principles" that preserve the British government, Anglican Church, and literature. The conservative, centripetal bent of Coleridge's literary vision culminates in the imagined institution of the Clerisy.

The Clerisy and the clerical prose author embrace ideological goals that Hazlitt, De Quincey, and Lamb largely reject. However, Coleridge's model of epideictic is not entirely "closed" because he finds the commercial, polemical print culture of the early nineteenth century incompatible with the formation of a Clerisy. Despite his confidence in *On the Constitution of Church and State*, Coleridge in his earlier texts questions whether the existing institutions can carry out these ideals and whether the prose writer can succeed without the support of the Clerisy. Coleridge's vision of the prose author as preacher in *Biographia*, as Frey observes, is more an idealization than a reflection of the real Anglican Church in the first decades of the nineteenth century. In the absence of the Clerisy as an institutional body, Coleridge attempts to play a one-man Clerisy with his writings, but in the 1809 and 1818 *Friend*, he remains uncertain of his success. As Coleridge debates with himself about the efficacy of literary authors over several decades, he proposes theories of prose writing and rhetorical moves that Hazlitt, De Quincey, and Lamb strategically appropriate. Coleridge's long-term uncertainties about his

authority, readers' competence, and language itself enable the other "prose declaimers" to create more decentralized prose forms from the centripetal model that Coleridge offers.

3.2 ***THE FRIEND: A ROMANTIC MODEL OF EPIDEICTIC RHETORIC***

As Coleridge's attempt at a periodical, *The Friend* puts forth an epideictic vision of literature's function and relation to politics. Coleridge, in his 1809 explanation of *The Friend*, defines his project as an attempt to change readers' cultural values: "It is my object to refer men to PRINCIPLES in all things; in Literature, in Fine Arts, in Morals, in Legislation, in Religion. Whatever therefore of a political nature maybe reduced to general principles, necessarily indeed dependent on the circumstances of a Nation internal and external, yet not especially connected with this year or the proceeding—this I do not exclude from my scheme" (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 4.2.13). His attention to "general principles" recalls Jeff Walker's definition of epideictic rhetoric as an attempt to affirm or challenges the "basic codes of value and belief by which a society or a culture lives" (*Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity* 9). Coleridge wants to change the opinions by which middle-class readers judge political debates, institutions and culture as a whole. He thus explores the relation between the "general principles" of politics and religion and the "circumstances of the Nation," the debates in Parliament and the specific decisions that result from them. However, in both the 1809 and 1818 versions of *The Friend*, Coleridge remains uncertain about his ability to transform readers into the ideal judges, and this uncertainty leads him to a theoretical investigation of rhetoric itself.

In this section, I read *The Friend* as Coleridge's most comprehensive attempt at rhetorical theory because his style and commentary about the purposes of prose writing, more than his

political and religious beliefs, inform Hazlitt, Lamb, and De Quincey's projects. While Coleridge intends *The Friend* as a vehicle for his philosophies, concerns about the style and situation of his writing consistently displace the teaching of "principles." I thus agree with Jerome Christensen that *The Friend* becomes "a test of language itself as a vehicle ...of communicating true principles"(Coleridge's *Blessed Machine of Language* 187). Before Coleridge can mold the ideal readership, he must evaluate the available means of persuading middle-class readers: early nineteenth-century periodicals. He intends to demonstrate the inefficacy of these publications but instead recognizes his dependence upon their techniques. Because Coleridge comes to assess the "how" of communicating principles over the "what" of his conservative agenda, *The Friend* approaches rhetorical theory.

By reading *The Friend* as rhetorical theory, I do not argue, like Victoria Meyers, Rex Veeder, and James Berlin, that Coleridge created a rhetoric manual and intervened in early nineteenth-century debates about rhetoric as an academic discipline.⁶² Rather, Coleridge is as reluctant a rhetorician as Aristotle at the beginning of *Rhetoric*.⁶³ Coleridge, like Aristotle, prefers dialectic over rhetoric, and he adopts rhetoric only to compensate for what he sees as the shortcomings of the network where his texts circulate. Coleridge states in the 1809 *Friend* that "My system compels me to make every fair appeal to the Feelings, the Imagination, and even the Fancy" (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 4.2.31). In other words, he wants to teach readers the "emotions which arise in a well-ordered mind" and "are always proceeded by thought and linked with improvement" through philosophical demonstration but realizes that this approach won't succeed with the majority of the "reading public" who, he alleges, have been schooled in superficial habits of reading (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 4.1.15).

Like Aristotle tentatively admitting the necessity of emotional appeals, Coleridge plans to use rhetoric only for the purposes of conveying more important philosophical principles.

The introduction to the 1818 *Friend* demonstrates Coleridge's grudging adoption of rhetoric in order to reach middle-class readers:

In respect to the entertainingness of moral writing, if in entertainment be included whatever delights the imagination or affects the generous passions, so far from rejecting such a mean of persuading the human soul, my very system compels me to defend not only the propriety but the absolute necessity of adopting it, if we really intend to render our fellow-creatures better or wiser." (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 4.1.10)

This passage resembles Aristotle's complaint in *Rhetoric* that rhetoric is necessary because philosophical "instruction is impossible" when "conversing with the multitude" (Aristotle 1.1.12). Coleridge reluctantly chooses rhetoric as the best means of "persuading the human soul" and admits the power of "entertainingness" to move readers. Like Wordsworth's poet who must "descend from his supposed height" in order to speak the "real language of men," Coleridge the philosopher must adopt the persona of the "Friend" who educates and entertains readers (Wordsworth, "Preface" 404). This "Friend" will speak "in *praise and in blame*, in close reasoning and in impassioned *declamation*"--in short, as an epideictic rhetor (Coleridge, *Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 4.1.33). Coleridge thus sets up an experiment to use magazine techniques to discuss weighty political and religious issues. His rhetorical theory emerges as the problems attending the experiment itself displace the teaching of principles.

Addressing the poor reception of the 1809 periodical, Coleridge further frames the 1818 book-length *Friend* as an investigation into "the communication of the Truth," a phrase that

recalls the eighteenth-century rhetorical paradigm adopted by both the Scottish rhetoricians and middle-class radicals like William Godwin (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 4.1.39). Coleridge wants *The Friend* to teach religious and political “truths,” but he doubts that such principles can be communicated to readers without misinterpretation: “To convey truth is not merely to say it,” Coleridge argues in a passage that seems to contradict Godwin’s command in *Political Justice* that rhetors must “disclose the whole system of political and moral truth” through plain language and logical arguments (Coleridge, *Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 4.1.43; Godwin, *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*, 1793 4.1.112). While Coleridge and the eighteenth-century theorists agree that “the intentions of the speaker” and the audience’s interpretation can distort this “truth,” the discrepancy between a rhetor’s words and “his thoughts in the sense in which he expects them to be understood by others” presents a greater political and moral danger to Coleridge (Coleridge, *Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 4.1.42). Coleridge’s distrust of eighteenth-century rhetorics leads him back to classical rhetoric in order to theorize the difficulty of directly communicating “truth.”

Christensen calls Coleridge a “post Enlightenment author” and a promoter of “sophistic play” for his refutation of the eighteenth-century rhetorical paradigm of communication (*Coleridge’s Blessed Machine of Language* 16). Christensen suggests that Coleridge embraces the skepticism of the ancient sophists despite his refutation of them, but I argue that Coleridge also returns to the civic, persuasive forms of classical rhetoric represented by Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian and taught in British grammar schools. For example, he paraphrases Book 12 of Quintilian’s *Institutions of Oratory* to bolster the “Friend’s” goodness and sincerity: “There is no fellowship of honour and baseness in the same breast and to combine the best and the worst designs is no more possible in one mind, than it is for the same man to be at the same instant

virtuous and vicious” (Coleridge, *Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 4.1.34).⁶⁴

Coleridge uses Quintilian’s concept of the “good man speaking” to justify rhetoric as a “truthful” means of teaching his principles. In “On the Origin and the Progress of the Sect Called Sophists in Greece,” Coleridge simultaneously depicts classical rhetorics as manipulation and as a way of debunking manipulative discourse: On the one hand, he condemns ancient sophists as “mere empty disputants and slight of word jugglers” who fail to communicate truth and instead serve what he sees as dishonest, socially destructive ends (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 4.1.437). On the other hand, he recognizes the necessity of rhetoric in all human communication. Coleridge works through the problem of rhetoric not only to illuminate the inherently unstable nature of language itself, as Christensen argues, but also to criticize the political and commercial institutions that impede the communication of “truth” in early nineteenth-century society. *The Friend* or the “Friend” comes to rely upon classical rhetoric as a “truthful” means of persuasion.

Coleridge’s refutation of eighteenth-century rhetorics, classical borrowings, and need to invent a new system of writing drive Hazlitt, Lamb and De Quincey’s projects, which I discuss in subsequent chapters. As stated above, some of Coleridge’s concepts predate the *Friend*, so the other “prose declaimers” were in dialogue with his evolving theories and practice of literary prose. Hazlitt, for example, draws on Coleridge’s critique of William Pitt to paint the paralyzing consequences of eighteenth-century rhetorics on Members of Parliament who substitute elaborate displays of knowledge for responsible political decisions. Lamb’s Elia persona enacts Coleridge’s claim to return to “my Catechism and my Spelling-book” because he plays a schoolboy declaimer who repurposes rote classical exercises to comic, timely ends (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 4.2.15). De Quincey also takes up Coleridge’s critique of

eighteenth-century rhetorics in his concept of literature that communicates power, which I discuss below. Although *The Friend* failed as a magazine, Hazlitt, De Quincey, and Lamb selectively translate Coleridge's rhetorical outlook to their projects as periodical authors.

3.3 COLERIDGEAN RHETORICAL PRINCIPLES

In addition to Coleridge's critique of eighteenth-century rhetorics, the "prose declaimers" share with Coleridge a set of stylistic criteria and textual strategies for prose writing. Coleridge experiments with new moves in his desire to teach "principles" that cannot be taught directly. In defending his experiment from critics' charges of obscurity, Coleridge theorizes his practice into what I call "Coleridgean rhetorical principles." In this section, I discuss the innovation of commonplaces, argument as inquiry, the figure of the active reader, and the return to seventeenth-century prose styles as the rhetorical principles that Hazlitt, Lamb, and De Quincey rearticulate in their work.

3.3.1 "Old and Venerable Truths"

Because he addresses the cultural "principles" behind current political debates and institutions, the Coleridgean prose writer is primarily an innovator of commonplaces, or one who reinterprets old ideas and rearticulates their lasting merit to the community. In the introduction to the 1818 *Friend*, Coleridge explains that he "discovered a new world of intellectual profit" in older English philosophy and religious beliefs that middle-class readers take for granted (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 4.1.13). In his 1809 *Friend* essay on "The Liberty of the

Press," Coleridge fears that readers will take him for a "school-boy declaimer on old and worn-out Truisms," but he asserts that "in Philosophy equally in as in Poetry, Genius produces the strongest impressions of novelty, while it rescues the stalest and most admitted universal admissions" (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 4.2.74). Coleridge, who gives his prose writing the highest title of "philosophy," explains that "worn-out" cultural values have complexities which have been glossed over by their repetition in daily discourse, including the aforesaid school exercises. Like the Wordsworthian poet, who illuminates "situations from common life" by "tracing in them...the primary laws of our nature" through the "colouring of Imagination," the prose writer's mission is to "represent familiar objects so as to awaken the minds of others to a like freshness of sensation" (Wordsworth, "Preface" 392; Coleridge, *Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 4.2.73). Through this re-presentation of commonplaces, the prose writer reaffirms shared values and produces new texts.

Coleridge's adaptation of biblical passages to describe contemporary events demonstrates his renovation of commonplaces. For instance, in the *Lay Sermon*, he cites Isaiah 32:5-8 to condemn the "political empirics" of early nineteenth-century British reformers who pushed for political change after the French Revolution: "The instruments of the churl are evil: he deviseth wicked devices to destroy the poor with lying words, even when the needy speaketh aright" (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 6.142). Coleridge, as a preacher of "High Eloquence," universalizes Isaiah's observation in order to apply it to reformers' alleged manipulation of the poor in contemporary British society: "it is our duty, to examine with a more attentive eye this representative portrait drawn for us by an infallible master" (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 6.143). With this move, he amplifies the *topos* of the churl through caricatures of early nineteenth-century reformers and radicals, such as "worthless persons of little

or no estimation for rank, learning, or integrity," "professional men of shewy accomplishments," and orators who cultivate "an eloquence well calculated to set the multitude agape and excite *gratis* to overt-acts of sedition or treason" (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 6.144, 145). Critics like Deidre Coleman have observed that Coleridge alludes to politicians like William Cobbett and Henry Hunt, who published reformist pamphlets and defended radical authors in court.⁶⁵ He ends the variations upon Isaiah's theme with further comments on the spread of radical politics in modern print culture: "Whether in spoken or printed Addresses, whether in periodical Journals or in yet cheaper instruments of irritation, the ends are the same.... [to alienate the masses] from the government of their country" (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 6.147–148). Coleridge in this passage analyzes the multiple media—oratory, books, periodicals, and “cheaper” pamphlets like Cobbett's *Political Register*—through which reformers address their audiences. By emphasizing the allegedly divisive, "seditious" nature of these texts, he plays up the unifying, epideictic impulses of his own "clerkly" project and its power to heal an unstable postwar society. In his effort to rally readers around conservative "principles," Coleridge not only embellishes a biblical *topos* with contemporary examples but also uses a scripture passage to explore the broader values and practices that enable his "churlish" opponents

3.3.2 “The Flux and Reflux of the Mind”: Rhetoric as Inquiry

What's new about the Coleridgean prose writer's performance is the arrangement of his thoughts, the new connections that he makes between disparate concepts. For Coleridge, prose writing is as much a dramatization of the author's thoughts as a communication of new ideas to readers.⁶⁶ Coleridge, by emphasizing active thought, revises the rhetorical canon of arrangement,

or the organization of ideas in a discourse. Coleridge in *The Friend* and as the “Friend” records “whatever had occurred to me, and all the Flux and Reflux of my mind within itself”(*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 4.2.17). In this 1809 reflection on the genesis of *The Friend*, he defines arrangement as a process of inquiry. He acts as “the Biographer of my own sentiments [rather] than the Legislator of the opinions of other men” (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 4.2.8). Coleridge makes the writer’s voice in the text, what rhetoricians call *ethos* and what John Wilson at *Blackwood’s Magazine* called “personality,” the ground for a successful performance.⁶⁷ In the 1818 *Friend*, Coleridge clarifies the importance of the speaking person in the text and defends the efficacy of first-person statements over the “arrogance” of “tu-isms and elle-isms” that characterize 1810s periodical prose (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 4.1.26). Not only does the first-person voice connect with readers, but it also allows the writer to represent his thoughts as an active process.

Excursus and “Method” are the “Friend’s” distinct, yet interrelated, strategies for dramatizing thoughts or setting the “manner” of the discourse above the “matter” to be communicated. *Excursus* is the classical figure of digression, while “Method” is a refined dramatization of thoughts in which the author’s thoughts only *appear* haphazard.⁶⁸ Coleridge and Wordsworth in the first decades of the nineteenth century both believed that effective discourse imitated the writer’s train of thoughts. Wordsworth in “Reply to Mathetes,” published in the *Friend*, proposes *excursus* as a means of responding to contemporary political and cultural debates. Wordsworth, writing as the “Friend,” responds to a letter by John Wilson, who became a major *Blackwood’s Magazine* contributor. Wilson, writing as the young “Mathetes,” scorns the “degeneracy” of British society following the French Revolution and seeks a “teacher” to guide him through the political and cultural upheavals of the early 1800s (*Collected Works of Samuel*

Taylor Coleridge 4.2.222, 228). However, Wordsworth refutes Mathetes' concept of a guide who supplies readers with ready-made answers: The best such a leader can do is to “preserve for [readers] an unbroken image of the winding, excursive, and often retrograde course along which his own intellect had passed”(*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 4.2.268). In other words, the author reflects on his own process of thought and models an inquiry for readers who must undertake their own. Wordsworth places *excursus* at the heart of the prose writer's practice and public duties. Although Wordsworth himself would model such an inquiry in *The Excursion* (1814) and in his ongoing *Prelude* project, writing that captures the “winding, excursive” course of thought is integral to Romantic prose authors' projects as well.

However, Coleridgean rhetorical arrangement is no undisciplined “art of wa/ondering,” to paraphrase William Covino, and *excursus* coexists with “Method,” a more orderly form of dramatizing thoughts. The effective prose author cultivates “Method” to dramatize thoughts in writing⁶⁹. In the “Essays on Method” from the 1818 *Friend*, Coleridge intends to reconcile empirical philosophies with idealist philosophies. Method is the “science common to all sciences” that will unite these disparate theories of knowledge and the academic disciplines that grew out of them (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 4.1.460). He chastises early nineteenth-century disciplines like botany which consist of simply describing natural phenomena. Instead, scientists should study “the relations of things either to each other or to the observer or the state of apprehension of the hearer,” the connections which constitute the writerly practice of “Method” (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 4.1.449). By focusing on relationships over the discovery of discrete facts, “Method” privileges the “manner,” or process of inquiry, over the “matter” to be communicated. With Method, scientists and scholars make new connections between seemingly disparate phenomena and resolve apparent opposites or

"polarities." For Coleridge, Method not only helps scientists to recognize similarities across disciplines but also to recognize the transcendent "truths" of his religious and political philosophy.

Coleridge envisions Method as a system that will unite disparate fields of knowledge, but he grants literature or the *literae humaniores* a primary role in fostering Method and hence improving emergent scientific fields. In the first "Essay on Method," Coleridge treats it as an "art of discourse" using examples from Shakespeare's plays and Edmund Burke's oratory. (Christensen, *Coleridge's Blessed Machine of Language* 233). Reflecting on Burke's combination of deep thoughts and emotional appeals, Coleridge observes that "It is in the unpremeditated and evidently habitual arrangement of his words, grounded on foreseeing, in each integral part...the whole he intends to communicate. However irregular and desultory his talk, there is method in his fragments" (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 4.1.449). The literary prose author only seems to represent "desultory" thoughts in writing which are united by a common inquiry, which Coleridge terms the "staple" or "leading question" (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 4.1.455). With this leading thought, the "Methodical" writer examines the "union and interpenetration of the universal and the particular," a capacity that Coleridge associates with literary texts that explore the cultural values that underwrite interpretations of specific cases or empirical evidence (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 4.1.455). He encourages scientists and philosophers to master Method through the study of literary authors like Shakespeare and Burke. With Method, Coleridge disciplines the dramatization of thought in writing and validates literary prose as a serious discourse.

3.3.3 “My Reader, My Fellow-Labourer”: The Figure of the Active Reader

The third Coleridgean rhetorical principle is the figure of the active reader, which follows from Coleridge's belief in prose writing as a dramatization of thoughts. In the 1818 *Friend*, Coleridge explains that the only way to change readers' values is to change their habits of thinking: effective writers do not so much “shew [the] reader this or that fact, as to kindle his own torch for him and leave it to himself to chuse the particular objects he might wish to examine” (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 4.1.46). The writer's Methodical inquiry invites readers to become “fellow-labourers” who make meaning from the discourse by developing their own inquiries (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 4.1.21).

Coleridge argues for the readers' participation in contradistinction to what he sees as their passive role in eighteenth-century rhetorics. Hugh Blair, for example, asserts that an effective writer will “free [readers] from all fatigue of searching for his meaning” with a style that “always flows like a limpid stream, where we see to the very bottom”(100). In Coleridge's opinion, proponents of clarity like Blair prefer that writers communicate “without demanding any additional thought” from readers, and he argues that readers should work to grasp complex concepts for themselves (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 4.1.21). *The Friend* or the “Friend” attempts to create a new middle-class constituency by enlisting them as participants in his political, religious, and philosophical inquiries. Despite his conservative values and desire to vindicate dominant institutions, Coleridge presents a more liberating model of the reader than that of classical epideictic rhetoric or eighteenth-century rhetorics, a model more in keeping with the multivocal, participatory dynamics of early nineteenth-century magazines.

The arrangement of the 1818 *Friend* demonstrates Coleridge's figure of the active reader. In this book-length version, Coleridge creates an anthology of his political, religious, and

aesthetic “principles.” He pairs abstract political and philosophical essays with what he terms “Landing Places” or “essays interposed for amusement, retrospect, and preparation” (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 4.1.339). These “Landing Places” are historical, narrative pieces, such as the comparison of “Erasmus and Voltaire,” the didactic “Story of Maria Eleonora Schoning,” and the “Life of Sir Alexander Ball.” By following Coleridge’s motions of mind as he evaluates specific people and events, readers are encouraged to apply his abstract theoretical “principles” to concrete situations and literary performances. Moreover, the “Essays on Method” appear in the final third of the collection. According to Christensen, Coleridge places the “Method” essays towards the end in order to persuade readers to create unity from disparate essays: “It is as if amidst the digressions, fragments, epigraphs, plagiarisms, and metaphors, method had been active all along” (*Coleridge’s Blessed Machine of Language* 238). Readers are made to find order among the seemingly random assortment of texts that comprise *The Friend* and to recognize their role, alongside the author’s, in creating this unity.⁷⁰ With this arrangement, “The Friend” or *The Friend* presents his principles, tests readers’ ability to apply these principles to the interpretation of new situations, and validates their strategies of reading as instances of “Method.”

3.3.4 Reviving “Our Elder Writers”: Seventeenth-Century Styles

Coleridge looks back to the seventeenth century—before England’s 1688 revolution and the more gradual “revolution” in scientific thinking—for an engaging prose style that conveys nuanced ideas. This revival of seventeenth-century prose styles participates in the recovery of so-called “Metaphysical” literature at the turn of the nineteenth century. William St. Clair notes that the works of seventeenth-century authors were rarely published during the eighteenth century,⁷¹

and eighteenth-century rhetoricians saw the intricate syntax, complex metaphors, and copious wordplay of Metaphysical writers like Thomas Browne, Jeremy Taylor, and Thomas Hooker as inadequate for communicating knowledge. Godwin, for example, compares this style to "the solecisms of the ancient Britons running naked in the woods" (*The Enquirer: Reflections on Education, Manners, and Literature*. 475). Like other critics, Godwin champions the "energy and vigour" of Samuel Johnson's prose because it employs short, balanced, antithetical sentences to efficiently convey information: "We have disburdened ourselves of the useless load of words that encumbered our predecessors and express our thought in precise words, directly flowing from the subject to be treated" (*The Enquirer: Reflections on Education, Manners, and Literature*. 474).

In contrast to critics like Godwin, Coleridge champions the seventeenth-century prose writers in the *Lay Sermon* to argue the necessity of a "learned class" in his own time: "in any half-dozen sermons of Dr. [John] Donne or Jeremy Taylor, there are more thoughts...more excitements to inquiry and intellectual effort, than are presented to congregations of the present day" (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 6.197). Because seventeenth-century prose writers were preachers as well as authors, Coleridge suggests that they were "popular" orators whose sermons "actuate the understandings of men" through a complex style and theological inquiry (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 6.200). Seventeenth-century authors fulfill the educational functions of the "learned class" because they reach socially diverse, non-expert audiences through their sermons. Coleridge laments that these purposes are lacking in early nineteenth-century preaching and print culture. He believes that a revival of seventeenth-century preaching and writing styles would create a middle-class readership who is receptive to his political and religious "principles."

In the 1818 *Friend*, Coleridge explicitly allies his obscure style with seventeenth-century authors. He asserts that the older style of long sentences and complex figures is the best means of stirring readers to thought. Here, Coleridge defends his style in contrast to the short, balanced sentences of the Johnsonian style:

Doubtless too, I have in some measure injured my style, in respect to its facility and popularity, from having almost confined my reading of late years, to the works of the Ancients and those the elder Writers in our modern languages. We insensibly imitate what we habitually admire; and an aversion to the epigrammatic, unconnected periods of the fashionable *Anglo-Gallican* taste has too often made me willing to forget, that the stately march and difficult evolutions of Hooker, Bacon, Milton, and Jeremy Taylor are, notwithstanding their intrinsic excellence, still less suited to a periodical essay. This fault I am now endeavoring to correct; though I can never so far sacrifice my judgment to the desire of being immediately popular as to cast my sentences in French moulds, or affect a style which an ancient critic would have deemed purposely invented for persons troubled with the asthma to read, and for those to comprehend who labour under the more pitiable asthma of a short-witted intellect. (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 4.1.20)

In this mock apology, Coleridge frames his appropriation of the seventeenth-century style as classical *imitatio*, or imitation exercises; he models his writing after authors he admires, although this complex style does not suit the conventions of periodical prose. Coleridge plays the neoclassical proponents of Johnson against themselves by stating that the “ancient critics” would not approve of short, balanced sentences. In a conflation of oral and written modes of

performance, Coleridge asserts that short sentences encourage a mental “asthma” in readers who are unable to connect thoughts, while the “stately march and difficult evolutions” of seventeenth-century prose stimulate readers’ thinking. He later explains that long, intricate sentences provide “the cement of thought” and encourage readers to slow down in order to connect competing ideas, rather than rushing to grasp the next set of facts (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 4.1.20).

Notice, too, that Coleridge frames his endorsement of seventeenth-century styles as a nationalist statement. He calls the Johnsonian style an “Anglo-Gallican taste” and “French moulds,” linking the “talent of communicating [one’s] thoughts with grace and perspicuity” to politically subversive, foreign models (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 4.1.21). Not only is this statement a powerful emotional appeal in the period following the Napoleonic Wars—Coleridge repudiates a “Jacobin” style that could be used to inflame the masses—but he also gestures to the French roots of the Scottish rhetorical tenet of perspicuity that influences early nineteenth-century theories of style.⁷² For Coleridge, the long, complex sentences of the Metaphysical authors represent a truly “English” style that adapts the highest ideals of classical rhetoric to vernacular prose. He positions himself within an invented tradition that bypasses the foreign (French, Scottish) rhetorical innovations in favor of the classical rhetoric practiced by Oxbridge and the Anglican Church. For Coleridge, the seventeenth-century style reinforces the dominant cultural values in spite of and because of its verbal complexities.

The politics of Coleridge's stylistic preference are most apparent in his comparison of Edmund Burke and Thomas Paine. In the 1809 *Friend*, Coleridge contrasts these disparate orators in order to validate *The Friend's* intellectual complexity. For Coleridge, Burke's "eloquence has taken away for Englishmen all cause of humiliation from the names of

Demosthenes and Cicero" (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 4.2.21). Like the seventeenth-century writers, Burke "has almost uniformly made the most original and profound principles of political wisdom and even the recondite laws of human passions, bear upon particular...events" (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 4.2.21–22). Burke is a master orator on par with both the seventeenth-century preachers and the ancient classical rhetoricians. By contrast, Coleridge accuses Paine of narrow-mindedness in his effort to move readers to action. Paine resembles the asthmatic reader of short, balanced sentences: "the illiterate Perpetrator of the 'Age of the Reason' must have had...his common-sense over-clouded by the vapours from his Heart" (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 4.2.35). Paine is stifled by a plain style and the suffocating "vapours" of wild emotional appeals. As the class-based insult "illiterate" suggests, Coleridge blasts Paine for his radical politics and condemns his "language and manner...avowedly calculated for the illiterate (and perhaps licentious) part of his Countrymen." Whereas Paine pushes audiences to question the status quo, or "unsettle[s] a general belief closely connected with public...quiet," the eloquent Burke is among "the Upholders of the Government and society in their existing State" (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 4.2.35, 22). Coleridge equates Burke's complex style and philosophical insights with his conservative politics and frames Burke as the inheritor of an elite classical tradition. Coleridge's praise and appropriation of early modern prose fulfills the conservative mission of *The Friend*, because he uses elite, classically educated writers to oppose popular forms of political rhetoric and the "radical" values associated with them.

Coleridge's rhetorical principles, or his techniques for prose writing, participate in the early nineteenth-century transformation of epideictic rhetoric from the articulation of unified set of values to a literary discourse capable of negotiating disparate social "voices." Although

Coleridge uses the renovation of commonplaces, the dramatization of thought through *excursus* and method, appeals to active readers, and seventeenth-century styles to recontain competing perspectives and promote his conservative values, the other “prose declaimers” adapt these rhetorical principles to create more decentralized models of prose writing. In the next section, I explore how De Quincey, Lamb, and Hazlitt transform Coleridgean prose “principles” in response to the emergent institution of literary magazines.

3.4 VARIATIONS ON “COLERIDGEAN RHETORICAL PRINCIPLES”

Coleridgean rhetorical principles resurface in the concepts that today’s scholars associate with Romantic prose writers including De Quincey’s “Literature of Power,” Lamb’s “Imperfect Sympathies,” and Hazlitt’s critique of the William Pitt administration. These Romantic essayists extend Coleridge’s thinking about the style and purpose of literary prose even as they deviate from his political goals. De Quincey and Lamb apply Coleridgean rhetorical principles to the literary magazines that he found lacking, and Hazlitt adapts Coleridge’s theories in service of a politically oppositional literary prose project.

3.4.1 Coleridge, De Quincey, and the “Literature of Power

De Quincey’s “Letters to a Young Man Whose Education has Been Neglected” (*London Magazine* 1823), a series of pedagogical essays on languages, literature, and philosophy, extend Coleridge’s prose project. Writing in the wake of the *London Magazine* editor John Scott’s death, De Quincey sharpens Coleridge’s definition of literature in order to preserve the *London’s*

mission to teach cultural values through the criticism of literature. De Quincey advises a hypothetical self-taught mercantile man, just as Coleridge teaches his “principles” to middle-class readers, but he separates the “prose declaimer” from the dominant religious and political institutions.

Coleridge is an important “prior utterance” in De Quincey’s “Letters” from the beginning. De Quincey opens by citing Coleridge’s assertion in *Biographia* that literature is not a “means of sufficiently occupying and exercising the intellect” (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 3.43). He refutes Coleridge’s argument and transfers the power of the Clerisy to the institution of the literary magazine and the position of the critic: “Literature must decay unless we have a class wholly dedicated to that service, not pursuing it as an amusement only with [the] wearied and preoccupied minds” of preachers and theologians (DeQuincey, *The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 3.48). This “class” of authors writing for magazines like the *London* is charged with cultivating literature as an index and shaper of cultural values. From the opening salvo of the “Letters,” De Quincey modifies Coleridge’s project by carving distinct positions for the prose writer and literary magazines.

In outlining the duties of the magazine, De Quincey cites Coleridge’s concept of *literae humaniores* in his third letter. This letter, which purports to be about the study of foreign languages, is famous for De Quincey’s assertion that “all, that is literature, seeks to communicate power; all, that is not literature, to communicate knowledge” (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 3. 71). The division between knowledge and power has Coleridgean roots because De Quincey, like Coleridge, distrusts the eighteenth-century model of rhetoric as communication. In summarizing the distinction between “literature” and “books of knowledge,” De Quincey refers to the “literae humaniores”: “I shall use the antithesis power and knowledge [sic] as the most

philosophical expression for literature (i.e. *Literae Humaniores*) and anti-literature (i.e. *Literae didacticae*—*paedia*)”(*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 3.71). The “anti-literature” or “literature of knowledge, corresponds to texts that communicate facts. De Quincey equates literary texts, by contrast, with the “humanizing letters” that Coleridge associates with the Clerisy.

In addition to evoking Coleridge’s phrase, De Quincey refines the *literae humaniores* in his distinction between “knowledge” and “power.” In a Coleridgean move, he desynonymizes “literature” from “*paedia*,” or texts that communicate facts:

“All, that is literature, seeks to communicate power....Now, if it be asked by what name a man would designate the case in which I should be made to feel vividly, and with a vital consciousness, emotions which ordinary life rarely or never supplies occasions for exciting ,and which had previously lain unawakened and hardly within the dawn of consciousness—as myriads of modes of feeling are at this moment in every human mind for want of a power to organize them? –I saw, when these inert and sleeping forms are *organized*-when these possibilities *are* actualized,--is this conscious and living possession of mind *power* or what is it?

(*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 3.71)

De Quincey, following Schlegel’s philosophy, establishes “Literature” as a discourse that moves readers to feel emotions that exist in “every human mind” and displays his own “Power” through this series of rhetorical questions. Although the “Literature of Power” has been described as a stereotypical model of “Romantic” literature, De Quincey focuses less on the outpouring of the author’s personal feelings and more on the coordination of emotional appeals as demonstrated by his repetition of the word “organized.”⁷³ Readers are “made to feel vividly” through the poet’s intensified arrangement of allegedly universal feelings. By adapting Coleridge’s model of

literature as a rhetorical performance, De Quincey creates a distinct position for prose authors and the study of literature. As I explain in Chapter 6, De Quincey further modifies these concepts when he writes for *Blackwood's Magazine*.

3.4.2 Coleridge and Lamb's "Suggestive" Style

Although he offers "sly critiques of the central dogmas of Romanticism," or the Wordsworthian-Coleridgean model of poetry, Lamb adapts Coleridgean rhetorical principles in his performances as the quirky Elia (Monsman, *Confessions of a Prosaic Dreamer* 16). Not only do Lamb and his persona share Coleridge's praise of seventeenth-century authors, they also share his distrust of the eighteenth-century rhetorical paradigm rooted in communication.⁷⁴ In an unpublished 1821 review of Hazlitt's *Table Talk*, Lamb, writing as himself, extends Coleridge's preference for the first-person voice. He describes a canon of essayists, Plutarch, Montaigne, Addison and Hazlitt, who are united by their excursive display of thoughts and appeals to readers.⁷⁵ For example, Hazlitt "acts all along as his own interpreter,...continually translating his thoughts out of their metaphysical obscurity," just as the Coleridgean writer is the "biographer" of his thoughts (Charles Lamb, "Review of Table Talk by William Hazlitt" 307). For Lamb, the character of the author, often a fictional persona, is "the charm which binds us in his writing" ("Review of Table Talk by William Hazlitt" 300). In rhetoricians' terms, both Lamb and Coleridge privilege the writer's *ethos* and *pathos* over the *logos*, or "message."

Moreover, Lamb's Elia essay "Imperfect Sympathies" (*London Magazine* August 1821), which some critics interpret as Lamb's *ars poetica*, illustrates his modification of Coleridgean rhetorical principles.⁷⁶ Lamb criticizes eighteenth-century Scottish rhetoricians for their emphasis on rhetoric as perspicuous communication. He caricatures a typical Scottish orator:

You are never permitted to see his ideas in their growth—if, indeed they do grow, and are not rather put together upon the principles of clock-work. You never catch his mind in an undress. He never hints or suggests any thing but unlades his stock of ideas in perfect order and completeness. He brings his total wealth into company, and gravely unpacks it...He never stops to catch a glittering something in your presence, to share it with you, before he quite knows whether it be true touch or not....He has no falterings of self-suspicion. Surmises, guesses, misgivings, half-intuitions, semi-consciousnesses, partial illuminations, dim intuitions, embryo conceptions, have no place in his brain, or vocabulary. (*Essays of Elia* 137)

In this passage, Lamb criticizes the “Caledonian’s” commitment to the communication of “truth,” which results in a “clock-work” style. This static display of “his wealth” lacks the nuance of “surmises,” “self-suspicion,” and interactions with readers that both Lamb and Coleridge prefer.

Lamb's concept of the "suggestive" mind resembles Coleridge's praise of Edmund Burke in *The Friend*. Lamb suggests that the rhetor must "share" a "glittering something" with the reader in order to have a meaningful performance, just as Burke inspires audiences and readers to rethink political debates through his deployment of figures and reworking of commonplaces. The Elian rhetor engages the audience in a “conversation” that they co-create; he treats readers as “fellow-labourers.”⁷⁷ For Lamb, as for Coleridge, the performance of the essay—the author’s uncertainties and interactions with the audience—becomes as important as the argument itself.⁷⁸ Readers “witness [the writer’s] first apprehension of a thing” and participate in the author’s process of inquiry.

However, Lamb's "suggestive" model of discourse deviates from Coleridge's prose project because he welcomes a radical uncertainty that Coleridge prefers to resolve. "Suggestive" thinkers propose "hints and glimpses, germs and crude *essays* at a system," a description that hints at Lamb's identification with older essay writers like Montaigne (*Essays of Elia* 136). They "will throw out a random word in or out of season, and be content to let it pass for what it's worth....They seldom wait to mature a proposition, but e'en bring it to market in a green ear. They delight to impart their defective discoveries as they arise, without waiting for their full development." The randomness of Lamb's prose author and rejection of system clash with Coleridge's Method in which a discourse only *seems* haphazard and open-ended. While Coleridge's Methodical writer uses the appearance of scattered thoughts to bring readers to an apprehension of philosophical "truths", Lamb's "Suggestive" writer offers "a random word" or potentially "defective discoveries" and embarks on a performance with genuinely uncertain outcomes.

Whereas Coleridge condescends to the essay as an "entertaining" means of reaching readers, Lamb makes the essayistic form an end in itself. As Tim Milnes observes, Lamb engages in an "attempt, in the face of a culture increasingly driven by the dissemination of knowledge, to cultivate an imaginative space the reverse of the knowing or 'philosophical'" (324). Lamb's embrace of a Keatsian "negative capability" is at odds with the certainty and cultural unity for which Coleridge strives in prose projects like the *Friend*. What's most important about Lamb's "indifference" to philosophical certainty is that his model of prose is more amenable to literary magazines than Coleridge's. Lamb's embrace of uncertainty and rhetorical play participate in post Napoleonic magazines' attempts to evaluate and orchestrate competing voices. While he shares Coleridge's desire to create a literary prose capable of

moving readers to active thought, Lamb makes Coleridgean rhetorical principles serve opposing philosophical, and sometimes oppositional political, goals. As I argue in Chapter 5, Lamb demonstrates how classical rhetorical exercises, rote schoolboy practices, can do more than affirm the conventional wisdom of the early nineteenth-century middle classes.

3.4.3 Coleridge, Hazlitt, and the “Mechanical” William Pitt

Despite their opposing politics, Coleridge is a significant "prior utterance" in Hazlitt's thinking about political oratory, which I discuss in the next chapter. Hazlitt responds to Coleridgean rhetorical principles, broadly articulated since the turn of the nineteenth century, in his career-long criticism of British Parliamentary rhetoric. For example, in "My First Acquaintance with Poets" (1823), Hazlitt depicts a dinner conversation in which a young Coleridge contrasts Burke with the Scottish MP James MacKintosh: "Burke was an orator (almost a poet) who reasoned in figures, because he had an eye for nature; MacKintosh, on the other hand, was a rhetorician, who had only an eye to commonplaces" (Hazlitt, *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 17.111). Young Hazlitt assents to Coleridge's "great opinion" of Burke, and in a *Spirit of the Age* sketch, a mature Hazlitt reuses Coleridge's distinction between "commonplaces" and "reasoning in figures" to elevate Coleridge himself above MacKintosh. Even as he objects to the mature Coleridge's conservatism, Hazlitt agrees with the poet's desire for a literary prose that transcends the empty commonplaces of political oratory, and Coleridge's early critique of William Pitt is central to Hazlitt's project.

As I describe in the next chapter, William Pitt, the longstanding Prime Minister of the early 1800s, "is a critical term which condenses a whole system of values" for Hazlitt, and he draws upon Coleridge's March 1800 sketch of Pitt in *The Morning Post* (Paulin 28). In this

editorial, Coleridge condemns the minister who "persuaded himself and the nation, that extemporaneous arrangement of sentences was eloquence" and led Britain into a prolonged war with France (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 1.222). Pitt recycles "phrases which he had learnt from Mr. Burke" to produce vapid, yet politically efficacious, speeches that reiterate conservative commonplaces (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 1.223). His speeches lack the development of thought that Coleridge associates with Burke. Pitt's "eloquence consisted not in the ready application of a general system to particular questions, but in the facility of arguing for or against any question by specious generalities without reference to any system" (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 1.222). Because Pitt lacks philosophical "principles" and merely rehashes the dominant wisdom in eloquent phrases, Coleridge considers him a sophist bent on manipulating the public and winning praise for his speeches.

Hazlitt echoes Coleridge's charges in his 1806 pamphlet *Free Thoughts on Public Affairs*, which Hazlitt redacted for a sketch of Pitt in his parliamentary anthology *Eloquence of the British Senate*. Hazlitt cites the "masterly and unanswerable essay on this subject in the Morning Post, by Coleridge" in his portrait of Pitt as an orator manqué ("Free Thoughts on Public Affairs" 18). Like Coleridge, Hazlitt blasts the minister's lack of thought, "artificial use of words," "dexterity of logical arrangement," and "unmeaning common-places," while he surveys the detrimental consequences of this reduced rhetoric on the nation ("Free Thoughts on Public Affairs" 15, 17). Pitt, Hazlitt asserts, "had none of the profound, legislative wisdom...or rich, impetuous, high-wrought imagination of Burke" ("Free Thoughts on Public Affairs" 17). While I discuss Hazlitt's critique of Pitt's oratory in greater detail in the next chapter, what I want to stress here is Hazlitt's affinity with Coleridgean rhetorical principles: Both Hazlitt and Coleridge condemn Pitt's reliance on empty commonplaces. Both attribute Pitt's failures to the rote forms

of classical education in the early nineteenth century. Both use the flawed example of Pitt to champion models of rhetoric that dramatize the orator's train of thought to address complex issues.

Coleridge's desire for a complex prose rhetoric drives Hazlitt's criticism of early nineteenth-century literature, politics, and culture, but Hazlitt, like Lamb, uses Coleridgean concepts for oppositional political ends. Take, for instance, Hazlitt's embrace of seventeenth-century prose styles. In *The Eloquence of the British Senate*, he characterizes the seventeenth century as an era when orators' "minds were stored with facts and images almost to excess" and "the understanding was invigorated" by a combination of ideas and emotional appeals (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 1.126). He contrasts this older celebration of "the impressions of things as they were first stamped upon mind" with "mechanical" early nineteenth-century oratory. While Hazlitt seems to endorse Coleridge's model of prose as inquiry, Hazlitt positions seventeenth-century style as a discourse with critical potential because such a complex display of thoughts and emotions takes the reader's mind to "knowledge of things without it" and potentially to a critique of existing conditions (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 1.125). While Hazlitt acknowledges the impracticalities of implementing early modern styles in parliamentary oratory, he modifies Coleridge's defense of seventeenth-century styles in service of a literary project that reinvents the "prose declaimer" as oppositional epideictic rhetor.

3.5 CONCLUSION

Coleridge is often credited with laying the grounds for the (somewhat elitist) professional study of literature in Anglo-American universities. For critics like Raymond Williams, he participated

in a century-long project to “specializ[e] and contain” literary discourse “in new ways” due to his canonization of the Poet in *Biographia Literaria* and lifelong desire to create a network of professional critics and teachers who reinforce the dominant political and religious values (Williams, *Marxism and Literature* 145). While I agree with Williams that Coleridge shaped the modern study of literature, I have shown that Coleridge’s project is indebted to the older discipline of rhetoric and the community-building functions associated with it. His prose project in *The Friend* participates in the post Napoleonic transformation of literature as a means of debating and reshaping cultural values, and Hazlitt, Lamb, and De Quincey share some of his beliefs about literary prose as a form of epideictic rhetoric. Coleridge enlists literary prose in the project of uniting readers around conservative values and dominant institutions, but he also provides the later “prose declaimers” with an impressive toolkit with which to challenge the period’s centripetal visions of literature as nationalist discourse. As a self-proclaimed throwback to older prose styles, Coleridge repurposes classical rhetorical concepts in modern literary writing and attempts to synthesize these concepts with the period's emergent literary magazines, a project that Hazlitt, Lamb, and De Quincey extend and modify. In the following chapters, I further explore how these authors adapt Coleridgean rhetorical principles in order to reframe literary prose as heteroglot epideictic rhetorics.

4.0 **HAZLITT'S ELOQUENCE OF THE BRITISH SENATE AS ROMANTIC ARS RHETORICA**

"Are those members of the senate, who have been educated at Oxford or Cambridge, the most distinguished for their wisdom and their eloquence...?"

Vicesimus Knox, On Liberal Education, 1785

"A long and degrading catalog of absurdities might be collected from the dialect of our present parliamentary orators."

William Godwin, The Enquirer, 1797

4.1 **INTRODUCTION: HAZLITT AND RHETORIC**

The next two chapters argue that William Hazlitt reinvents the literary prose author as an oppositional epideictic rhetor. He refashions Coleridge's romantic rhetoric, classical rhetoric, and the Dissenter rhetoric of Joseph Priestley into a means of questioning the status quo in British politics and culture. Hazlitt's prose, known for its dense allusions and multivocality, demonstrates the potentials of an oppositional epideictic rhetoric in an era marked by a tension between competing social "voices" and the desire for a literary discourse that communicates unified cultural values. In his early *Eloquence of the British Senate* (1807) and mature *Spirit of the Age* sketches (1825), Hazlitt criticizes others' rhetorical performances and repurposes elements of the political oratory, poetry, and magazine prose that he finds lacking.

My reading of Hazlitt as an oppositional epideictic rhetor extends the work of critics who have begun to recognize “the extent to which Hazlitt’s criticism is generally conditioned by rhetorical concerns” (Mulvihill 74).⁷⁹ Since the 1970s, scholars like David Bromwich, James Mulvihill, and Kevin Gilmartin have questioned M. H. Abrams’s and E. P. Thompson’s portraits of Hazlitt as an apolitical “essayist” and a “stylist” in order to recover the nuanced connections between his politics and prose practice.⁸⁰ For these chapters, Gilmartin’s discussion of Hazlitt in the context of early nineteenth-century radical and Reformer discourses is fruitful. Gilmartin argues that Hazlitt “channels his critique from politics to culture” in essays aimed at middle-class readers in contrast to the reformers and radicals whose tracts persuaded working-class constituencies to take action in the form of protests or petitions (229). While Hazlitt shares these groups’ disappointment with early nineteenth-century parliamentary politics, he cultivates an “ironic political commitment” and “self-critique” that distinguish his literary practices from their direct-action tactics and allow him to analyze the roadblocks to reform in British politics and culture (Gilmartin 323,233). For Gilmartin, Hazlitt is a shrewd meta-critic of early nineteenth-century political discourse who simultaneously extends and criticizes the rhetorics of modern political opposition.

Gilmartin’s reading of Hazlitt is useful for me because his emphasis on the shift from “politics” to “culture” resembles current rhetoricians’ criteria for distinguishing the epideictic mode from the judicial and deliberative rhetorics that aim at specific decisions or actions. Hazlitt imagines the literary prose author as an epideictic rhetor who challenges the status quo through a reassessment of the values that undergird the dominant political institutions and shape the education of leaders. Hazlitt treats literature as a shaper of cultural values in keeping with the popular Schlegelian models of the 1810s and 20s, but, more than any other “prose declaimer” in

this study, he explores how literary authors can create alternative values to the residual aristocratic ones of early nineteenth-century British society. As Gilmartin observes, Hazlitt wishes to avoid radical and reformer rhetors' direct calls to action, a mode that shuts down the play of disparate social "voices" to secure readers' assent. Hazlitt instead uses his performances to explore how literary authors might make audiences amenable to political change through the orchestration of multiple perspectives.

While Gilmartin and others have noticed the "rhetorical" aspects of Hazlitt's career, they overlook the historical rhetorical practices that Hazlitt engages in his criticism and redeploys in his own writing. Knowledge of these rhetorical practices strengthens the relationship between Hazlitt's oppositional politics and clever, multivocal prose. Although Hazlitt uses the term "rhetoric" pejoratively, as in "the regular rhetorical routine" of Parliament, classical rhetoric and Priestley's Dissenter rhetoric were available means for him to theorize the changing configurations of literature and politics in the first decades of the nineteenth century (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 12.276). He also demonstrates a mastery of these rhetorical practices in his writing when he transforms them into multivocal literary texts that correspond to the complexities of the era's political and cultural debates. In *The Eloquence of the British Senate* (1807), Hazlitt uses sketches of famous orators to model an ideal "eloquence" and transfers Edmund Burke's oratorical techniques to literary prose. Moreover, in *Spirit of the Age* (1825), he reappropriates the failed rhetorical moves of leading poets, politicians, and magazine editors to criticize these figures for what he sees as the stagnation of post-Napoleonic British culture.

Before I discuss Hazlitt's performances in *Eloquence* and *Spirit*, it is necessary to discuss his experiences with rhetoric, including his education at Hackney New College and the related

concept of the “division of labour.” Hazlitt, the son of a Dissenting minister who was trained in both classical rhetoric and the theories of Joseph Priestley, occupies a versatile position from which to reassess and redeploy these rhetorics. His interest in a “division of labour” among poets, literary prose writers, and politicians develops from this critical exposure to rhetoric and resurfaces in his attempts to define the work of the literary “prose declaimer.”

4.2 HAZLITT’S RHETORICAL EDUCATION

Although he was legally prohibited from attaining a classical education in the universities, Hazlitt studied classical rhetoric at Hackney New College, a Dissenting seminary in London that he attended from 1793-1795. Hackney New College was founded in 1786 by Richard Price and Thomas Rogers in order to train non-Anglican men in "the learned professions" and prepare them for "commercial and civic life" (McLachlin 246). According to historians of the school, Hackney’s founders and professors debated its curriculum and purposes, which led to its closure in 1796.⁸¹ On the one hand, Hackney became notorious in the 1790s for its sympathy with the French Revolution and hosted speakers like William Godwin. On the other hand, Hackney's governors wanted to keep up with OxBridge and the grammar schools, retaining elements of the classical curriculum.

Classical education at Hackney had a more rhetorical bent than typical grammar school training in the late eighteenth century. Hazlitt, for instance, studied Quintilian’s *Institutes* under classics professor John Corrie. In addition to learning Greek and Latin, students practiced rhetoric with declamations and written themes. For example, Theophilus Lindsay, one of Hazlitt's classmates, recalls in a 1795 letter that "students delivered orations in English and

Latin" to public audiences (McLachlin 252). Lindsay notes that one of these declaimers treated England's war with France or "the wickedness of War...especially that in which we have been fatally engaged." These declamations combined Hackney's oppositional politics with the (re)assessment of cultural values that is typical of classical rhetorical exercises. Hazlitt likewise mentions themes, or short compositions on philosophical topics, in his 1793 letters to his father (Burley 59). In their effort to cultivate "professional" men, the governors and instructors of Hackney provided students with a rhetorically-oriented classical education.

Alongside training in classical rhetoric, students at Hackney studied Joseph Priestley's 1777 *Lectures in Oratory and Criticism*, a famous exponent of late eighteenth-century Dissenter rhetoric. In the *Lectures*, a compilation of notes that draws upon eighteenth-century Scottish rhetorics and the associational psychology of Hartley, Priestley frames rhetoric as "communicat[ing] information" (6). Priestley breaks from the classical formula of three rhetorical genres (deliberative, judicial, and epideictic) to focus on rhetoric as communication and argumentation.⁸² As a participant in Dissenter politics and scholarship, he believes that political empowerment begins with the learning of new knowledge, and he treats rhetoric as an educational discourse that seeks to change audience's thoughts and actions.⁸³ For example, the rhetor must "lay down some proposition and endeavor to prove" it (6). "Oratory" involves "illustrating the nature and force of the evidence" in order to inform "the [audience's] judgment and influence the practice" (Priestley 51, 68). Priestley's view of rhetoric is deeply pragmatic in its aim to communicate knowledge, change the audience's thinking, and alter their behavior through education.

As the title of his *Lectures* suggest, Priestley separates "oratory," the production of oral, argumentative texts, from "criticism," the reception of written, imaginative texts like poetry.

While the first ten lectures focus on communication and argument, the last 25 lectures cover “the knowledge which is essential to criticism upon works of genius,” or the discussions of style and the brief catalogs of figures found in Scottish rhetoric manuals like Blair’s *Lectures* (Priestley 73). In this section, Priestley discusses imaginative, emotional discourses that “attract and engage the attention by the grace and harmony of the style, the turn of thought, and the striking and pleasing manner in which sentiments are introduced and expressed” (71–72). He encourages rhetors to deploy emotional appeals but warns that these must be subordinate to “the ultimate end of oratory” which is “to convince and persuade” (68). Student rhetors are figured primarily as readers of poetry who learn to recognize and modify emotional appeals for their pragmatic discourses. At a time when classical education was synonymous with writing and reading poetry in dead languages, Priestley treats poetry as a means to more pragmatic, argumentative ends.

Although Priestley’s rhetorical theories seem oversimplified to today’s scholars of rhetoric and literature, they reflect his participation in a network of politically controversial Dissenter institutions. Priestley and the professors at Hackney address audiences legally barred from participating in English politics. Priestley’s *Lectures* and the curriculum at Hackney present ways for them to become active participants in public life through alternative means. Students not only trained to become lawyers and ministers, but they also sought mercantile jobs and used these positions to participate in the “civic and commercial life” of the nation. By teaching rhetoric as an educational, argumentative discourse, Priestley and the instructors wanted students to articulate their political beliefs outside of Parliament. By teaching “criticism” as the appreciation of imaginative, emotional texts, they sought to mold sophisticated Dissenting readers who could interpret and hence expose the dominant discourses that oppress them. As I

explain later, Hazlitt draws upon Priestley's theories of reading in his analysis of British Parliamentary oratory.

As Tom Paulin observes, Hazlitt's Dissenting education is evident in his oppositional politics and his "plain," often confrontational, prose style.⁸⁴ However, I want to focus on how Hazlitt develops a dual orientation towards classical rhetoric from his training in both classical and Dissenting rhetorical practices. On the one hand, he sees the study of ancient rhetoric as essential to an educated status. As he explains in "On Classical Education," an essay in the *Round Table* collaboration with Leigh Hunt, classical education "accustoms the mind to take an interest in things foreign to itself" or potentially challenges students' prejudices with knowledge of another time and culture (Hazlitt, *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 4.5). On the other hand, Hazlitt sees classical rhetoric as part of the residual aristocratic privileges that are corrupting contemporary parliamentary politics and print culture. Hazlitt's ambivalence towards classical rhetoric is crucial to understanding his assessment of parliamentary oratory in *The Eloquence of the British Senate* and his critiques of contemporary figures from Coleridge to Lord Eldon in *The Spirit of the Age*.

While a student at Hackney, Hazlitt recognized a disconnect between that school's classical rhetorical practices and Dissenting political commitments. In an October 1793 letter, Hazlitt complains that he is unable to finish his theme "on the political state of man" for Corrie's class (Burley 61). Hazlitt, with this teacher's encouragement, expands the piece, but observes that "I should not be able to make a good oration from my essay. It is too abstruse and exact for that purpose" (Burley 65). His argument on "natural" political duties, a timely issue in the 1790s, is too complex for a theme or declamation even in a politically progressive school. Despite Corrie's support for Hazlitt's theme that would become the *Essay on the Principles of Human*

Action (1805), Hazlitt finds the classical rhetorical exercises hermetic and detached from current political controversies, a charge that he will later apply to the educations of politicians in *The Eloquence of the British Senate* and *The Spirit of the Age*.

Beyond the classical pedagogies at Hackney College, classical rhetoric and the institutions that teach it are significant topics in Hazlitt's mature criticism. For Hazlitt, the rhetorical practices of classical education contribute to the residually elite, aristocratic values and power structures that persist despite the seeming innovations of early nineteenth-century society.⁸⁵ For example, he asserts in "On the Aristocracy of Letters" (*Table Talk*) that classical education is "a kind of external appendage or transferable property," an empty status symbol that confers advantages upon its owner in politics and literary publishing (Hazlitt, *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 8.208). "The learned languages are a passport to...unmeaning, unanalyzed reputation," such as the political authority accorded to Members of Parliament and the praises conferred upon classically educated authors in the leading periodicals (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 8. 207). For Hazlitt, classically educated politicians in Parliament allied themselves with aristocratic interests and prevented needed reforms following the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars. In *The Spirit of the Age*, Hazlitt also discusses how classical rhetorical education underwrites emergent Romantic literary practices from celebrity poets to the aggressive, partisan criticism of *The Quarterly Review* and *Blackwood's Magazine*.

Through his training at Hackney New College, Hazlitt gained a critical purchase on classical rhetoric. Priestley's investment in rhetoric as imparting new knowledge and desire to produce strong Dissenting orators drives Hazlitt's oppositional commitments, or critiques of early nineteenth-century politics and culture. However, even as he criticizes the class privileges of classical education, classical rhetoric provides him a means for theorizing the

interrelationships of early nineteenth-century politics and culture. Hazlitt uses both the classical and Dissenting models of rhetoric to assess the political effects of literary texts as well as the performances of politicians. He likewise modifies the straightforward style of Dissenter rhetoric and classical rhetorical exercises in his dynamic, multivocal performances. In short, classical and Dissenter rhetorics, as represented by Priestley, are crucial strands in Hazlitt's heteroglot prose. As I explain in the following chapters, these rhetorics not only enable Hazlitt to orchestrate the era's disparate "voices" but also to create a new form of literary prose.

4.3 THE "DIVISION OF LABOUR"

Priestley's anxiety to separate the politically empowering enterprise of "oratory" from imaginative, emotional, and stylistic discourses anticipates Hazlitt's pressing interest in a "division of labour" among poets, politicians, and literary prose authors. Throughout his work, Hazlitt uses "division of labour," a term dating back to Adam Smith, to distinguish the work of writers from that of orators according to their audiences, aims, and situations.⁸⁶ Even as he calls for this division, he recognizes the impediments to such a separation: Hazlitt "set strict political limits of the exercise of his own critical faculties, although he often found it hard to imagine that such limits had force in the post Napoleonic world" (Gilmartin 232). In "On the Periodical Press," Hazlitt explains that "All the greatest things are done by division of labour" but laments that "Politics blend[s] with poetry" in periodicals like *Blackwood's* and *The Quarterly Review*, resulting in polemical attacks on authors disguised as evaluations of their literary work (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 16. 216). Likewise in "On the Conversation of Authors," Hazlitt invokes the "division of labour" to fault political orators who sacrifice expediency for

stylistic flourishes more suited to written discourse than speeches (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 12. 24). Hazlitt uses the “division of labour,” a scheme for classifying rhetorical performances according to their audiences and situations, to reinvent the literary prose author as an oppositional epideictic rhetor.

Under Hazlitt’s “division of labour,” political oratory and poetry become the Scylla and Charybdis that the literary prose writer must navigate. The “prose declaimer” can discuss political controversies and make arguments; for instance, Hazlitt explains in “The Prose Style of Poets” that “Every word should be a blow” (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 12. 11). Despite this argumentative agon, the prose author must avoid the politicians’ calls to action. In the preface to *Political Essays* (1819), Hazlitt appeals to these distinct roles when he declares, “I am no politician” (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 7. 7). In the “Character of Edmund Burke,” from the same collection, he states that Burke was “an ingenious political essayist” rather than an effective orator in Parliament (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 7.227). This self-reflexive epithet, “political essayist,” demonstrates Hazlitt’s investment in a “division of labour” because he distinguishes the work of orators and literary prose authors. Hazlitt observes that Burke fails in his duty to represent the people because his arguments for or against legislation become lost in the display of his own thoughts. By contrast, Hazlitt, who rightfully assumes the title of “political essayist,” can explore multiple sides of an issue because he is not licensed to represent a constituency and enact legislation. What the literary prose author loses in expediency and decisiveness, he gains in the reassessment of the cultural values that shape decisions in Parliament and the society where these decisions operate.

The literary prose author also differs from poets, whom Hazlitt sees as defenders of the status quo. In addition to his outrage at Wordsworth’s and Coleridge’s abandonment of their

1790s liberalism, Hazlitt sees poetry as a potentially conservative genre because poets isolate themselves from political debates or cultivate superficial performances in the capacity of poet laureate.⁸⁷ As Charles Mahoney explains, Hazlitt fears that poets “threate[n] to substitute indolent fancy for political principle” as Wordsworth’s “emotion recollected in tranquility” becomes an end in itself and poet laureates flatter the powers-that-be with “Birth-day and Thanksgiving Odes” (Mahoney 190; Wordsworth, “Preface” 407; Hazlitt, *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 4.120). In an 1822 review of Shakespeare’s *Coriolanus*, Hazlitt declares that “poetry naturally falls in with the language of power” or serves elite interests by persuading audiences to identify with elite characters (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 5. 47). As critics have shown, Hazlitt riffs on William Shenstone’s adage that “poets are Tories by nature”; he believes that poets covet an artistic “power” over audiences that resembles the absolute political power of kings.⁸⁸ As I discuss in the next chapter, Hazlitt in his sketches of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Robert Southey connects the poet’s power explicitly to the monarchy through these poets’ attempts at securing political patronage. What Keats termed an “egotistical sublime” poet can easily become the producer of trite “birthday odes,” or centripetal epideictic rhetoric.

In contrast to the poets, the literary prose author cultivates “a popular mode of writing necessary to convey subtle and difficult trains of reasoning... to force attention to original observations, which did not restrict themselves to ...the repetition of obsolete prejudice”(*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 17. 31). Hazlitt offers this description of his work in the “Letter to William Gifford” (1819), in which he refutes the notorious *Quarterly* reviewer’s political and class-based attacks on his conversational style. Responding to Gifford’s charge of a

"jacobin" disregard for grammar, he contrasts the "subtle and difficult trains of reasoning" of his prose to the "meager, vapid style" of the *Quarterly's* polemics.

By tackling "subtle and difficult trains of reasoning," Hazlitt allies the work of the literary prose writer with the complexity of Edmund Burke's oratory that both he and Coleridge admire. The prose writer makes complex ideas accessible to middle-class readers by writing in a "popular" style. As Charles Lamb observes in an unpublished review of *Table Talk*, Hazlitt "continually transl[at]es his thoughts out of their metaphysical obscurity" in order to engage readers in a conversation ("Review of Table Talk by William Hazlitt" 307). Moreover, Hazlitt dramatizes complex thoughts to repudiate "obsolete prejudices," a critical orientation that draws upon Priestley's Dissenter rhetoric. The literary prose author must question the longstanding "prejudices" that hold back cultural and political progress and engage readers in the project of creating new values. Throughout his career, Hazlitt surveys the stagnation of British parliamentary politics against the backdrop of broader beliefs about art and culture—the "principles" that Coleridge and the magazines also evaluate through their criticism of literature. With his commitment to challenge "obsolete prejudices," Hazlitt's literary prose author anticipates Matthew Arnold's ideal for the critic who complicates the "stock notions and habits" of Victorian society (*Culture and Anarchy* 5)⁸⁹.

Hazlitt's desire to distinguish literary prose authors from political orators resembles recent rhetoricians' separation of epideictic from deliberative rhetorics. Throughout his writings, Hazlitt claims for himself a space outside of political institutions and immediate cases from which to argue multiple perspectives and re/assess the broader values at stake in the immediate cases. He takes this rhetorical division a step further by distinguishing literary prose as a critical, polemical discourse from poetry, as an emotional, imaginative enterprise, a distinction that

Matthew Arnold more fully develops in his 1864 essay "On the Function of Criticism." Hazlitt invents a multivocal literary prosaics, or prose art, that draws upon poetry and rhetoric in an effort to grapple with "difficult trains of reasoning" and do justice to the complex political and cultural debates of the early nineteenth century. In the chapters that follow, I discuss the results of his experiment to reinvent the literary "prose declaimer" as an oppositional epideictic rhetor.

4.4 THE ELOQUENCE OF THE BRITISH SENATE

The Eloquence of the British Senate (1807) is a parliamentary anthology, a two-volume collection of 250 House of Commons speech transcripts.⁹⁰ These transcripts, based upon reporters' notes and previously published in newspapers, are rearranged by Hazlitt and reframed by his commentary. The speeches span the period of 1625 to 1802: The first volume covers speeches from 1625 to 1760, while the second covers speeches from 1761-1802. Some of the speeches are accompanied by brief notes about the context of the speech and the orator's biography; most of these notes occur in Volume II. Hazlitt also wrote longer sketches of major British politicians, including William Pitt (Earl Chatham), Edmund Burke, Charles Fox, and William Pitt, the younger⁹¹. These essays, a common feature of oratory collections, take the MP's style and character as the basis for broader inquiries on the nature of rhetoric and Hazlitt's reactions as a contemporary reader.⁹²

With its layers of remediated political oratory, *The Eloquence of the British Senate* is a fascinating case study for Romantic book historians. The repackaging of political speeches in book-length collections exemplifies the period's debates about the identity of the author, the uses of literary texts, and the changing habits of readers. However, for the purposes of this

dissertation, I treat Hazlitt's parliamentary anthology as a highly performative *ars rhetorica*, or a theory of rhetoric based on the history of British oratory and the practices of individual MPs. Unlike the authors of rhetorical textbooks who simply describe the parts of orations, the writers of *ars rhetorica*, like Cicero in *De Oratore* or George Campbell in *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, explore their criteria for rhetoric and reflect on the range of rhetorical practices in their societies. Hazlitt adapts the format of the parliamentary anthology—a genre that transforms deliberative political speeches into epideictic celebrations of patriotism and good style—to develop a rhetorical theory that he modifies throughout his career.⁹³ He not only criticizes British parliamentary politics but also outlines an ideal “eloquence” based on Edmund Burke's orations. In his concept of “eloquence,” Hazlitt rearticulates the Coleridgean rhetorical principles of innovating commonplaces, writing as inquiry, the active reader, and seventeenth-century styles. By examining the advantages and drawbacks of “eloquence” in a parliamentary setting, Hazlitt introduces the rhetorical tactics that he uses in his mature essays to reinvent the literary prose author as an oppositional epideictic rhetor.

My reading of Hazlitt's *Eloquence of the British Senate* as a Romantic *ars rhetorica* extends work by critics who suggest that Hazlitt does more than simply evaluate MPs' speeches.⁹⁴ Tom Paulin, for example, argues that Hazlitt's collection “is an early exploratory, concealed statement of his poetics” and politics (140). James Mulvihill likewise observes that “*Eloquence of British Senate* presents in its notes and commentary a critique that extends beyond its selections to encompass habits of thought and expression shaping public life in post Reformation Britain” (74). For Mulvihill, Hazlitt traces the historical trends and cultural values that lead to the stagnation of parliamentary discourse in the early nineteenth century. While these critics recognize the importance of Hazlitt's early anthology to his mature criticism, I want to

stress the significance of rhetoric itself to Hazlitt's theory and practice. As an assessment of "habits of thought and expression shaping public life," *The Eloquence of the British Senate* is an epideictic performance about epideictic rhetoric because Hazlitt explores the broader values that underwrite specific political speeches. It is also a theoretical exploration of the relationship between epideictic and deliberative rhetorics in British society. Hazlitt finds that some orators' speaking is more appropriate for epideictic situations than the deliberative or legislative setting of Parliament. Even as Hazlitt criticizes the shortcomings of orators, like Edmund Burke, he speculates on the value of their techniques for literary writing; he develops an epideictic "eloquence" that invests literary prose with the powers of rhetoric, while distinguishing its techniques and goals from political oratory.

The Parliamentary anthology shares with the *ars rhetorica* the capacity for reflexive meta-moves. The authors or compilers of both genres reflect on their own rhetorical practice in relation to the conventions of the genre and the rhetorical practices of others. As Richard Lockwood quips, "What is more reflexive, what speaks more about its own speaking than a rhetorical manual, even if in principle it considers its own discourse separate from the object-discourse it describes?" (20). In *The Eloquence of the British Senate*, Hazlitt likewise reflects on his participation in late eighteenth-and early nineteenth-century practices for reframing parliamentary speeches as statements of national values. He adapts these conventions to criticize the stagnation of British parliamentary oratory from the seventeenth to the early nineteenth centuries. In his evaluations of individual speakers, Hazlitt both faults these politicians' showy epideictic speeches and recognizes the potential of their moves for literary writing, including his own project of evaluating famous orators. The epideictic mode of "eloquence", though ultimately

unsuitable for Parliament, allows the literary prose author to critically assess the effects of political discourse on the wider society.

I first examine the rhetorical practices of the parliamentary anthology, a genre that Romanticists do not frequently study, and situate Hazlitt's *Eloquence of the British Senate* within these practices for transforming deliberative oratory into epideictic texts. By twisting the conventions of parliamentary anthologies, Hazlitt lays the groundwork for a serious rhetorical criticism of parliamentary oratory. I then discuss Hazlitt's rhetorical theory that develops out of the sketches of famous MPs. In the sketches of William Pitt, the Younger and Edmund Burke, Hazlitt distinguishes a serious, complex form of epideictic rhetoric from the "mechanical" epideictic of the elite classical curriculum and criticizes the failure of both rhetorics in the deliberative institution of Parliament. While the epideictic mode clashes with Parliament's mission to represent the people by enacting legislation, Hazlitt recognizes Burke's "eloquence" as a literary discourse capable of reassessing the cultural values that underwrite specific decisions.

4.4.1 Parliamentary Anthologies: The Epideictic Remediation of Parliamentary Oratory

Parliamentary anthologies like Hazlitt's *Eloquence of the British Senate* are multivolume collections of historical oratory. These collections are the production of parliamentary reporting and publishing practices at the turn of the nineteenth century which transformed deliberative orations into published, epideictic texts for extra-parliamentary readers.⁹⁵ Although publishing parliamentary speeches was technically illegal, events such as the 1761 Wilkes trial changed the relationships among Parliament, the press and the people in the late eighteenth century.⁹⁶ By the 1780s, reporters and book compilers transformed MPs' speeches into "literary entertainment"

(Bevis 24). In addition to reports in newspapers, rhetorical textbooks, such as Thomas Enfield's *Speaker* (1774), published the speeches of William Pulteney and John St. Aubin alongside fictional speeches from Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and *Henry VIII*, while selections of Edmund Burke's speeches circulated in anthologies called "beauties" in the 1790s.⁹⁷

By introducing political oratory to extra-parliamentary constituents, parliamentary reporters and editors create "new" texts from their transcriptions of oral discourse. In the late eighteenth century, reporters like William "Memory" Woodfall transcribed parliamentary speeches from memory, and several accounts were combined to create the impression of a continuous debate.⁹⁸ For example, William Pitt, Earl Chatham's 1765 speech in Hazlitt's *Eloquence of the British Senate* begins with a third-person statement: "Mr. Pitt at beginning was rather low, and as every one was in agitation at his rising, his introduction was not heard, till he said, I came to town but to-day" (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 2. 7). The reporter demonstrates the physical challenges of speaking and listening in Parliament because Pitt's "low" voice and "agitation" on the floor prevent him from hearing and accurately recording the MP's words. In this passage, as in many speech transcripts, paraphrases ("Mr. Pitt was rather low") mingle with attempts at direct quotation ("I came to town"), showing how reporters and editors collated multiple accounts when they publicized politicians' speeches.

Printed transcripts of political speeches are "remediations" that alter the status of Parliamentary language.⁹⁹ At the turn of the nineteenth century, Members of Parliament saw their speeches as private discourse among elite peers. As Christopher Reid explains, gallery reporters and editors challenge this "patrician orality" because they transcribe the speeches and submit them to the judgment of extraparliamentary readers ("Whose Parliament?" 126). In rhetoricians' terms, the remediation of political oratory in newspapers, textbooks, and

anthologies transforms deliberative speeches into epideictic ones. As recent rhetoricians observe, deliberative performances before a voting body become epideictic when they are published or re-enacted for audiences who are not in the capacity to make binding political decisions. By turning from the forum of Parliament to the broader forum of reading public/s, the remediators of parliamentary speech not only wish to hold politicians accountable for their words but also wish to educate readers about MPs' political values and decisions.

Although print remediations of political speech are epideictic by virtue of their extra-parliamentary audiences, Parliamentary anthologies explicitly reframe the speeches as examples of British history, patriotic values, and good style. In addition to Hazlitt's *Eloquence of the British Senate*, Thomas Browne's *British Cicero* (speeches from 1734 to 1799) and William Cobbett's *Parliamentary History* (speeches from 1066 to 1802), a 36 volume collection that evolved into the *Hansard* guides, are examples of early nineteenth-century parliamentary anthologies.¹⁰⁰ By enshrining ephemeral newspaper transcripts in book form, these collections teach cultural values through the study of past oratory.¹⁰¹ Thomas Browne's promise in the Advertisement of *The British Cicero* to "infuse the spirit of true Eloquence and the genuine principles of the [British] constitution" typifies this epideictic repackaging of deliberative speech in these multivolume collections (1.i). Browne, a compiler with Whig sympathies, celebrates Parliament's consolidation of power over the monarchy during the eighteenth century. He presents the *British Cicero* as an encomium to politicians who "so eminently dignified the Senate and the Forum," equating eloquence with MP's Whig values. Browne's references to "the Senate" and the "Forum," along with the title *British Cicero*, also suggest the classical framings of these collections. Because they aim to educate and entertain readers historically removed from

the "original" debates, Parliamentary anthologies transform deliberative speeches into epideictic celebrations of history and national identity.

4.4.2 Hazlitt's Critical Adaptation of Parliamentary Anthologies

Hazlitt undermines the conventions of parliamentary anthologies even as he performs them. Through his satires on the celebration of parliamentary oratory in anthologies, he reads political speech critically, with an ear for style as the incarnation of political values. Hazlitt's critique of typical anthologies begins in the Advertisement, which questions the purposes of these compilations and parodies their upbeat patriotic tone. Hazlitt calls his collection a "piece of justice due to the mighty dead," a quintessential epideictic posture (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 1.iv)¹⁰². However, he laments that politicians "who were the mouthpiece of their parties, nothing but perpetual smoke and bounce" languish in obscurity (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 1. iv). Hazlitt belittles past MPs as representatives of faction and cant who almost deserve to be forgotten. He further quips that a "very small volume indeed, would contain all the recorded eloquence of both houses of parliament" and mocks the lengthy tomes that preserve lackluster oratory for posterity (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 1. vii). As Bakhtin might say, Hazlitt approaches the parliamentary anthology with a "sidewise glance," simultaneously perpetuating and questioning the genre's tendency to celebrate mediocrity (Bakhtin 376).

Through this satirical tone, Hazlitt proposes a serious model for engaging with printed political oratory. He frames the collection as an alternative to the reading habits encouraged by the "columns of news-papers" in order to examine more closely the historical and stylistic aspects of parliamentary rhetoric (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 1. iv). Hazlitt elaborates on the importance of careful reading in his sketch of William Pitt: Pitt's "common-place topics

will...be evident to any one who *carefully looks* into his speeches” (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 2. 496–497). Hazlitt’s emphasis on “careful” reading recalls Joseph Priestley’s observations about manipulative political oratory. Priestley condemns the “want of close connexion [sic], small improprieties, or even inconsistencies” in political speeches which “pass unnoticed with most persons when they hear a discourse” (Priestley 30). These politicians not only manipulate listeners who cannot closely analyze a spoken performance, but also, they “cover the absurdity of such language” with stilted emotional appeals (Priestley 83). Hazlitt agrees with Priestley that “all these little inaccuracies [of political speech] are exposed to observation” when readers study a written transcript of the speech (Priestley 32). To read a parliamentary oration closely is to expose folly and faction, to think critically about England’s past and present.

As this connection to Priestley suggests, Hazlitt’s reading tactics are a political critique. Hazlitt, by emphasizing the reading of speeches, confirms MPs’ worst nightmares about the mass circulation of their oratory: That readers might scrutinize the language and style of the speeches in order to hold politicians publically accountable for speeches delivered behind closed doors. William Meredith, for instance, argued in the 1770s, that “The world at large...had no just claim to be apprised of all the minutiae of the debates” (Reid, “Whose Parliament?” 125). Hazlitt’s treatment of political orations redeploys Dissenter rhetorics to challenge the ways in which Parliament is mediated to the people through print. As I explain in the next section, Hazlitt uses the sketches of politicians to expose the stagnation of parliamentary discourse in contemporary British society and explore how individual MPs’ showy styles further impede Parliament’s mission to enact legislation on behalf of the people.

Hazlitt demonstrates "careful" reading in his sketches of orators by examining the relationship between a politician's style and his political values. For example, Hazlitt observes in a note on Charles I that "The following is his speech from the throne on meeting his first parliament. It contains nothing very remarkable, but may serve as a specimen of the stile that was in use at the time" (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 1. 1). In this 1625 speech, Charles urges Parliament to continue a war with Spain and fawningly secures the status quo power relations between the monarchy and the Parliament: "I hope you will take such grave (and wise) counsel, as you will expedite what you have in hand to do: which will do me and yourselves an infinite deal of honour; you, in shewing our love to me, and me, that I may perfect that work which my father hath so happily begun" (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 1. 3). Beyond Parliament's decisions in 1625, this speech exemplifies, for Hazlitt, the monarchy's control over Parliament because Charles tells the legislators to execute his will and commends their "love to me." Charles's speech demonstrates the presumptuous "pageantry," "flowery style," and "fulsome compliments" that Hazlitt condemns in other early seventeenth-century orators (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 1. 12, 175).

By framing Charles's speech as a "specimen of the stile...at the time," Hazlitt stresses the intersection of political values and the rhetorical effects of style. He examines how style can uphold or challenge the status quo values, whereas typical compilers of Parliamentary anthologies simply treat speakers' styles as evidence of their "patriotism" and treat the speeches as events. Even in collections such as *The British Cicero*, which purport to connect eloquent speech to the British constitution, the speeches are framed as means to political ends. For example, Browne's chapter on "War with France" begins with a summary: "During the early progress of the French Revolution, long before any decided action was taken by Great Britain, a

debate relative to the army estimates, on the 9th of February 1790, led to a very violent shock or conflict of opinions between Mr. Burke and Mr. Fox” (2. 258). The compiler’s emphasis is on the “violent...conflict of opinions” between the two men rather than on the qualities that make their opinions “eloquent” or how “eloquence” conveys clashing political opinions. Whereas Browne values this verbal skirmish only for the role it played in leading England to "decided action" against France, Hazlitt treats style itself as an incarnation of the MP’s political orientation and the broader cultural values that shape his beliefs.

With this investment in careful readings of printed oratory, Hazlitt differentiates his project from typical Parliamentary anthologies by examining how political orators shape and are shaped by the cultural values that underwrite specific cases. More than just evidence of an MP’s “patriotism” or individual preferences, style emerges from a complex network of cultural values and institutions, including the MPs’ (classical) educations. In the advertisement, Hazlitt describes his collection as “a history...of the progress of the language, of the state of parties at different periods” (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 1. vi). The parallel association of “progress of the language” and “state of the parties” connects formal technical qualities like language with the atechanical, socio- historical factors at work in the speeches. In other words, Hazlitt embarks on a thoroughly rhetorical approach to Parliamentary discourse.

Through his adaptation of common practices for reframing parliamentary oratory as printed epideictic texts, Hazlitt lays the ground for a politically-oppositional theory of rhetoric. He mocks the tendency of parliamentary anthologies to frame mediocre speeches as celebrations of patriotism and good style. He supplements this facile epideictic celebration with Priestley’s techniques for reading political oratory in order to focus on the qualities that make parliamentary speeches “eloquent.” Hazlitt treats style as the incarnation of an MP’s political values and the

cultural values that undergird the specific debates of their era. In his sketches of William Pitt and Edmund Burke, Hazlitt extends this critical orientation towards parliamentary oratory and builds a theory of epideictic rhetoric that guides his mature writing practices.

4.4.3 Hazlitt's Rhetorical Theory in Eloquence of the British Senate

Hazlitt's critical approach to reading parliamentary oratory complements his political angle in *The Eloquence of the British Senate*: Namely, that the house of commons has abandoned its mission to represent the people and has become "[nothing] more than the representative of property and power" (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 1. 385). In Volume 2 of the collection, Hazlitt traces the decline of British parliamentary oratory in the eighteenth century by showing how star orators show off their skills, champion aristocratic interests, and prevent necessary political reforms. In other words, Hazlitt suggests that MPs have become epideictic orators instead of performing their duties as deliberative orators. From this political critique, Hazlitt develops a theory of rhetoric and attempts to parse the unclear boundaries between epideictic and deliberative discourses.

Hazlitt in *Eloquence* wishes to distinguish parliamentary oratory from discourses that do not aim at persuading audiences to action. For example, in the sketch of William Pitt, Earl Chatham, he contrasts poetry and rhetoric: "The difference between poetry and eloquence I take to be this: that the object of the one is to delight the imagination, that of the other to impel the will" (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 2. 6). Hazlitt echoes Blair and other rhetoricians who distinguish poetry's "primary aim ...to please and to move" from rhetoric's "direct aim ...to inform, to persuade, or to instruct" (Blair 425). However, Hazlitt realizes the inadequacy of the poetry/eloquence binary when he states that "Burke was both a reasoner and a poet" because his

speeches surpass the empty commonplaces of typical parliamentary orations. Burke seems to combine the argumentative agon of politics with the imagery and emotional appeals of poetry. By admitting how an orator might cultivate both “eloquence” and “poetry,” Hazlitt imagines a practitioner of a literary or epideictic prose.

Within Hazlitt's history of parliamentary oratory, Burke and William Pitt the Younger stand out as the representatives of two influential rhetorical styles at the turn of the nineteenth century. Pitt represents the “the vulgar notions and mechanical feelings,” or the reductive epideictic rhetoric of the classical curriculum that is corrupting British politics (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 2. 7). For Hazlitt, Pitt practices “rhetoric” in the modern pejorative sense of manipulating audiences and affirming commonplace beliefs. Just as Hazlitt represents Shakespeare as a notable exception to the “egotism” of most English poets, he figures Burke as an anomaly among dull, classically-educated MPs.¹⁰³ Burke practices an ideal “eloquence,” a form of emotionally engaged, intellectually serious rhetoric that resembles Hugh Blair’s “High Eloquence.” In his *Lectures*, Blair describes “High Eloquence” as an emotionally intense discourse capable of altering audiences’ behavior and habits of thought.¹⁰⁴ Burke, like the preachers and politicians that Blair associates with High Eloquence, uses intense imagery and emotional appeals to address broader values that underwrite immediate political debates. Although Burke, like Pitt, fails as an epideictic rhetor in the deliberative setting of Parliament, Hazlitt sees the techniques of his eloquence as appropriate for a literary prose author who is free from the demands of the parliamentary institution.

4.4.3.1 Pitt and Mechanical Rhetoric

The Eloquence of the British Senate expands Hazlitt’s critique of William Pitt the Younger’s “mechanical” rhetoric in *Free Thoughts on Public Affairs* (1806) by showing the historical

factors that allowed Pitt to flourish by the turn of the nineteenth century. Although Hazlitt admires Parliamentary speeches that argue and persuade, he identifies Pitt with the epideictic bullying that characterizes the classical education of elite MPs in the eighteenth century. Pitt uses his orations to bolster existing conditions such as England's prolonged continental wars. He typifies "the mechanical exercise of [a politician's] profession" through a reliance on superficial commonplaces (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 2. 206).

Hazlitt sets the stage for Pitt's ascendancy during the decline of Parliamentary oratory in the 1730s.¹⁰⁵ According to Hazlitt, Robert Walpole "turned Parliament into a regular debating society" (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 1. 382). After a period in which Parliament's desire to limit the monarchy's power endued orators with "a manly tone, a solidity, and a fervor which could hardly be produced in any other circumstances," the Hanoverian kings ushered in a period of factional infighting that reduced parliamentary discourse to declamatory games (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 1. 363). In the sketch of Walpole, Hazlitt contends that legislating has become a school exercise in which participants hurl commonplaces at one another: "The house of commons instead of being the representative and depository of the collective sense of the nation, has become a theatre for wrangling disputants to declaim in the scene of noisy impertinence and pedantic folly" (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 1. 383). The words "disputants," "declaim," "wrangling," and "pedantic" recall the OxBridge practices familiar to MPs, while the images of a "theatre" and a "scene" turn the House of Commons into a farcical performance. (1. 383). Political discourse has become "a set of words...substituted for the silent operation of general feeling and good sense" (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 1. 383). These "empty shews of reason" pervert Parliament's mission to serve as the "collective" voice of the people and simply reinforce the interests of the aristocracy. The same sort of

discourse that sounds like a flaw of eighteenth-century poetry to Wordsworth has deleterious effects for political decision making and the nation as a whole.¹⁰⁶

Hazlitt also anticipates Pitt's mechanical rhetoric in his sketch of Earl Chatham, the elder William Pitt. For Hazlitt, both Pitts represent the disastrous effects of a reduced classicism that pervades elite education in the eighteenth century. Chatham was a staunch defender of Parliament's power and a "high priest of the British Constitution," but Hazlitt faults his reliance on "the habitual prejudices of mankind" or empty patriotic appeals. In this sketch, he further quips that "the business of an orator is not to convince but persuade; not to inform, but to rouse the mind; to build upon the habitual prejudices of mankind...and [add] action to feeling" (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 2.4). Hazlitt's riff on the "business of an orator" not only recalls Aristotle but also the eighteenth-century neoclassical rhetorician Lord Chesterfield, as quoted in *The British Cicero*: "the business of Oratory...is to persuade people" (Browne 1. 29). Chesterfield opts for a softer approach to rhetoric in which "pleasing people" is the "first step towards persuasion," but Hazlitt suggest that pleasing an audience is bullying an audience with emotional appeals and "big words" that reinforce the dominant beliefs.

Chatham's son, William Pitt, represents the nadir of this problematic rhetoric in the early nineteenth century. In a passage reprinted from *Free Thoughts on Public Affairs*, Hazlitt criticizes Pitt's "monotonous and artificial" style:

If he could pretend to any excellence in an eminent degree it was to taste in composition. There is certainly nothing low, nothing puerile, nothing far-fetched or abrupt in his speeches; there is a kind of faultless regularity pervading them throughout; but in the confined, mechanical and passive mode of eloquence which

he adopted, it seemed rather more difficult to commit errors than to avoid them
(*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 2. 497).

Like Coleridge, Hazlitt participates in an early nineteenth-century repudiation of Samuel Johnson's balanced style, or the "faultless regularity" of sentences that defined eighteenth-century taste, by scorning Pitt's "mechanical" and "passive" sentences. Hazlitt connects Pitt's style to his investment in the status quo. Pitt thinks like "a man who is determined never to go off of the beaten road," and balanced sentences and flawless grammar attest to his reliance on the dominant political institutions and protocols (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 2. 497).

Although it is difficult to trace Pitt's balanced sentences in the transcripts that Hazlitt employs, Pitt's 1796 reply to Fox's demand for peace with France shows his investment in the status quo.¹⁰⁷ Pitt "vindicates the first proposition contained in his Majesty's speech" (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 2. 533). He goes on to uphold the king's command to continue the war with France: "allowing for the victories and advantages obtained by the enemy, and for all the calamities which had befallen this country..., the house, from looking at the present principles of the war, must observe the grounds of his [King's] satisfaction and the state of our improvement." In this paraphrase of the speech's introduction, Pitt equates the "calamities" of losing the wars with "improvement"! Through Hazlitt's commentary and prior reporters' transcriptions, Pitt appears as the pawn of monarchical interests spouting contradictory assertions about Britain's (lack of) progress in the French war.

As this speech transcript illustrates, Pitt offers the tautologies and stilted emotional appeals that exemplify the reduced rhetorical practices in the classical curriculum. Hazlitt describes Pitt's grammatically exact speeches in terms of these exercises: "You would not suppose him to be agitating a serious question which had real grounds to go upon but to be

declaiming upon an imaginary thesis, proposed as an exercise in the schools" (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 2. 495). As in the Walpole sketch, Hazlitt paints declamation as a superficial discourse that reduces political issues to "commonplaces" (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 2. 496). However, Pitt's rhetoric is powerful precisely because it is so flimsy: "the total indistinctness and uncertainty of his own ideas tended to confound the perceptions of his hearers more effectually than the most ingenuous misrepresentation could have done." Pitt appeals to members of opposing political parties who take his vapid speeches to mean what they want, which enables the Commons to expedite his agenda. Hazlitt stresses that this "mechanical" style is a product of classical education and Parliamentary procedures because Pitt's speeches "were exactly fitted for the situation in which he was placed" (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 2. 498).

The mechanical William Pitt anticipates Hazlitt's satire on the "Political Automaton," or the politician who spouts empty phrases to advance the ruling faction. In a December 1813 editorial for *The Morning Chronicle*, Hazlitt introduces the automaton in language that resembles his sketch of Pitt in *Eloquence*: "It strains hard to reconcile contradictions, and redoubles the loudness of its vaunts...to hide the extravagance of its pretensions" (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 19. 117). Like Pitt, the automaton elaborates on commonplaces to "treat the interests of the state as the playthings of its pen" and serve "the will of its employer," the monarchy. In an allusion to *Macbeth*, Hazlitt compares the automaton's manipulative speech to a "poor player...[who] struts and frets itself into the notion of the reality of the part it is acting," an image that also recalls the parliamentary "theatre... of noisy impertinence" in *Eloquence*. Like the poet laureate who composes trite "birthday odes" for the king, the "political automaton" transforms serious issues into superficial epideictic displays that reaffirm the existing political

conditions and values. Unfortunately for Hazlitt, this "mechanical" rhetoric becomes a fixture of early nineteenth-century British parliamentary discourse, as I discuss in the next chapter on *The Spirit of the Age*.

4.4.3.2 Burke and “Eloquence”

Troubled by parliamentary rhetoric’s tendency to degenerate into “factious bullying” and declamatory exercises, Hazlitt champions an ideal eloquence that he recognizes in the oratory of Edmund Burke. Unlike Pitt's mechanical rhetoric, eloquence entails innovative uses of *topoi* to address questions whose implications transcend the immediate political debate. Eloquence also comes nearest to poetry through its emotional intensity. Although Burke supports a conservative agenda, Hazlitt suggests that practitioners of eloquence can make audiences think critically about the cultural values at stake in a specific political case. While it fails in a parliamentary setting that demands arguments and action, eloquence becomes a tool for the literary prose author, and Hazlitt redeploys Burke’s tactics in service of a politically oppositional critique.

As with his condemnation of Pitt's mechanical rhetoric, Hazlitt contextualizes Burke within the history of British Parliamentary oratory. Burke's ability to "mix up sentiment and imagery with his reason" resembles the late seventeenth-century style that Hazlitt admires in Bulstrode Whitlock: "Fact and feeling went hand in hand" in Whitlocke’s speeches, just as Burke combines emotional appeals with intellectual seriousness (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 2. 219, 1. 126).¹⁰⁸ As I discuss in Chapter 1, rhetoric occupied a larger place in the classical curriculum of the seventeenth century than in the eighteenth-century curriculum. Students in the seventeenth century cultivated a wide range of genres in their writing exercises, contributing to the richer parliamentary oratory that Hazlitt praises in Whitlocke's era. Burke's

speeches, Hazlitt argues, resemble this older style because they are at once more learned and more emotionally intense than the mechanical oratory of the late eighteenth century.

In the sketch of Burke, Hazlitt represents him as a deliberative orator with epideictic speeches. He compares Burke and Chatham: “Chatham’s eloquence was calculated to make [the audience] act; Burke’s to make them *think*...Chatham supplied his readers with motives to immediate actions; Burke furnished them with *reasons* for action which might have little effect upon them at the time, but for which they would be wiser and better all their lives after”(*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 2. 207). This antithesis distinguishes deliberative rhetoric—moving an audience to “act”—from epideictic rhetoric—moving an audience to “think” and producing habits of thought that influence their long term decisions. Burke’s speeches and writings, unlike Chatham’s, transcend the immediate case at hand and address the deeper historical or philosophical issues at stake in a short-term case. Although critics interpret this passage as evidence for Hazlitt’s canonization of Burke as “the man of genius” and “the instructor of mankind” (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 2. 207), Hazlitt is also interested in a systemic alternative to the mechanical rhetoric that dominated late eighteenth-century British oratory.¹⁰⁹

Expanding Coleridge’s emphasis on shared cultural “principles” that unite people and guide politics, Hazlitt believes that eloquent orators address the cultural values and philosophical questions that transcend the particulars of the debate, or what are essentially epideictic *topoi*. Hazlitt asserts the centrality of these *topoi* to all political and cultural change: “All the great changes which have brought about in the mortal world, either for better or worse, have been introduced *not by the bare statement of facts*...but by the development of certain opinions and abstract principles and reasoning on life and manners, on the origins of society and man’s nature

in general, which being obscure and uncertain, vary from time to time, and produce correspondent changes in the human mind” (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 2. 210). These *topoi*, such as the “opinions and abstract principles” and “reasoning on life and manners,” are the cultural fabric that undergirds specific cases and institutions. These topics speak to audiences who cannot make binding political decisions and thus shape the larger society where specific decisions operate. Like Thomas De Quincey, who argues that the “secondary questions” catalyze and eclipse the “primary questions” of debate, Hazlitt asserts the importance of epideictic *topoi* to all discourse.

The eloquent Hazlittian orator, moreover, must complicate these *topoi*. In the Burke sketch, he identifies two “styles” by which the best orators renovate commonplaces: The “inventive” and the “impressive.” The “inventive” involves communicating new ideas, or “leading the mind to new trains of thought, to which it was before unused” (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 2. 208). As its counterpart, the “impressive” involves complicating already-known ideas—“to give that which was familiar the effect of novelty”—through innovative uses of figurative language and emotional appeals. By figuring style as a means of generating and arranging thoughts, Hazlitt adapts Priestley’s division of discourse into “narrative” and “argumentative” modes from *Lectures on Oratory and Criticism*. The “impressive” style corresponds to Priestley’s “narrative” because it “relate[s] facts with a view to communicate information” and showcases “the most striking relations” between ideas that are already known to the audience (Priestley 6, 34). Moreover, Priestley’s “argumentative” mode, like Hazlitt’s “inventive style,” entails establishing new knowledge through exposition and argument. Like Priestley (and Coleridge), Hazlitt insists that the best prose dramatizes the orator’s thoughts. However, while Priestley stresses a strong division between conveying established facts through

"narrative" and communicating new knowledge through "argument," Hazlitt blurs the lines between these two modes. The most eloquent orators blend both approaches to create a powerful, emotional style that complements the intellectual content of the discourse.

Hazlitt's selections of Burke's speeches in *Eloquence* highlight the "abstract principles and reasoning on life and manners, on the origins of society and man's nature." For instance, Hazlitt includes excerpts from Burke's 1780 proposal for "Economical Reformation," where Burke urges Parliament to adopt his plan of "gradual" reform as the best means of eliminating wasteful government spending.¹¹⁰ In an opening passage comparing hasty reforms to disease, he warns against adverse public reactions to swift, sudden changes:

I do seriously put it to administration, to consider the wisdom of a timely reform....Early reformations are made in cool blood; late reformations are made under a state of inflammation. In that state of things, the people behold in government nothing that is respectable. They see the abuses, and will see nothing else—they fall into the temper of a furious populace, provoked at the disorder of a house of ill fame: they never attempt to correct or regulate; they go to work by the shortest way—they abate the nuisance—they pull down the house."

(*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 2. 225).

This passage begins the variations on the *body politique* commonplace that advance Burke's motion to remove parasitic governmental posts in a gradual plan to regulate spending.¹¹¹ Burke creatively adapts a *topos* to examine the social, economic, and psychological issues surrounding the budget bill.

Hazlitt's framing of Burke and his concept of eloquence recall the Schlegelian conception of literature as a shaper of national values, which became popular among British periodicals in

the 1810s and 20s. Just as Schlegel explains that written oratory is “literature,” Hazlitt asserts that Burke’s “speeches are writings” because they involve the complex motions of mind found in written texts (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 2. 207). Burke is also literary in Schlegel’s sense because he deploys cultural allusions in his political oratory that transcend the limits of the case at hand. For instance, Burke in the 1780 budget speech compares himself to Pyrrhus in the *Aenied*:

When I look to the other side of the water, I cannot help recollecting what Pyrrhus said on reconnoitering the Roman camp, 'These barbarians have nothing barbarous in their discipline.' When I look, as I have carefully looked, into the proceedings of the French king, I am sorry to say it, I see nothing of the character and genius of arbitrary finance....On the contrary, I behold with astonishment, rising, before me, by the very hands of arbitrary power, and in the very midst of war and confusion, a regular, methodical system of public credit.

(*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 2. 222)

Burke uses classical allusion to persuade Parliament to adopt the French King’s fiscal policies in spite of their cultural differences. In the 1790 speech against the French Revolution, Burke also alludes to the headless King Priam as a metaphor for the kingless French state: “Jacet ingenies littor truncus / Avulsumque humeris caput, et sine nomine corpus” (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 2. 222, 414). These classical allusions show Burke as an accomplished scholar who adeptly uses quotes in contrast his similarly educated, but rhetorically inept, peers.

Praising Burke, Hazlitt asserts, “His words are most like things...He exults in the display of power, in shewing the extent, the force, and the intensity of his ideas, he is led on by the mere impulse and vehemence of his ideas, not by the affectation of dazzling his readers with gaudy

conceits and pompous images”(*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 2. 213). Hazlitt evokes emergent Romantic conceptions of literature in which the poet’s words correspond to things. The idea that "words are most like things" and opposition to "gaudy conceits" recalls Wordsworth's condemnation of "gaudiness and inane phraseology" in the 1800 Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* and echoes Wordsworth's note to "The Thorn" in that collection (Wordsworth, "Preface" 392). In the note, Wordsworth explains that poets ought to treat words "as *things*, active and efficient, which are themselves part of the passion" ("Note to 'The Thorn'" 389). Burke, like the Wordsworthian poet, deploys language and figures that advance the intellectual content of his arguments. Extending Wordsworth's ideas, Hazlitt suggests that good literary prose, like good poetry, deploys figurative language as an incarnation of thoughts and feelings.

Lastly, the ideal Hazlittian rhetor treats audiences as active participants in the discourse and presents the opportunity for an informed response. For Hazlitt, participating in Burke's motion of mind does not entail passively accepting his views: "I do not say that [Burke's] arguments were conclusive; but they are profound and true, as far as they go" (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 2. 212). Burke offers readers the opportunity to respond with more than a simple affirmation or refutation of his argument. Hazlitt explains that a liberal reader's "accusation of want of judgment [in Burke], in fact, only means that you yourself are of a different opinion"; readers can disagree with Burke's conservatism, but the intellectual complexity of his speeches also forces them to rethink their own views and defend their perspectives: "Burke presents...one view or face of society. Let him, who thinks he can, give the reverse side with equal force" (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 2. 212–213). Because Burke fosters active audience responses, his speeches have relevance outside of Parliament and merit re-readings.

While eloquence has a life beyond the minutiae of political debates, Hazlitt doubts its efficacy in a parliamentary setting: Given Parliament's devolution into a declamatory arena, will the incompetent politicians follow the nuances of Burke's orations? Burke's rhetoric risks an alienating erudition. In a footnote to Burke's 1780 budget speech, Hazlitt quips that "while Burke was making these fine observations, the gentlemen of the house of commons,...were coughing or scraping their feet against the floor" waiting for Burke to deliver his main point (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 2. 20). Although he satirizes stupid MPs, Hazlitt suggests that Burke's nuanced speeches do not address the audience or the situation. Towards the beginning of the sketch, he also confesses that Burke "was out of his place in the house of commons" (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 2. 207). Although Hazlitt intends to show Burke's superiority to the "motley crew of knights, citizens, and burgesses" who comprise the Commons, he suggests that Burke is unfit for his chosen career. Burke, unlike Pitt who is "perfectly fitted" for his position, cannot play Parliament's declamatory games. Hazlitt gestures to the inefficacy of epideictic oratory on the debating floor: "Burke's mind was satisfied with speculation; Chatham's was essentially *active*" (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 2. 208). Burke does not contribute to political action because his speeches are too philosophical. Lastly, Hazlitt observes that "the subtlety of [Burke's] mind was undoubtedly that which rendered Burke a less popular writer and speaker than he otherwise would have been. It weakened the impression of his observations upon others" (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 2. 209). As an epideictic orator in a deliberative forum, Burke fails to connect with audiences who lack his sophistication.

Through his sketch of Burke, Hazlitt depicts the failure of eloquence in a Parliamentary setting. Hazlitt respects Parliamentary norms to the extent that MPs advance the interests of the people through legislation; rather, he is exploring the extent to which eloquence and

parliamentary deliberation ought to be kept separate. Although he argues that "it is impossible to make a fair decision without having the opposite side of the question clearly and fully stated to us," Hazlitt values concise, agonistic discourse that "clearly and fully" refutes an opponent's argument in a legislative or parliamentary setting (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 2. 212). As Hazlitt observes in a later essay on "Parliamentary Eloquence", the goal of political speech is to "carry a point, gain a verdict for yourself or for truth"; it is not the time for intellectual nuance or to "let out all [one's] knowledge indiscriminately" by arguing the opposite side of the question (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 17. 6). Politicians must make arguments that engage an opponent, advance a side, and lead to a vote. By contrast, Hazlitt suggests that Burke excels in "speculation" for readers distanced from the parliamentary arena.

After the Napoleonic Wars, the Regency crisis, and stifled reforms at home, Hazlitt becomes more cynical towards Burkean eloquence in the 1817 "Character of Mr. Burke," reprinted in *Political Essays*: "The truth is, that Burke was a man of fine fancy and subtle reflection; but not of sound and practical judgment...nor was he a man of sense and business; for, both in counsel and in conduct, he alarmed his friends as much at least as his opponents:--he was an acute and accomplished man of letters—an ingenious political essayist" (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 7. 227). Hazlitt, now disillusioned with Burke's mercurial politics, seems to degrade his oratory and writings. Burke failed because his oratory did not advocate "sound and practical judgment." Burke's ability to explore multiple sides of an issue led him to change his stance on the French revolution, which doomed a progressive movement in the Whig party led by Charles Fox, or "alarmed his friends as much as his opponents." Hazlitt finds the epideictic display of thoughts to be politically ineffective and inappropriate for an orator who claims to represent the people and enact legislation.

Hazlitt in 1817 also blasts the centripetal orientation of Burke's epideictic performances. Burke swayed public opinion towards a unified set of "traditional" British values: "The poison of high example has by far the widest range of destruction" (Hazlitt, *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 7.226). The circulation of Burke's visceral rhetoric in books like *Reflections on the Revolution in France* and as excerpts in parliamentary anthologies stoked public fears of the French Revolution and led Britain into decades of foreign wars, internal oppression and lack of reform. In the case of Burke, Hazlitt finds that the epideictic elements of his serious, emotionally-intense oratory had a stifling effect on politics and society because these very elements enabled the spread of his conservative values.

Yet despite this harsh critique of Burkean eloquence, Hazlitt in 1817 recognizes its potential for a literary discourse distinct from the deliberative oratory of Parliament. He gives Burke qualified praises as an *author* in contradistinction to his "political career":

Burke's literary talents, were, after all, his chief excellence. His style has all the familiarity of conversation, and all the research of the most elaborate composition. He says what he wants to say, by any means, nearer or more remote, within his reach. He makes use of the most common or scientific terms, of the longest or shortest sentences, of the plainest and most downright, or of the most figurative modes of speech. He gives for the most part loose reins to his imagination and follows it as far as the language will carry him.

(*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 7. 229)

In this passage, Burke appears as a literary or epideictic rhetor who orchestrates all verbal resources or "means" to "say what he wants to say." Burke combines disparate elements (i.e. long and short sentences, plain and figurative styles, "common" and learned terms) to produce a

densely textured performance. Hazlitt describes Burke's rhetorical process as the work of "imagination," which further allies Burke with Schlegel's image of the literary author who works great effects from language itself.¹¹²

Hazlitt's 1817 description of Burke's oratory resembles the prose author's self-descriptions from the late 1810s and 1820s. The style that combines "all the familiarity of conversation and all the research of the most elaborate composition" anticipates Hazlitt's defense of his writing in the 1819 "Reply to Gifford." Hazlitt, too, combines a conversational style with complex trains of thought. Moreover, Burke complicates the binary between poetry and oratory in ways that are fruitful for a "prose declaimer":

He is the most poetical of our prose writers, and at the same time his prose never degenerates into a the mere effeminacy of poetry; for he always aims at overpowering rather than at pleasing...He has invariably a task to perform, a positive purpose to execute an effect to produce. His only object is therefore to strike hard and in the right place. (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 7. 229)

Burke's speeches have the imagery and emotional intensity of poetry, combined with the agonistic dynamics of political oratory, or "an effect to produce" upon audiences. This description of Burke resembles Hazlitt's later reflections on literary prose in "On the Prose Style of Poets" from *The Plain Speaker* (1826):

In prose...nothing can be admitted by way of ornament or relief, that does not add new force or clearness to the original concept. The two classes of ideas brought together by the orator or impassioned prose-writer, to wit, the general subject and the particular image, are so far incompatible, and the identity must be more strict, more marked more determinate, to make them coalesce to any practical purpose.

Every word should be a blow: every thought should instantly grapple with its fellow. (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 12. 11)

In this passage, Hazlitt claims for himself, or for the literary prose author, the agonistic energy of Burke's oratory. The prose writer, in the process of writing itself, "grapples" with complex ideas and attempts to "convince" readers to participate in this motion of mind. Hazlitt also adopts Burke's practice of figurative language that advances the intellectual content of the discourse. In Burkean eloquence, Hazlitt recognizes a form of persuasion not limited to specific political cases and that, in fact, thrives outside the legislative commitments and the hermetic declamatory games of Parliament. Hazlitt has found a mode that is suitable for the emergent literary magazines that assess cultural values through their criticism of literature and art. From the Burkean orator, who fails as an epideictic performer in a deliberative setting, Hazlitt creates the "prose declaimer."

4.5 CONCLUSION

I dwell on Hazlitt's mature descriptions of his prose because he begins to explore these criteria in the early *Eloquence of the British Senate*. In this collection of parliamentary speeches, Hazlitt explores the boundaries of epideictic and deliberative rhetoric and proposes a philosophy of rhetoric that distinguishes the literary prose author from political orators and poets. The Parliamentary anthology, a complex genre of remediated oratory and editorial meta-moves, provides Hazlitt with a platform for examining the epideictic remediation of deliberative speeches in the early nineteenth century. Because of its generic hybridity and Hazlitt's detailed commentaries, *The Eloquence of the British Senate* is a Romantic *ars rhetorica*, a highly

performative statement of rhetorical theory that surveys past rhetorical practices and proposes new genres for the present age.

Before I examine Hazlitt's prose tactics in *The Spirit of the Age*, I would like to return to the Burke sketch in *Eloquence*. In that early assessment of Burke, Hazlitt hints at the multivocality of "eloquence," its potential to negotiate opposing voices and engage readers with opposing political views. Burke "makes us think," even if "we" don't endorse his conservative, monarchical politics or repudiation of the French Revolution. Burke's speeches and writings address the history, philosophical questions, and broader cultural values underlying the present controversies. Hazlitt throughout his career continues to wrestle with Burke's legacy, his dynamic, intellectual style and the repressive consequences of his conservative "message." However, the flexibility of epideictic eloquence enables Hazlitt to repurpose Burkean tactics in service of a politically oppositional rhetoric. Hazlitt's description, in the *Plain Speaker*, of the prose writer who grafts complex ideas onto commonplace images is based upon this latent dialogism of Burkean eloquence. A literary writer, without the obligation to represent constituencies or enact laws, can truly "grapple" with the era's competing social voices and reorchestrate them. This author can juxtapose multiple perspectives to assess the values that supposedly unite British society and challenge them. Hazlitt hopes that the literary prose author will be just as successful as Burke was in his reaffirmation of "traditional" British values.

In *The Eloquence of the British Senate*, Hazlitt claims a position for the "prose declaimer" through his assessment of past orators. In *The Spirit of the Age*, he turns to the contemporary poets, politicians, and periodical editors of the 1820s in order to survey the stagnation of post Napoleonic politics and culture. Hazlitt rearticulates classical rhetorical practices in order to orchestrate the age's disparate "voices," which are problematically united by

their attachment to the superficial epideictic rhetoric of classical education. In his most famous collection of verbal portraits, Hazlitt paints a nation of declaimers and, by adapting some of their tactics, establishes the literary prose author as an oppositional epideictic rhetor.

5.0 "THIS SPLENDID PIECE OF PATCHWORK": HAZLITT'S HETEROGLOT RHETORIC IN *THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE*

Hazlitt in *The Spirit of the Age* (1825) addresses the “habits of thought and expression shaping public life” in the 1820s through sketches of leading authors, politicians, and periodical editors (Mulvihill 74). Hazlitt’s “descriptive miscellany” of famous figures is both a product of and a meditation on the Schlegelian model of literature that became popular in Britain in the fifteen years since *The Eloquence of the British Senate* was published (Parker 154). As in that earlier collection, Hazlitt laments the commonplaces and declamatory displays in Parliament, but he also examines the consequences of treating literature as an index and shaper of “national character.” Examples of authors and periodical editors who deploy literature to centripetal, sometimes conservative, ends abound in *The Spirit of the Age*: Poets who once challenged the status quo like Wordsworth and Robert Southey now champion it as a government stamp distributor and a poet laureate. Periodicals such as *The Quarterly Review* and *Blackwood’s* purport to have a “literary” focus that transcends political parties but advance narrow partisan agendas and attack authors who disagree with their views.

Critics of *The Spirit of the Age* have read Hazlitt’s dissatisfaction with early nineteenth-century politics and culture as concern for the stagnation of discourse itself.¹¹³ James Kinnaird, for example, argues that “what seems to worry Hazlitt most is the debilitating effect that polemicists and the more popular writers...were having on language” (322). Annette Cafarelli

likewise observes that “the words written and spoken by politicians, poets, and preachers are divisive, adversarial and contradictory” (132). James Chandler suggests that these divisive words prevent Hazlitt from pronouncing a decisive judgment on the era: “the irreducible multiplicity of representatives...of the Spirit of the Age in Hazlitt’s great volume...aims precisely to refuse or at least diffuse such an epitome” (185). Contentious authors, politicians, and other public figures, in their attempts to rally readers around their preferred values, threaten the cohesion of British society. For recent critics, Hazlitt’s praise and blame for individuals in *The Spirit of the Age* becomes a systemic study of how language unites and divides constituencies.

I extend the work of critics like Kinnaird, Cafarelli, and Chandler by examining Hazlitt’s critiques of rhetoric and rhetorical moves in the *Spirit* sketches. While I agree with Chandler about the multivocality of the “age,” Hazlitt suggests that the leading figures, because of their disparate views, reinforce older aristocratic values and institutions. For Hazlitt, heteroglot arenas from Parliament to periodicals are centripetal institutions because they orchestrate multiple “voices” in an affirmation of these older values. Even seemingly innovative literary practices, such as celebrity poets, are indebted to older privileges like classical education. In this chapter, I trace Hazlitt’s criticism of classical school rhetoric and eighteenth-century Scottish rhetorics in emergent “Romantic” literary practices and parliamentary discourse. The figures in *The Spirit of the Age* are “political poets” and “poetical politicians” who deploy earlier rhetorics to problematic ends: The poets cultivate superficial epideictic performances from official political positions, while the politicians cultivate showy declamations instead of representing the people.

Despite his disgust with the age’s rhetorical practices, Hazlitt plays the disclaimer and redeploys the moves that he finds lacking in the leading poets, politicians, and periodical reviewers. Hazlitt draws upon the ancient exercises called *progymnasmata* to produce complex,

multivocal representations of a chaotic, heteroglot age. By reusing classical rhetorical practices, he establishes his *ethos* as an open-minded critic in contradistinction to the partisan authors that he condemns. He turns the multivocal potential of the era's literary and political practices from centripetal to centrifugal ends: Hazlitt repositions the literary prose author as an oppositional epideictic rhetor who orchestrates the era's clashing "voices" towards a critique of the status quo.

5.1 HAZLITT, *THE NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE*, AND THE LITERARY PROSE AUTHOR

When he wrote the *Spirit* sketches of Jeremy Bentham, John Irving, Horne Tooke, Lord Eldon, and Sir Walter Scott in 1824, Hazlitt had been writing for periodicals for over a decade. These sketches respond to changes in the literary field since Hazlitt compiled *The Eloquence of the British Senate*, including the popularity of the Schlegelian model of literature and the emergence of magazines, like *Blackwood's*, *The London*, and *The New Monthly* that treat literature as a shaper of cultural values. As I discuss below, *The New Monthly Magazine* defines literature in contradistinction to the narrow agendas of partisan politics. Hazlitt exploits this more specialized 1820s literary scene to position the essayist as a critic of politics and culture.

The New Monthly Magazine, where Hazlitt's first *Spirit* sketches were published, complements his "division of labour." Founded by William Coburn in 1814 as "neoconservative" propaganda for the Napoleonic Wars, *The New Monthly* took a literary and centrifugal turn under the editorship of Thomas Campbell in the 1820s (Klancher, *The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790-1832* 62).¹¹⁴ Campbell shifted the publication's focus from commercial and political affairs to the study of literature, adding more poetry, essays, and book reviews. In a

December 1821 preface that explains the changes in the magazine's scope, Campbell describes the *New Monthly* as a "calm spot in the world of political literature where all minds of common charity and candour may meet without the asperities of party feeling"(v). The magazine is a forum above the political fray where contributors and readers celebrate shared values through the evaluation of literature and culture.

Campbell also acknowledges the interdependence of literature and politics in *The New Monthly Magazine*. In the preface, he addresses the "paper wars" between the Britain and the United States following the War of 1812 and enlists literature as a diplomatic gesture during a period of postcolonial tensions. Literature fosters a "charitable feeling between two kindred and free nations"(viii). British authors should engage in literary conversation with their American detractors: "the general character of our publications should gain over the young American, who is to be the future senator or ruler of his country, to form pleasing associations with the political literature of Britain" (x). Just as Schlegel suggests that literature "asserts its influence on active affairs," Campbell asserts that it builds political relationships between nations (Schlegel 22). British literature and magazines reach American readers who may become "senators" and shape their opinions of British culture. These leaders reciprocate the "pleasing associations," and their texts, in turn, alter British readers' opinions. By proposing literature as a solution to the Trans-Atlantic "paper wars," Campbell frames literature as epideictic rhetoric that represents cultural values and influences political decisions by building communities of readers who admire the same values.

Campbell's distinction between political and literary discourse accords with Hazlitt's "division of labour" between politicians and the producers of literature. Hazlitt and the *New Monthly* editor agree that politics should not "invariably pervade every species of literary

compilation" (T. Campbell v). Like Matthew Arnold in the 1860s, they seek a space beyond the narrow agendas of political parties in which participants can assess the broader values behind the minutiae of current debates. Campbell figures the *New Monthly* contributors as "a repertory company of social interpreters" who map and criticize the competing "voices" of 1820s society (Klancher, *The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790-1832* 63).

Hazlitt, too, seeks to define the literary prose author as a social critic, and in the *Spirit* sketches uses the word "critic" to describe the "prose declaimer's" work. For example, Scottish MP James Mackintosh "is *critical*, not parliamentary" in his orations because he argues both sides of the question (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.96) Likewise, Hazlitt remarks that the "critic seems to stand above the author" in Coleridge's prose because Coleridge frequently evaluates the work of other philosophers (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.31). Hazlitt suggests that both Mackintosh and Coleridge encroach on the territory of the critic, whose role is to evaluate authors' and politicians' disparate perspectives. Arguing both sides of the question like Mackintosh is literary work, more appropriate to the periodical than the Parliamentary chamber. In the case of Coleridge, the evaluation of authors is the domain of the critic rather than that of a poetic "genius." Hazlitt distinguishes the literary prose author and demonstrates the critic's work in the *Spirit* sketches.

Hazlitt, like Campbell, asserts the interdependence of literature and politics, but he pushes this model towards a critique of the status quo. In his sketches, Hazlitt criticizes the existing conditions of politics and literary production in early nineteenth-century Britain. He analyzes how popular models of literature often reinforce the dominant values and institutions. The "age" is immersed in competing, yet centripetal, epideictic discourses from the sensationalistic exploits of Lord Byron, to the stock "birthday odes" of the laureate Southey, to

the *ad hominem* attacks of the *Quarterly Review*, to the rants of evangelical preacher Edward Irving. In his *Spirit* sketches, Hazlitt orchestrates the disparate voices of the "age" by repurposing the classical rhetorical moves of these flawed authors, politicians, and speakers. By turning stale rhetorics to fresh purposes, Hazlitt reimagines literary prose as an epideictic discourse that articulates and debates alternatives to the status quo. In the following sections, I examine Hazlitt's assessments of individual figures and his own prose strategies in the *Spirit* sketches.

5.2 "POLITICAL POETS" AND "POETICAL POLITICIANS"

I use the terms "poetical politicians" and "political poets" to describe the figures in *The Spirit of the Age*. Hazlitt extends the argument from *The Eloquence of the British Senate* that politicians have forsaken their responsibility to represent the people by turning their orations into declamations. In his sketches, Hazlitt also suggests that poets wrongly enter politics by seeking patronage, like Wordsworth and Southey, or like Coleridge, by making obscure political statements. I turn to Coleridge and Sir James Mackintosh, a Scottish MP and public speaker, as examples of the political poet and the poetical politician.

Hazlitt connects Coleridge to Mackintosh in *The Spirit of the Age*. At the end of the Mackintosh sketch, he contrasts the two authors' oratorical skills: "we cannot conceive of any two persons more different in colloquial talents, in which they both excel than Sir James and Mr. Coleridge. Sir James M. walks over the ground; Mr. Coleridge is always flying from it...One is an Encyclopedia of Knowledge; the other is a succession of *Sibylline Leaves*!" (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11. 102). Hazlitt contrasts the politician who is preoccupied with mundane facts and the poet who produces imaginative and philosophically complex works.

Although Hazlitt opposes Mackintosh's earthbound erudition to Coleridge's visionary flights, he unites the two with the book metaphor. Both authors are the sum of the texts that they produce and perform: the organized "encyclopedia" of Mackintosh's political commonplaces and the "wild, irregular, overwhelming imagination" that graces the 'leaves' of Coleridge's mature poetry collection (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11. 35).

Hazlitt's Coleridge exemplifies the political poet because he abandons his poetic potential by chasing fruitless careers as a verbose philosopher and a chatty dinner guest. Beyond the epithet of "most impressive talker of the age," Hazlitt frames Coleridge as a professional orator: "On whatever question or author you speak, he is prepared to take up the theme with advantage" (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.29). Coleridge is a supreme declaimer, ready to expound upon any "theme" in ancient or modern literature. Hazlitt stresses Coleridge's role as declaimer through an allusion to the absent-minded scholar in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. Coleridge "'goes sounding on his way,' in eloquent accents, uncompelled and free!" (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.30). Although the image of an "uncompelled and free" speaker evokes a stereotypically spontaneous Romantic poet, the comparison to Chaucer's Clerk "sounding on his way" recalls older rhetorical training and anticipates a similar Chaucerian allusion in the Mackintosh sketch. In that sketch, Hazlitt quotes Chaucer's description of the Clerk—"And gladly would he learn, and gladly teach"—to sum up Mackintosh's misplaced strengths as an epideictic orator who wishes to educate, rather than persuade, audiences (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11. 101).

As the Chaucerian allusion suggests, Hazlitt sees Coleridge as a Romantic poet of "genius" with extensive formal rhetorical training. On the one hand, Coleridge is a practitioner of true eloquence who treats sophisticated philosophical topics. He "utters to the wind...things

mightier and more various” than Mackintosh's fact-bound political speeches (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11. 31). On the other hand, Hazlitt depicts Coleridge’s talent as the product of various institutions: Christ’s Hospital, a charity grammar school that I discuss in the next chapter; Cambridge University; and the 1790s Unitarian church. Hazlitt’s account of Coleridge’s early education upholds Charles Lamb’s image of the “inspired charity-boy” (*Essays of Elia* 48). This Coleridge adds “music, thought, and humanity” to the rote education of Christ’s Hospital, but Hazlitt stresses his official achievements at the school including “knowledge of the classics” and “prizes for Greek epigrams” (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.31). He suggests that these credentials not only enabled Coleridge to attend university but also prepared him for his later careers as a Unitarian preacher, philosopher, and public speaker. Like the well-trained declaimer, Hazlitt’s Coleridge is the sum of his educational experiences, but he transcends the mere orator by creating his own philosophy.

However, Coleridge fails due to the incompatibility of his writerly habits, partially acquired through education, and the commercially oriented print culture. Coleridge exemplifies Hazlitt's assertion in "On the Prose Style of Poets" that "the habit of writing verse" mars poets' ability to write prose, resulting in a style that "halts, totters, is loose, [and] disjointed" (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 12. 5). Coleridge excels as a declaimer and poetic performer, but “his prose is utterly abortive” due to its complexity, digressions, verbal obscurity and Coleridge's endorsement of these qualities (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11. 35). He has the potential to influence public opinion in politics and philosophy, but “the brilliancy and richness of [his] stores of thought” are “lost like drops of water in the ground” because of an obscure style (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.100). Hazlitt singles out *The Friend* as an instance of Coleridge's bad prose: “the principal works, in which he has attempted to embody

his general view of things, is the FRIEND, of which thought it contains some noble passages and fine trains of thought, prolixity and obscurity are the most frequent characteristics” (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11. 35). As discussed in **Chapter 3**, Coleridge in *The Friend* intends to instruct readers “in PRINCIPLES in all things; in Literature; in the Fine Arts, in Morals, in Legislation [and] in Religion,” or teaching the cultural values that undergird specific political cases (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 4. 2. 13). Although Coleridge's agenda is conservative, or what Hazlitt calls the "unclean side," his obscure style alienates, rather than persuades, readers.

Coleridge's reliance on complex sentences and digressions prevent him from enjoying the political perks conferred upon Wordsworth and Southey. Publications like *The Friend*, “shut [him] out when palaces and pensions, when the critics’ praise and laurel wreath were about to be distributed” (Hazlitt, *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11. 37). Hazlitt admires Coleridge's exile from politics. Due to his stylistic obscurity, Coleridge cannot “trammel himself into a poet-laureate or a stamp-distributor” (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11. 34). By contrast, Hazlitt suggests that Southey, the “laureate,” and Wordsworth, the “stamp distributor,” have committed the greater sins by abandoning their early liberal politics, supporting the conservative Regency government, and accepting positions as its representatives (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11. 86). Hazlitt applauds Coleridge for “pitching his tent upon the barren waste” beyond the pale of politics (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11. 38).

However, this concluding image of Coleridge stranded in the wilderness suggests his inability to intervene in contemporary debates. Hazlitt's Coleridge is a fallen genius whose career ends in opium addiction, or “doses of oblivion,” and “writing paragraphs for the *Courier*” (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11. 34). Hazlitt diagnoses Coleridge's fall as a combination

of self-selected obscurity and institutional forces that punish innovation: “government critics” oppose writers who put forth complex ideas; the institutions of the “age” are hostile to the experimental style that Coleridge demonstrates in *The Friend* (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.36). Whereas Wordsworth and Southey follow the money with superficial epideictic performances, Hazlitt’s Coleridge exemplifies the “misfortune” of independent thinkers who lack a profitable niche in the early nineteenth-century print market (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.37). Unable to realize his vast intellectual ambitions, articulate a political agenda, or connect with the reading public, he is a failed “political poet.”

James Mackintosh, a Scottish member of Parliament educated at the University of Aberdeen, is the inverse of the political poet, the poetical politician who occupies a position of great cultural and political influence. Like Coleridge, Mackintosh is an inveterate “talker” as a member of Parliament and a public lecturer. Also like Coleridge, he radically shifted his political views, first championing the French Revolution and opposing Burke in *Vindiciae Gallicae* (1792) and then endorsing Burke and condemning the Revolution in “Lectures on the Law of Nature and Nations” (1799). Although Hazlitt criticizes the “sudden and violent change in Sir James’s views,” he focuses on Mackintosh’s epideictic propensities and Scottish rhetorical education as the causes of his failure in Parliament (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.100).

Hazlitt characterizes Mackintosh as an epideictic orator in a deliberative venue. He “enter[s] into the shock and conflict of opinions on philosophical, political, and critical questions” (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.101). Like Edmund Burke, Mackintosh exceeds the limits of the case at hand, draws upon vast reading, and employs a *bravura* style as demonstrated in Hazlitt’s paraphrase of his speech against the French Revolution: “The volcano

of the French Revolution was seen expiring in its own flames...the principles of Reform scattered in all directions, like chaff before the keen northern blast" (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11. 98). Mackintosh innovates *topoi* and emotional metaphors in order to convey the devastating consequences of the French Revolution.

However, Hazlitt paints Mackintosh's epideictic flair as a liability inside and outside of Parliament. Like Burke, Mackintosh confuses his role as public speaker with his duties as a politician. He plays "rather the lecturer than the advocate" on the House floor with speeches that resemble academic lectures due to a Scottish rhetorical education that emphasized the communication of facts and the appreciation of style (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.96). Echoing the Horatian goals for poetry that eighteenth-century Scottish rhetoricians advocate,¹¹⁵ Hazlitt observes that Mackintosh's speeches "instruct and delight" the audience with a display of cultural allusions (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.96). They are full of "pros and cons, doubts and difficulties, dilemmas, and alternatives" that "compromise the argument" by failing to urge a course of action (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.97, 96). As a result, Mackintosh's speeches lack conviction and endanger his party by neglecting to refute opponents' arguments: "he gave a handle to his enemies; threw stumbling blocks in the way of his friends" in an attempt to give equal weight to both sides of the question (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.97). Mackintosh cultivates learned performances rather than advocate for his constituency and enact political change.

For Hazlitt, Scottish rhetorical education prevents Mackintosh from becoming a competent parliamentary orator. In the 1822 *London Magazine* essay on "The Present State of Parliamentary Eloquence," Hazlitt describes Mackintosh as a product of "the didactic style of parliamentary oratory which has since been imported from our northern colleges," or the

rhetorics associated with Hugh Blair and George Campbell (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 17.5). Due to an education which stressed the study of style and emotional appeals, Mackintosh has become a scholarly "man of taste" of the sort described in Blair's introductory lecture ¹¹⁶. He "belongs to a class (common in Scotland and elsewhere) who get up school-exercises in a masterly manner" (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.103). Although Scottish rhetoricians often oppose their theories to classical rhetoric, Hazlitt suggests that these "new" rhetorics produce schoolboy declaimers who simply display their knowledge and argue both sides of the question.

Hazlitt amplifies the political danger of Mackintosh's Scottish education by connecting it to his inconsistent views of the French Revolution. Mackintosh initially opposed Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* but was swayed by Burke's *Regicide Peace* and wrote a favorable review of it in *The Monthly Review*. Through praise for "an old, a powerful, and admired antagonist," Mackintosh "became a convert not merely to the graces and gravity of Mr. Burke's style, but to...the solidity of his opinions" (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.100). Hazlitt sarcastically concludes that "such is the influence exercised by men of genius and imaginative power over those who have nothing to oppose to their unforeseen flashes of thought and invention, but the dry, cold, formal deductions of the understanding." In this backhanded compliment to Burke, Mackintosh appears as a weak thinker who cannot resist the charm of Burkean eloquence due to training that emphasized the appreciation of style and emotional appeals.

While Hazlitt argues that Mackintosh is more suited for an epideictic orator than a deliberative one, his public speaking career is equally problematic.¹¹⁷ This portion of Hazlitt's sketch is a review of Mackintosh's 1799 "Lectures on the Law of Nature and Nations," a series of

public speeches about the French Revolution given at the Inns of Court.¹¹⁸ The situation of a public lecture suits Mackintosh's dazzling rhetorical skills better than the House of Commons because audiences are not in the position to make binding political decisions, but the effects of his speech are dubious: Mackintosh acts like

a political and philosophical juggler; and an eager and admiring audience gaped and greedily swallowed the gilded bait of sophistry, prepared for their credulity and wonder. Those of us who attended day after day, and were accustomed to have all our previous notions confounded and struck out of our head by some metaphysical legerdemain, were at last at a loss to know *whether two and two made four*, till we had heard the lecture's opinion on that head. (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.98)

This hyperbolic passage, in which Hazlitt ventriloquizes the audience's reaction, shows Mackintosh entertaining a "credulous," fawning audience with his "legerdemain" of philosophical and literary allusions.¹¹⁹ Hazlitt sees through Mackintosh's flimsy appeals to authority, but he suggests that these epideictic performances leave less informed audiences slack-jawed. This passive audience becomes "accustomed" to "swallow[ing]" the speaker's every word. The comparison of Mackintosh to a "juggler" also recalls "Indian Jugglers," where Hazlitt questions petty talents akin to Mackintosh's art of quoting many authors.¹²⁰ Just as the jugglers' tricks lack originality and serious thought, Mackintosh is dependent upon Burke, and his critique of the French Revolution derives its force from Burke's ideas. Although Mackintosh argues a conservative agenda, Hazlitt seems more outraged by Mackintosh's style and the rhetorical dynamics of the lecture setting than by his ideological stance. Like Coleridge's metaphysical

declamations in *The Friend*, Mackintosh's performances are erudite "one-versations" that support the status quo.

The flawed positions of "poetical politician" and "political poet" coalesce in Lord Byron and George Canning, an MP and minor poet who sponsored the *Quarterly Review*. Because both Canning and Byron are classically-educated politicians, Hazlitt represents them as writers of "commonplace" poetry whose immersion in classical rhetorical practices shapes their investment in the status quo (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.158). Hazlitt depicts Canning as a textbook declaimer akin to the mechanical "political automaton," and he uses Byron to explore the residual influence of classical rhetoric on emergent Romantic literary practices.

Hazlitt's Canning sketch demonstrates the detrimental effects of classical training on Parliamentary politics in the 1820s. Canning, a champion of monarchical "Legitimacy," not only upholds the political status quo but his classical training also reinforces this conservative position. Hazlitt opens the sketch by announcing that Canning was "the cleverest boy at Eton," the school that championed Greek and Latin poetry in the eighteenth century (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.150). With this education, Canning "has merely ingrafted a set of Parliamentary phrases and the technicalities of debate onto the themes and school-exercises he was set to compose" as a student. Canning's speeches, Hazlitt alleges, are not so much arguments about real issues as elaborate declamations: "the whole force of his mind has been exhausted in an attention to the ornaments of style and to an agreeable and imposing set of topics" (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.151). Political slogans like "legitimacy" simply replace the trite adages of the classical curriculum because these "technicalities" are interchangeable with the "themes and school-exercises" of the classical curriculum. Like William

Pitt the Younger in *The Eloquence of the British Senate*, Canning is the product of a reduced classical education in which style trumps substance.

Hazlitt criticizes Canning's style at length, and the portrait that emerges is comparable to the declaimer in Charles Valentine Le Grice's *General Theorem for a *****Coll. Declamation* (1796), the parodic "how to" guide for Cambridge University declaimers. Hazlitt's Canning "hears an observation on the excellence of the English Constitution or on the dangers of Reform" and "illustrates it by the application of some well-known and well-authenticated simile" (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.152). Likewise, Le Grice suggests that the declaimer should offer "On these present times at least three or four knocks" and "take the first [simile] that offers itself" when introducing a political controversy (3, 6). Both Canning and Le Grice's stock declaimer reduce contemporary political debates to commonplaces; they obscure real problems with rhetorical ornaments and quotes from classical texts. Even Canning's choice of figures, such as "vessels of the state," and "the torrent of popular fury," resemble those parodied by Le Grice, who advises the declaimer to "Exert the Harlequin's sword of your Rhetoric and turn all your nations into ships" in order to raise a political "storm" with "torrents" (Hazlitt, *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11. 152; LeGrice 11). Canning also specializes in "Britannia's lost freedom," another commonplace of school declamations (LeGrice 4). By depicting Canning as a schoolboy declaimer, Hazlitt shows that Canning has become the rhetorical practices taught in England's elite schools.

Like James Mackintosh, Canning demonstrates the inefficacy of declamation in a parliamentary setting. Hazlitt believes that political oratory should be a dynamic, argumentative process in which the speaker "carr[ies] a point, gain[s] a verdict for yourself or for truth," but declamation, in which speakers argue hypothetical cases on both sides of the question, impedes

this process (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 17.6). Canning "has a ready and splendid assortment of arguments upon all ordinary questions" and "does not confine himself to any one view of the subject" (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.154). Rather, "he takes that side or view of the question that is dictated by his vanity, his interest or his habits" on account of his classical training. Canning's declamatory set pieces, as much as his conservative values, block needed reforms through their inconsistency and vain display. Canning, the polished Eton declaimer, embodies the failure of classical education in a modern Parliamentary government.

For Hazlitt, Canning's classical mis-education illustrates how the entire Parliament is corrupted by an immature classical rhetoric. Canning's oratory exemplifies a specialized political discourse akin to the "poetic diction" that Wordsworth condemns in the preface to *Lyrical Ballads*: "There is also a house of Commons jargon as well as a scholastic pedantry in [Canning's] style of oratory, which is very displeasing to all but professional ears" (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.152). As Hazlitt observed in the sketch of Robert Walpole in *The Eloquence of the British Senate*, parliamentary speeches are words that do not correspond to things, words that consequently fail to represent the people. Canning's political "jargon" is a coterie language, the "inheritance" of elite classically educated politicians, and, as such, it is adverse to the interests of "real" people (Wordsworth, "Preface" 396). Like Wordsworth, Hazlitt criticizes the artificiality of political language: Orations like Canning's "bear the same relation to eloquence that artificial flowers do to real ones—alike yet not the same, without vital heat or the power of reproduction, painted, passionless, specious mockeries" (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.151). Parliamentary speeches, the 'flowers' of rhetoric, are impotent declamations that lack the "vital heat" of argumentation and expediency that Hazlitt values in political oratory.

While Hazlitt's Canning declaims by the book, Hazlitt's Byron demonstrates how classical rhetorical education underlies Romantic concepts of authorship and tilts poets in favor of the status quo. Hazlitt grants Byron a degree of originality for *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and *Don Juan* but highlights the Lord's dependence on his classical training. On the one hand, Byron's poetry is "like a solitary peak" that reveals his dark emotions (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.69). On the other hand, Byron's texts are a "tissue of common-places," or the *topoi* of the classical curriculum (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.76). Hazlitt compares *Childe Harold* to the themes assigned in grammar schools: "Childe Harold contains a lofty and impassioned review of the great events of history, of the mighty objects left as wrecks of time, but he dwells chiefly on what is familiar to the mind of every school-boy" (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.73). *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* is a survey of Europe after the Napoleonic Wars, in which Byron praises fallen empires and blames Britain for exacerbating the wars. Hazlitt, however, finds Byron's meditation on war and empire to be derivative of classical epics and the school exercises in which students imitate these texts. Hazlitt's use of "common-places" to describe Byron's writing ties the poet to Canning through their shared education. Although Byron, unlike his fellow schoolboy declaimer, certainly challenges some aspects of early nineteenth-century society, Hazlitt suggests that the Lord is merely a student of paradox whose declamatory performances, like Canning's, reinforce status quo values.

Byron seems innovative because he introduces classical commonplaces to wider audiences and turns tedious exercises to literary profit. In the *Spirit* sketch, Hazlitt observes that classical platitudes captivate readers only "by being out of place" in English poetry (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.76). Readers of *Don Juan*, for instance, delight in Byron's

unexpected combinations of epic conventions, low humor, and contemporary allusions: "A classical intoxication is followed by the splashing of soda water" (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.75). Byron uses his classical education to game the commercialized book market and win "a niche in the Temple of Fame" (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.77). As a practitioner of classical paradox, he operates through shock and sensationalism: Byron "has taken a surfeit of popularity, and is not contented to delight, unless he can shock the public" into an admiration of his talents (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.76). He "forces" readers "to admire in spite of decency and commonsense" and to "read what they would read in no one but himself" in an attempt to possess classical commonplaces as his own. Byron's formula is successful because non-classically educated readers perceive him as an 'original' poet, while more knowledgeable readers experience the novelty of contrasting styles.

Despite his admiration of Byron's commercial success, Hazlitt assesses the stifling political consequences of his Lordship's sensationalized schoolboy rhetoric. Throughout the sketch, Hazlitt compares Byron's bestsellers to Sir Walter Scott's *Waverly* novels because both promote the interests of the aristocracy despite appeals to the people.¹²¹ He concludes that Byron professes a "preposterous liberalism": Byron "may affect the principles of equality" in poetry that satirizes British politics and propriety, "but he resumes his privilege of peerage" because his aristocratic status allows him to flout the norms (Hazlitt, *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.77). The aristocratic values of Byron's poetry infect his politics. Just as Canning disrupts the legislative process with declamations, Byron neglects his duties as an MP in order to cultivate his own celebrity.¹²² Hazlitt asserts that "his ruling motive is not the love of the people, but of distinction." With his aristocratic entitlement, clever adaptation of commonplaces, and appetite for sensation, Hazlitt's Byron comes across as an unusually talented schoolboy declaimer.

As Hazlitt's comparison of Byron's poetry to the *Waverley* novels suggests, Byron sells classical commonplaces and an aristocratic worldview through the new practices of the commercialized book market. In "On Reason and Imagination," Hazlitt further compares Byron's dramatic poetry to the steam boat, an innovation in transportation: In these plays, emotion "is converted into a handsomely constructed steam-boat, moved solely by the expansive power of words" (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 12.55). Like the boat, Byron emotionally "moves" readers in the most mechanical way through a rehashing of commonplaces and dark melodrama, and this mechanism allies his poetry with the stock speeches of George Canning. In *Spirit*, Hazlitt describes Canning's process of composition as the "manufacture...of *common-places*" and the "staple commodity of speeches," images that suggest the mass production of texts and goods in the early nineteenth century (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.151,152). Through his analysis of the political poets and poetical politicians, Hazlitt exposes the older rhetorical practices and institutions that underlie seemingly modern literary practices.

5.3 "THIS SPLENDID PIECE OF PATCHWORK": HAZLITT'S HETEROGLOT ADAPTATION OF CLASSICAL RHETORIC

As a participant in the same literary market as Byron and Coleridge, Hazlitt repurposes the rhetorical moves of others to create a distinct form of prose. However, he wishes counteract the egotism and centripetal orientation of the poetical politicians and political poets by representing their voices in his writing.¹²³ Like a Bakhtinian novelist, he "interilluminates" or juxtaposes the heterogeneous voices of the age through the classical rhetorical moves that he finds lacking in

others' performances.¹²⁴ By redeploying rote rhetorical practices, such as those of Byron and Canning, Hazlitt puts a heteroglot slant on classical rhetoric and demonstrates its potential for literary prose. In this section, I examine Hazlitt's adaptation of three classical practices: *imitatio*, quotation, and *syncrisis*. Hazlitt's ability to mimic others' styles draws on *imitatio*, an imitation exercise that is part of the preliminary *progymnasmata*. He likewise represents others' voices in his prose through strategic quotations, and his flair for comparing famous authors is a sophisticated form of *syncrisis*, or a comparison exercise.

5.3.1 Imitatio

As Bromwich observes, Hazlitt "echoes" the voices of authors he criticizes, blending their stylistic tics with his own writing (Bromwich 285). This playful echoing is a form of *imitatio*, a *progymnasmata* exercise in which the student "absorbed a technique or style" from a famous author in order to "develop his own voice" (Vickers 77). Hazlitt in the Coleridge sketch, for example, performs his thesis that "our author's mind...is tangential" and jumps between topics to imitate Coleridge's digressive trains of thought (Hazlitt, *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.29). In the sketch of Jeremy Bentham, he imitates the philosopher's "barbarous, philosophical jargon with all the repetitions, parentheses, formalities, uncouth nomenclature and verbiage of Latin law" (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.15). In the *Spirit* sketches, Hazlitt not only mocks leading authors through *imitatio* but also establishes his "voice" as a critic.

A powerful, extended example of *imitatio* is Hazlitt's sketch of William Gifford, the editor of the *Quarterly Review* whom Hazlitt once called "the invisible link that connects literature and the police" (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 9.13). The Gifford sketch is an

ad hominem attack on a critic notorious for *ad hominem* attacks. Hazlitt echoes the status insults typical of Gifford's criticism:

Mr. Gifford was originally bred to some handicraft: He afterwards contrived to learn Latin, and was for some time an usher in a school till he became a tutor in a nobleman's family. The low-bred, self-taught man, the pedant, and the dependant upon the great contribute to form the Editor of the Quarterly Review.

(The Complete Works of William Hazlitt 11.114)

Throughout the sketch, Hazlitt stresses Gifford's 'low, upstart, servile' origins and desire to hide his background by "follow[ing] the train of wealth and power" to a position at the *Quarterly* (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt 11.115*). This class-based invective avenges Gifford's previous assaults on Hazlitt's writing as "crude... laboured lucubrations" and "vulgar...broken English" (Gifford, "Table Talk" 103; Gifford, "The Round Table" 155).

In bringing fastidious charges against a fastidious critic, Hazlitt imitates Gifford's rudimentary style. He deploys a simple subject/verb sentence structure as in "Mr. Gifford has no pretensions to be thought a man of genius...He merely understands the mechanical and instrumental part of learning. He is a critic of the last age" (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt 11.114*). In addition to mocking Gifford's simple sentences, Hazlitt imitates Gifford's repetitiousness. In the second paragraph, for instance, he begins six sentences in a row with 'He': "He damns," "He garbles." "he fly-blows," "He is tetchy," "He has the chalk stones," "He may call out," "He would go" (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt 11.116*). The repetition of "he" echoes Gifford's attack on *The Round Table*:

He professes more than once, with a laudable, though unnecessary caution, that he is not used to "fashionable manners," and in perfect conformity with these

protestations, he is sparing, even to abstemiousness, of all remarks upon gentlemen or gentlewomen; but to make amends, when he gets amongst the "tumbling viragoes," as he playfully calls them, he is quite at home.

(Gifford, "The Round Table" 158)

Through simple, monotonous sentences and repetition, Hazlitt exposes Gifford's rhetoric of reviewing which persuades through repeated attacks on authors' politics.

In his parody of Gifford, Hazlitt analyses *The Quarterly's* powerful alliance with the Tory establishment. Gifford "owes it to his employers to prejudice the work and vilify" writers who oppose the review's politics (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11. 124). As a "dependant upon the great," Gifford executes the will of the politicians who fund his publication. Hazlitt transcends Gifford's tendency to attack writers' personal lives and instead examines him as the product of political and literary institutions. Hazlitt distinguishes his work by acknowledging his Giffordesque performance: "The foregoing [sketch] is a harsh criticism and may be thought illiberal. But as Mr. Gifford assumes a right to say what he pleases of others—they may be allowed to speak the truth of him!" (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.126). The imitation of Gifford reaches a satirical climax: To be heard at all, Hazlitt must write like Gifford.¹²⁵ With this self-reflexive move, he also establishes himself as a 'liberal' critic because he demonstrates the ability to seriously consider a rival's style. Through his ventriloquism, Hazlitt tests out Gifford's style in order to prove its inadequacy and uses the performance to examine the institutional intersections of literature, politics, and the "police." By imitating another's "voice," Hazlitt finds his and explores the social and political conditions of literary production beyond individual authors' idiosyncrasies.

5.3.2 Double-Voiced Quotations

Hazlitt further imitates others' voices through strategic quotations, twisting the practices of quotation in the classical curriculum and early nineteenth-century literary culture. As he observes in *The Eloquence of the British Senate*, classical quotes were a "convenient short-hand language" among the elite, and these appeals to ancient authorities validated the speaker and his audience (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 1.8). In *Spirit*, Hazlitt depicts a number of such passive quoters: Canning "refers to a passage of Cicero in support of his argument, quotes his authority, [and] relieves exhausted attention by a sounding passage of Virgil" (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.152). Southey "has a little resemblance to a common-place book" due to his copious quotations (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.84). Scott "has taken occasion to remember and quote almost every living author" in the mottoes of his novels (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.67). Byron "takes the thoughts of others...out of their mouths and is content to make them his own" (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.70). Quotations were also a convention of book reviews, as reviewers "select all the best passages and...string them together" (Wilson, "Bremhill Parsonage" 227). These quotes supported the critic's judgment and advertised the book under review.

For Hazlitt, the "age" may not have a unified character, but it is an "age" heavily indebted to the circulation and reuse of others' words. Hazlitt complicates conventional uses of quotation by enlisting others' voices to develop his arguments. He exemplifies Bakhtin's observation that citing another's words is "no simple act of reproduction, but rather a further creative development of another's...discourse in a new context and under new conditions" (Bakhtin 347). In other words, quotations manifest Hazlitt's active conversation with other authors rather than serve as superficial ornaments and appeals to authority. Hazlitt's quotations

are “double-voiced” because he uses multiples voices to advance his argument and lets these disparate speakers sound off.

Building on a technique from his 1806 political pamphlet, *Free Thoughts on Public Affairs*, Hazlitt summons authors from different time periods to comment on the present situation.¹²⁶ For instance, in the sketch of Lord Eldon, Hazlitt employs a quote from Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, “All is conscience and tender heart,” to describe the discrepancy between Eldon’s seemingly benign demeanor and the “fine oiliness” of his pro-monarchy machinations (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.142). This phrase, which describes Chaucer’s mild-mannered, hypocritical prioress, compares the corrupt medieval clergy and nineteenth-century politicians who enjoy “pampered indolence” in exchange for endorsing the status quo with a smile. Likewise, Hazlitt quotes Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* in the Gifford sketch when he compares Keats to “a bud bit by an envious worm,/Ere it could spread its sweet leaves to the air” (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.118). The Shakespearean quote depicts Keats’s poetic potential cut short by Gifford’s vitriol.¹²⁷ With this pathos, Hazlitt counteracts the “envious worm,” Gifford’s harsh treatment of Keats, and elegizes the young poet. In the Eldon and the Gifford sketches, Hazlitt integrates multiple perspectives and advances his arguments in other’s words.

Hazlitt sometimes juxtaposes quotations from multiple authors in a single passage. For example, in the sketch of Edward Irving, an evangelical Scottish preacher, Hazlitt speculates on the trajectory of Irving’s career if he had not become famous in London:

He might, in keeping within the rigid line of his duty and professed calling, have preached on for ever; he might have divided the old-fashioned doctrines of election, grace, reprobations, predestination, into his sixteenth, seventeenth, and

eighteenth heads, and his *lastly* have been looked for as a "consummation devoutly to be wished"; he might have defied the devil and all his works, and by the help of a loud voice and strong-set person—"A lusty man to ben an Abbot able;"—have increased his own congregation, and been quoted among the godly as a powerful preacher of the word; but in addition to this, he went out of his way to attack Jeremy Bentham, and the town was up in arms. (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.41)

In this long sentence, Hazlitt cites both Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Chaucer's description of the monk in *The Canterbury Tales* to mock the hypothetical career of a small town Scottish preacher. He even quotes Irving's "voice" indirectly with the "lastly" of the minister's lengthy sermon, a conclusion that constitutes the "consummation devoutly to be wished" from the audience's perspective. He transforms Hamlet's metaphor for death into a joke about "old-fashioned," dogmatic sermons in which preachers rehearse arcane theological concepts through an interminable series of "heads." Without his fiery style, Irving might have been such a long-winded preacher. Hazlitt likewise cites Chaucer from memory, replacing the original "manly man" with "lusty man," to further satirize the hypocrisy of Irving's London fame: Irving with his "loud voice and strong-set person" might have aided "his own congregation" in Scotland, but instead, he channels his energies into the "age's" culture wars with attacks upon leading intellectuals. Irving might have been "quoted" by a small community of the "godly" in his regional Scottish sect, but his words now have achieved nation-wide coverage in the print media of the metropolis.

This passage from the Irving sketch illustrates the full range of Hazlitt's "double-voiced quotes." Here, Chaucer and Shakespeare, poets with disparate styles from distant eras, are

brought together to criticize current preaching styles and practices. To Hamlet's musings on death and Chaucer's anti-clerical satire, Hazlitt adds a parody of the sermon genre, "his sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth heads," and a hint of Irving's "voice" for a complete portrait of a celebrity preacher who abandoned his local congregation and "the rigid line of his duty." He actively re-accentuates the words of Chaucer and Shakespeare, widely circulating authors, to criticize the circulation of Irving's sermons in the same metropolitan print culture that distributes the words of these historical authors and Hazlitt's own writing. While I discuss Hazlitt's self-reflections in the Irving sketch below, it is important to note here that he juxtaposes past and present, metropolis and province, "original" writing and quotation in this nuanced critique of early nineteenth-century culture. Through "double-voiced quotations," Hazlitt revises the passive rhetorical practice of quotation to advance new arguments.

5.3.3 Syncrisis

Hazlitt also plays with *syncrisis*, the *progymnasmata* exercise of comparison and contrast. Several of the *Spirit* sketches deploy comparisons of famous people: In literature, Hazlitt compares Byron and Scott as well as Charles Lamb and Washington Irving. In politics, Sir Francis Burdett and Henry Brougham are paired. In philosophy, he measures Thomas Malthus against William Godwin. Hazlitt pairs politically and stylistically disparate individuals just as students practicing *syncrisis* compare one famous person to another from the same profession with equal talents. For example, ancient *progymnasmata* manuals suggest comparing Hector and Achilles as fictional generals with equal military prowess.¹²⁸ Late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century critics and compilers of literary anthologies also used *syncrisis* to augment

their sketches of famous authors.¹²⁹ In *Spirit*, Hazlitt transforms a worn-out rhetorical ornament into a vehicle of critical inquiry.

Hazlitt's sketch of Byron demonstrates his mastery of *syncrisis*. He opens with a seemingly textbook comparison of Byron and Scott and promises to "treat of them in the same connection, partly on account of their distinguished pre-eminence, and partly because they afford a complete contrast to each other" (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.69). Hazlitt piously performs *syncrisis* by painting Byron and Scott as equally talented, equally famous authors with disparate, yet equally great, styles:

Lord Byron's verse glows like a flame, consuming everything in its way; Sir Walter's glides like a river, clear, gentle, harmless. The poetry of the first scorches, that of the latter scarcely warms. The light of one proceeds from an internal source, ensanguined, sullen, fixed; the other reflects the hues of Heaven, or the face of nature, glancing, vivid and various. The productions of the Northern Bard have the rust and the freshness of antiquity about them; those of the Noble Poet cease to startle from their extreme ambition of novelty, both in style and matter.

(*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.69–70)

The balanced antitheses accentuate the differences between the two literary celebrities, and Hazlitt shows off his rhetorical skill with similes and metaphors.

Hazlitt seems to contrast Scott, the antiquarian storyteller, with Byron, the original poet,¹³⁰ but he soon shatters this binary:

The object of the one writer is to restore us to truth and nature; the other chiefly thinks how he shall display his own power, or vent his spleen, or astonish the

reader either by starting new subjects and trains of speculation, or by expressing old ones in a more striking and emphatic manner than they have been expressed before. He cares little what it is he says, so that he can say it differently from others.

(The Complete Works of William Hazlitt 11.70)

Hazlitt interrupts the chain of balanced antitheses with a long "Byronic" clause in order explain the Lord's vexed relationship to "truth and nature." In his *Theorem*, Le Grice quips that a declaimer using antithesis can "keep up the rhetorical see-saw forever," but Hazlitt throws the weight on Byron's side (LeGrice 9). He moves from a simple exercise in comparison to an inquiry into the classical roots of Byron's "originality," the dynamics of his celebrity, and the consequences of his attachment to aristocratic values. By upsetting the "rhetorical see-saw" of *syncretism*, Hazlitt advances an argument about Byron and Romantic literary activities as a whole.¹³¹

In his heteroglot deployments of classical rhetoric, Hazlitt fails to pronounce definitive praise or blame on any figure in the *Spirit* sketches. As Chandler points out, he eschews the (neo)classical impulse to draw a moral or political lesson from an individual's life.¹³² Hazlitt defies the Aristotelian belief that epideictic praise encourages the emulation of an exemplary individual because he has nuanced takes on the people he criticizes: In the Coleridge sketch, he both mocks the aging "talker" and champions him as an independent thinker; in the Byron sketch, he explores that poet's commercial success in creating a semblance of "originality" out of schoolboy exercises; in the Gifford sketch, he satirizes the "government critic" by imitating Gifford's own style. Hazlitt refutes the premise that the praise or blame of an individual translates into lessons for audiences because he maps how these figures address and are

appropriated by disparate constituencies. For instance, classically-educated and non-classically-educated readers have differing opinions of Byron's poetic "originality." Mackintosh fails in Parliament with his erudition but succeeds in dazzling audiences in public lectures. Magazine editors, like Gifford, promote disparate views of an author according to the political commitments of their publications. By avoiding the straightforward praise or blame of individuals, Hazlitt showcases the competing sets of values in early nineteenth-century society and invents a modern epideictic rhetoric that's capable of orchestrating these voices. While he acknowledges the centripetal, stagnating effects of these disparate "voices," Hazlitt demonstrates how a literary author might use them to imagine alternative values.

5.3.4 The Self-Critical Prose Declaimer

Through his clever, multivocal adaptations of classical school exercises, Hazlitt establishes his position as an open-minded critic of British culture and politics, and he demonstrates this *ethos* through self-critique. As critics have observed, Hazlitt is keenly aware of his implication in the "age's" problematic literary and political practices.¹³³ He assesses the benefits and drawbacks of being a "prose declaimer" in an age of political stagnation and clashing "voices": Given the political trajectories of Wordsworth and Southey, how effective or trustworthy are literary authors' critiques of the status quo? How does the critic's participation in the "institutional heteroglossia" of literary magazines advance or impede his message?

The classical practice of "paradox," or the refutation of conventional beliefs, haunts Hazlitt's critiques of 1820s politics and culture in the *Spirit* sketches. As a "prose declaimer" who criticizes the status quo through epideictic rhetoric, he risks upholding the order he defies. Hazlitt explains in "On Paradox and Commonplace" that "paradox," or the refutation of

commonly-held beliefs, fails to effect political change: the declaimer dismisses "all usages, creeds, and institutions...as a mass of bigotry, superstition, and barbarous ignorance" and alienates potential supporters through a rehearsal of extreme perspectives (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 8.147, 149). In "On Paradox and Commonplace," Hazlitt points to Percy Shelley as an exemplary practitioner of paradox because his atheism, vegetarianism, and radical views on sexuality repel moderate political reformers. In *The Spirit of the Age*, Lord Byron, with his satirical critiques of British society, demonstrates the rhetoric of paradox. Rather than persuade readers to push for political change, paradox merely entertains them or shocks them with extreme views. The refutation of conventional beliefs ultimately ends in the audiences' reaffirmation of those views, and Hazlitt fears that his own prose will be mistaken for this carnivalesque practice.

Hazlitt's sketch of evangelical minister Edward Irving demonstrates his self-reflexive concern about classical paradox. Irving is a fiery preacher from the Scottish backwoods turned London celebrity because of and in spite of his disdain for modern urban mores and trade: "Mr. Irving keeps the public in awe by insulting all their favorite idols" (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.41). For Hazlitt, he is a case study in "the preposterous rage for novelty" because he attracts audiences who attend sermons for "a mixture of delight and astonishment" rather than out of religious devotion (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.38). Irving succeeds on London's lecture circuit precisely because his real agenda of religious conversion fails. As critics like Mark Schoenfield suggest, Irving represents for Hazlitt the consequences of modern publishing practices "where meaning derives from difference beyond individual intentionality," but his repudiations of modern life also recall the classical rhetorical practice of

paradox (32). Like Byron and Shelley, Irving is a clever schoolboy declaimer who shocks audiences.

Hazlitt recognizes some of his own rhetorical practices in Irving's fiery sermons. The preacher becomes "an exemplar of criticism as an active embodied spirit" because Hazlitt compares their strategies (Paulin 246). For example, while commenting on Irving's combination of "the theatrical and the theological," he declares, "What wonder that this splendid piece of patchwork, splendid by contradiction and contrast, has delighted some and confounded others?" (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.39). This description recalls the "patchwork" structure of a typical *Spirit* sketch in which Hazlitt juxtaposes disparate perspectives, recombines quotations from various authors, and creates "splendid contrast" by comparing famous individuals. Irving likewise succeeds through his "transposition of ideas," or a mixture of religious zeal, theatrical panache, and conservative diatribes against urban modernity. He creatively combines several older styles and genres in his oratory just as Hazlitt repurposes classical rhetorical genres and reaccentuates others' voices in his writing

Through this identification with his political opposite, the conservative Irving, Hazlitt transcends the mere display of paradox and demonstrates the full power of his heteroglot rhetorical practices. This nuanced self-reflection extends throughout the *Spirit* sketches as Hazlitt adapts the available rhetorical resources of the "age" in portraits of leading authors and politicians. As Kinnaird observes, the collection demonstrates the rhetorical tactics of a distinctly "literary" author: "Meaning must be sought here not only in statement and logical inference, but in...echoes and repetitions, in parallels and hidden likenesses lurking within apparent contrasts, in *leitmotifs* of tone and phrase" (307). Hazlitt in *The Spirit of the Age* exploits the centrifugal potential of the Schlegelian model of literature and the multivocal techniques of 1820s literary

magazines. Even as he criticizes the centripetal, often conservative, deployments of this model, Hazlitt reinvents literary prose as a modern epideictic rhetoric, capable of representing and engaging the era's competing voices. Even as he recognizes the privileges of classical rhetorical training in emergent "romantic" literary practices, Hazlitt redeploys these rote rhetorical practices in his politically oppositional prose. *The Spirit of the Age* is thus both a critique and a celebration of the era's disparate voices, varied rhetorical resources, and how a literary prose author might re-assemble these towards an alternative political and cultural vision.

5.4 CONCLUSION

With a title that plays upon his career as a lecturer and the textbook genre of "speakers," *The Plain Speaker* (1827), Hazlitt's last collection of essays, conveys the most urgent desire to separate literature from politics and a stronger emphasis on the obstacles to this separation. In essays such as "On the Prose Style of Poets," "On Reason and Imagination," and "On the Conversation of Authors," an embittered Hazlitt laments the stagnation of British literature and politics in the late 1820s. For example, "On the Pleasure of Hating" surveys the damage through an epideictic performance that resembles Shelley's "England in 1819": "I see the insolent Tory, the blind Reformer, the coward Whig!...England, that Arch-Reformer, that heroic deliverer, that mouther about liberty and tool of power, stands gaping by, not feeling the blight...of the new monster [monarchial] Legitimacy" (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 12.135). In addition to this image of England as a declaimer, or "mouther about liberty," Hazlitt condemns his own writings for their inability to effect political change: "Mistaken as I have been in my public and private hopes, have I not reason to hate and despise myself? Indeed I do, and chiefly for not

having hated and despised the world enough" (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 12.136).

In other words, by opting for multivocality and nuance over more centralized models of literary and political discourse, Hazlitt implicitly supports the status quo. He lacks a definitive praise and blame capable of persuading audiences to change their values.

Hazlitt recognizes the literary prose author's loss of relevancy and compromised position in magazines. A "prose declaimer" cannot do justice to all voices in the "age" nor can he treat all groups of readers equally. As Bromwich and Gilmartin have shown, he loses the working-class readers who lack the cultural capital to participate in his clever, allusive performances and who do not share his interest in the epideictic underpinnings of political problems.¹³⁴ Moreover, literary prose is hampered by the very "institutional heteroglossia" of the magazines through which it functions. Scholars of Romantic periodicals from Klancher to Schoenfield have noted how the competing interests of editors, other contributors, and authors quoted in periodicals reframe and compromise an individual author's words. After all, *The New Monthly Magazine*, where Hazlitt published the first *Spirit* sketches promoted the "liberal bourgeois capitalism" that Hazlitt condemns in the commercial print market (Parker 156). Campbell and other contributors also straightforwardly "celebrated and supported [literary] genius," whereas Hazlitt prefers to challenge this emergent "Romantic" myth in his sketches (Higgins 15). Like the "blind Reformer" who relies on a display of learning over a strident call to action, Hazlitt risks supporting the status quo due to the heteroglot nature of his literary prose and the venues where it circulates.

Indeed, Hazlitt represents a "road not taken" in the evolution of Literature as a specialized discourse and an academic discipline. His politically oppositional approach to literary prose is eclipsed by the conservative "principles" of Coleridge and the centripetal, nationalist

configurations of literature theorized by Schlegel and promoted by magazines like *Blackwood's*. Current Romanticists note similarities between Hazlitt's prose practice and Arnold's model of the critic who orchestrates disparate perspectives from above the political fray, yet Arnold himself does not acknowledge any debt to Hazlitt's vision of the prose author as an oppositional epideictic rhetor. Until recent decades, Hazlitt was known as an "impressionistic" critic who focused more on displaying his skill and expressing his emotions than on an assessment of other authors.¹³⁵ He became synonymous with his term "gusto" for describing the visual intensity of paintings as scholars adapted the term to describe his allusive, dynamic prose.¹³⁶ Hazlitt was reduced to a producer of stylistic prose and an emotional, if inconsistent, theorist of aesthetics.

The late cynical Hazlitt and critics' subsequent interpretations of him belie the depth of his rhetorical theory and the range of his rhetorical practice. In his early collection, *The Eloquence of the British Senate*, Hazlitt evaluates British parliamentary oratory and proposes a new form of "eloquence" based on Coleridge's rhetorical principles and Edmund Burke's dazzling performances. In his mature *Spirit of the Age*, Hazlitt likewise transforms the epideictic situation of judging famous individuals into an investigation of how poetry, prose, and oratory operate rhetorically in the complex society of the 1820s. Hazlitt takes a wide-ranging, systemic approach to rhetoric in early nineteenth-century British politics and culture. Although beyond scope of this dissertation, he investigates the rhetorical dynamics of fields as diverse as painting, political oratory, economics, and boxing, while writing in genres ranging from long essays to short newspaper editorials. Terry Eagleton hints at Hazlitt's sophisticated knowledge of rhetoric in an early essay: "Hazlitt's critical language, subtly responsive as it is to the textures of art and rhetoric...inwardly illuminates their meaning by exploring the social matrix which shapes them" (Eagleton, "William Hazlitt: An Empiricist Radical" 110). By investigating the styles of political

ideologies in parliamentary oratory and the competing ideologies of style in early nineteenth-century debates about literature, Hazlitt is among the most thorough and nuanced critics of the era's reconfigurations of politics and culture.

Hazlitt also actively contributes to these changing relationships among politics and culture. Among the "prose declaimers" in my dissertation, he is the most consistently interested in how literary authors can challenge the status quo through the style of their discourses as well as the content. Hazlitt, the son of a Dissenting minister, was trained in the oppositional politics of the 1790s, and although he abandoned the Dissenting religious commitments, strives to expose the power of the dominant political, religious, and education institutions amid the era's literary and commercial innovations. He re-envisioned the literary prose author as an oppositional critic who pronounces blame on the status quo in politics and culture. However, Hazlitt differs from the late eighteenth-century Dissenters like Priestley and early nineteenth-century reformers like Cobbett because his works resist a direct course of action. Instead, he exploits the available rhetorical resources including the reduced classical school rhetorics of parliament, Coleridge's conservative "principles," and the centripetal tendencies of magazines to create a dynamic, heteroglot and densely allusive epideictic prose. Rather than persuade readers to action in limited cases, Hazlitt orchestrates the era's competing voices and reassembles them to propose new literary forms, new values, and new communities of readers.

In these past two chapters, I focused so much on Hazlitt's redeployments of a form of rhetoric that was still a widely-recognized credential for male authors in the early nineteenth century. Like Coleridge, Lamb, and De Quincey, Hazlitt demonstrates the advantages of being a declaimer because he redeploys classical rhetoric in ways that may surprise today's scholars of Romantic literature. Although it seems odd given Hazlitt's disgust with the declamations and

commonplaces of parliamentary orators, the exercises of the *progymnasmata* animate the texture and structure of his prose, including his attempts to incorporate others' "voices." Hazlitt translates the dominant classical practices for training politicians to the emergent institution of literary magazines and repurposes these stale rhetorics to criticize the status quo. As a student at the Dissenting Hackney New College, Hazlitt had a liminal relationship to classical rhetorical education that enabled him to cleverly reshape it, and in the next chapter, I address how Charles Lamb, who also had a liminal relationship to classical training as a charity schoolboy at Christ's Hospital, likewise translates his rote rhetorical training to the middle-class readers of *The London Magazine* in his essays of Elia.

6.0 “REHEARSING CONTINUALLY THE PART OF THE PAST”: LAMB’S ELIA ESSAYS AND CLASSICAL EDUCATION

In "On Familiar Style," William Hazlitt compares Charles Lamb's Elia essays in *London Magazine*¹³⁷ to "Erasmus's Colloquies or a fine piece of modern Latin," linking the archaic diction and syntax of Lamb's persona to the Latin exercises taught in English grammar schools (Hazlitt, *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 8.285). Unlike the schoolboy declaimer George Canning, Lamb is "the reverse of every thing coarse, vulgar, obtrusive, and *commonplace*," as Hazlitt puts it in the sketch of Elia from *The Spirit of the Age* (Hazlitt, *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.179). Because he transcends the commonplaces of political oratory, Lamb seems to embody Hazlitt's ideal for a literary prose writer who productively cultivates older prose styles. Lamb's classicism, a mode associated with young schoolboys and ancient languages, complements the subject matter of the essays because Elia celebrates defunct institutions like the South Sea House and memorializes the "old familiar faces" of his youth. Through a classical style that clashes with the modern outlook of *London Magazine*, a publication dedicated to representing "the present times" (Scott, "Prospectus of the London Magazine" v), Lamb reuses his training from Christ's Hospital, the London charity grammar school that he attended from 1782 to 1789, to create a distinct magazine persona.

Scholars of Lamb, most recently Simon Hull, have discussed Lamb's treatment of classical education in "Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago" (*London Magazine*

November 1820) and in the non-Elia piece “On Christ’s Hospital and the Character of Christ’s Hospital Boys” (*Gentlemen's Magazine* June 1813).¹³⁸ They participate in a larger project to challenge Victorian and Edwardian readings of Lamb as an apolitical author and recover the veiled political commentary in his essays. Since the 1980s, critics like Gerald Monsman, Karen Fang, Felicity James, and Mark Parker have historicized the ways that Lamb “ironiz[es] conventional responses for new ends” by positioning his work in early nineteenth-century institutions including the *London Magazine* and the East India Company (Monsman, “Charles Lamb’s Elia as Clerk” 99).¹³⁹ However, the classical rhetorical practices of Christ’s Hospital, crucial to understanding Lamb’s comic interventions, are overlooked in favor of recovering his involvement in the cultural and political debates of the period.

The classical curriculum at Christ’s Hospital makes visible Lamb’s ludic deployment of archaic rhetorical moves to serious and timely ends. Lamb’s performances as Elia suggest that an author can adapt classical training to produce literary texts that address current debates. I argue that Lamb repurposes the rhetorical exercises and ceremonial oratory of Christ’s Hospital to fashion Elia as a sophisticated schoolboy declaimer. He translates elements of the classical curriculum for the middle-class readers of *London Magazine*. Rather than reinforce the dominant values or elite privilege, classical rhetorical education in Elia’s performances becomes a means of questioning established commonplaces and juxtaposing competing perspectives within a single text. Lamb transforms stale school rhetorics into fresh literary performances that demonstrate the importance of classical rhetoric as a strategic resource for Romantic authors.

By recycling his training from Christ’s Hospital, Lamb practices what Jerome Christensen would call “hopeful anachronism,” or the reuse of seemingly outdated practices in response to “uncertainties regarding innovation, standardization, and competition” (*Romanticism*

At the End of History 188). Christensen argues that Romantic authors and today's literary scholars share a common "re-creation of the given in the light of our best conceptions of good use" in response to the respective social, economic, and intellectual upheavals of their eras (*Romanticism At the End of History* 1, 2). Christensen traces how Wordsworth, Coleridge, and De Quincey repurposed older writing practices and systems of knowledge in response to political, economic, and cultural changes in the period following the Napoleonic Wars. Lamb's playful adaptations of the classical rhetorical curriculum are likewise a compelling case of "hopeful anachronism" that demands a close reading of the essays themselves.

"Hopeful anachronisms" proliferate in periods of sociopolitical change when both older practices and new alternatives are contested, and Lamb writes at a time when classical education for middle-class men was coming under fire. As the son of a law clerk and grandson of a servant, Lamb attended Christ's Hospital, which was established by Edward VI in 1552 for financially struggling middle-class boys whose families could no longer afford a classical education, but by the late eighteenth century, the school's classical curriculum was being challenged.¹⁴⁰ With the rise of a vernacular reading culture, patrons, clergymen, and secular critics questioned the practicality of the dead languages and the classical texts that constituted the English grammar school curriculum.¹⁴¹ The classical curriculum, a traditional part of aristocratic education, was found lacking for both elite political leaders and middle-class businessmen, its rote, hermetic exercises inadequate to the demands of a modern society. In the face of these challenges, Lamb not only defends his classical education in pieces like "On Christ's Hospital" but also demonstrates its versatility through a creative reworking of classical school genres in the *Elia* essays.

Through his Elia persona, Lamb translates the rhetorical genres of Christ's Hospital to a new medium, the printed magazine, and a new audience of middle-class readers. I will first discuss the classical curriculum at Christ's Hospital in the late eighteenth century, which was based on the ancient preliminary exercises called *progymnasmata*. Lamb synthesizes writing exercises, ceremonial school oratory, and a ludic counter curriculum to make Elia into a schoolboy declaimer capable of addressing audiences beyond Christ's Hospital. I then examine Elia's classical performance in "A Dissertation Upon Roast Pig," "The Praise of Chimney Sweeps," and "A Complaint of the Decay of Beggars in the Metropolis," a group of 1822 essays that satirize the emergent institution of voluntary charity.

6.1 LAMB IN THE HISTORY OF CLASSICAL EDUCATION

In the "Old and New Schoolmaster" (*LM* May 1821), Elia observes that grammar teachers are "rehearsing continually the part of the past" as they repeat their instructions to new generations of students:

Rest to the souls of those fine old Pedagogues; the breed, long since extinct, of the Lilys, and the Linacres....Revolving in a perpetual cycle of declensions, conjugations, syntaxes, and prosodies; renewing constantly the occupations which had charmed their studious childhood; rehearsing continually the part of the past....(Charles Lamb, *Essays of Elia* 117)

"Those fine old pedagogues" are trapped in a bubble of Latin exercises, seemingly immune to the vicissitudes of real life. However, Lamb's performances as Elia defy this repetition of past rituals because he deploys basic rhetorical exercises called *progymnasmata* to address new

audiences and ends. As I discussed in **Chapter 1**, the *progymnasmata* are exercises in description, narration, and argumentation that dominated the early modern classical curriculum and residually shaped eighteenth-century education. Lamb, by writing in the English vernacular, translates the *progymnasmata* to the *London Magazine* at a time when classical rhetorical training was becoming obsolete for middle-class mercantile professionals like himself.

Lamb's rhetorical games are timely interventions due to the debates about charity grammar schools in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The challenges to charity schools, which corresponded with the disappearance of the *progymnasmata* from the classical curriculum, were a facet of a broader middle-class “reaction against undirected or wasted resources” in the sixteenth-century Poor Laws and the aristocratic practices of charity implicit in these statutes (M. J. D. Roberts, “Head Versus Heart: Voluntary Charity Organizations in England, 1700-1850” 74). The admissions practices of Lamb’s alma mater, Christ’s Hospital, exemplify this aristocratic model of charity grammar schools. Lower middle-class boys, known as the “bluecoat boys” for their blue uniforms, were sponsored by the school’s wealthy governors who vouched for their financial need and promised to restore them to “as reputable a condition, as any of their fathers had” (Barnes 23). Christ’s Hospital taught Latin and some Greek to the boys who were then apprenticed to merchants; a few were sent to university to become clergymen. Rather than facilitate social mobility, Christ’s Hospital intended to preserve the children’s status as “reputable” Londoners who would give back to the community through their professions. However, by the eighteenth century, Christ’s Hospital was “forced... to choose between classics and charity” because patrons and reformers questioned whether money should be spent to teach Latin to boys mostly destined for commercial careers (Tompson 27). Even Vicesimus Knox, a defender of classical education, remarks that boys training to work in “the

warehouse and accompting house....will not be able to acquire an ease in Latin composition” because “it will not be necessary” for mercantile employment (*Liberal Education, or, A Practical Treatise on the Methods of Acquiring Useful and Polite Learning* 1.85).

To show the relevance and utility of classical education, Christ’s Hospital began to revive rhetorical training in the late eighteenth century by reintroducing written exercises and reaffirming its relationships with London and the nation through ceremonial oratory.¹⁴² James Boyer, the grammar master from 1767 to 1799, supplemented Latin translation exercises with English writing exercises in which students amplified an adage in poetry or prose.¹⁴³ These assignments, known as themes, resemble the exercises of the ancient *progymnasmata*. In his memoir of Christ’s Hospital, Leigh Hunt explains that themes “were upon a given subject, generally a moral one; such as ambition, or the love of money” (*Lord Byron and Some of His Contemporaries, With Recollections of the Author’s Life and His Visit to Italy* 2.171). Students argued for or against the adage using “a few examples got out of Plutarch” (*Lord Byron and Some of His Contemporaries, With Recollections of the Author’s Life and His Visit to Italy* 2.172). Hunt’s sarcastic account of themes resembles the *maxim* exercise of the *progymnasmata* in which students amplified an adage through paraphrase and “testimony of the ancients” (Aphthonius 100, 97).

Lamb’s 1789 poem “Mille Viae Mortis,” copied into Boyer’s notebook, exemplifies the theme with its embellishment of a Latin expression about the “thousand ways of death.”¹⁴⁴ Lamb amplifies this commonplace with a dream-vision narrative, personifications, and descriptions of the underworld. For example, the speaker dreams that he is in “Death’s dark court” (“Mille Viae Mortis” 2):

Here pallid Fear and dark Despair were seen,

And Fever here with looks forever Lean,

.....

Wide-wasting Plague; but chief in honour stood

More-wasting War, insatiable of blood. (9–12)

The dreamer tries to outwit "Death" with a flattering speech, loses the debate, and suddenly wakes up in a darkly comic ending (23-26). As the topic of the poem suggests, themes celebrated the dominant values of Christ's Hospital, including the stoic acceptance of death and knowledge of classical mythology. While performing his theme, Lamb writes as a bluecoat boy who exudes "plain civility," a modest pride in "classical attainments," and a "turn for romance" or imaginative language (Lamb, "On Christ's Hospital" 541, 542).

In addition to themes, the bluecoat boys practiced oral declamations. Declamations taught grammar school students argumentation and rebuttal, and declamations at Christ's Hospital also were performances of school identity. Students gave "annual orations upon St. Matthew's Day" before their families and the school's governors (Lamb, "On Christ's Hospital" 621). An advanced student declaimed in Latin to show "the wider public how well Christ's Hospital taught and cared for its children" (Allan 38). These performances, also known as "Speech Days," resembled the practices of more elite schools like Eton and Harrow.¹⁴⁵ In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, "Speech Days" celebrated classical institutions and reaffirmed the model of aristocratic charity behind Christ's Hospital.

Classical oratory at Christ's Hospital culminated in the "Spital Sermons" given by alumni who became clergymen. Rehearsing the school's mythical history and service to the community, these grateful alumni urged aristocratic and upper-middle-class patrons to continue giving by framing their charity as an enhancement of the British nation. Samuel Parr's *Spital Sermon*,

which urges "men independent in their fortunes, respectable in their status...and distinguished by professional skill" to help the bluecoat boys, is a typical example of the genre (19). As charity grammar schools were challenged by secular critics and members of the Anglican establishment, preachers used Spital Sermons to refute naysayers. Parr, for instance, attacks William Godwin's critique of religious charities and asserts that "we must not condemn Institutions that have flourished for centuries" (18). Parr stresses patrons' obligation to Christ's Hospital by appealing to their identities as Englishmen in contrast to Godwin's new-fangled "French" philosophies. As ceremonial oratory, Speech Days and Spital Sermons attempt to mitigate current controversies with celebrations of shared values and civic identities.

The serious purposes of classical exercises and ceremonial oratory at Christ's Hospital were undercut by a comic counter-curriculum that Roland Barthes terms "rhetoric as a ludic practice." Barthes explains that because classical education was a "repressive" indoctrination of the dominant (elite, male) values, students developed "games, parodies, erotic or obscene allusions, classroom jokes, a whole schoolboy practice" in response to the schools' rigid physical discipline, alienating dead languages, and rote teaching methods (14).¹⁴⁶ Lamb's description of the bluecoat boy in "On Christ's Hospital" demonstrates Barthes' observations about the classically-educated boy and his comic diversions. According to Lamb, the Christ's Hospital student has a dual nature: He must be pious and solemn when addressing the general public and teachers, but among his peers, "in his bounds he is all fire and play" ("On Christ's Hospital" 542). Hunt, for instance, recalls that boys sprinkled their declamations with jokes about the teachers: "the master, while I was saying my lesson....little suspected what a figure he was often cutting in the text" (*Lord Byron and Some of His Contemporaries, With Recollections of the Author's Life and His Visit to Italy* 2.167). In "Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago,"

Elia likewise applauds Coleridge's extracurricular declamations: "Many were the 'wit-combats' ...between him and C[harles]. V[alentine]. Le Grice" in which they showed off their rhetorical skills (*Essays of Elia* 48). Part parody of an elite male subculture, part reaffirmation of it, ludic rhetoric reflects the changing status of classical education at the turn of the nineteenth century.

The schoolboy practices of ludic rhetoric, an inversion of the official school curriculum and rituals, seem like apt influences for the "boy-man" Elia who rejects the "*toga virilis*," or the uniform of the adult citizen orator, in favor of juvenile subject matter (*Essays of Elia* 347). However, I want to posit a more complex relationship between Lamb's immature persona and classical education: Elia's performances of ludic rhetoric transcend the mere inversion of the official order demonstrated by the students' games. Schoolboys who practice ludic rhetoric temporarily subvert their institutional roles to ease the alienation of rote learning and corporeal punishment. They form an alternative community based upon shared knowledge of Latin and the texts of the classical curriculum. Whereas these schoolboy declaimers entertain a homogenous, literally cloistered, audience, Lamb as Elia declaims for the broader middle-class readership of *London Magazine* and redeploys classical rhetorical exercises to address current issues.

Lamb complicates Elia's position as ludic declaimer in "Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago." In this essay, Elia challenges the upbeat tone of the earlier "On Christ's Hospital," where Lamb largely reinforces the official image of bluecoat boys contented with their lots as charity scholars. Elia depicts the "oppressions of these young brutes," or the school's harsh physical discipline and hypocritical class politics, from his perspective as a "poor friendless boy" from the country (*Essays of Elia* 31, 39). An outsider among the London-based student body, young Elia is hardly a candidate for the ludic schoolboy declaimer whose "class clown" antics

suggest an insider status. James Treadwell has argued that “Christ’s Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago” is Lamb’s meditation on the institutionally constructed, “ambiguous social status” of the bluecoat boy, but Lamb also exploits this social ambiguity to establish Elia’s position as a magazine essayist (503).

“Christ’s Hospital Five and Thirty Year Ago” stages Elia’s reinvention as a sophisticated schoolboy declaimer through the borrowed cultural capital of the real Lamb.¹⁴⁷ Although young Elia is merely a listener during the “wit-combats,” the mature Elia who narrates the essay displays copious, clever applications of classical learning that surpass his paltry training under the “careless” lower-division master Matthew Field (*Essays of Elia* 40). Elia, for instance, compares himself to Aeneas when he enviously gazes upon the dining hall’s idealized paintings of bluecoat boys: He is “reduced (with the Trojan in the halls of Dido) to feed [his] mind with idle portraiture” while he eats scanty portions of food before pictures of his well-fed institutional predecessors (*Essays of Elia* 34). Elia exposes the discrepancy between the school’s mythical self-representations and the actual Spartan accommodations through an allusion to a famous episode in Virgil’s *Aeneid*. He also sarcastically reaccentuates Latin vocabulary words, for example, calling the food “*caro equina*,” or horsemeat (*Essays of Elia* 29). “Christ’s Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago” rewrites Elia’s school experiences and retrospectively endows the lowly outsider with the ability to mock the language and texts of the classical curriculum. In the printed essay, the real Lamb, whose classical training surpasses Elia’s; the young Elia, whose alienation constitutes the essay’s content; and the adult Elia merge in the new voice of a schoolboy declaimer who has escaped the school’s bounds: The adult Elia democratizes ludic rhetoric by translating it to wider audiences.

Lamb's Elia is a sophisticated schoolboy declaimer because he uses past rhetorical practices to address new audiences and situations. Rather than echo a shared curriculum, as the schoolboy declaimer does, Lamb redeploys ludic rhetoric to accommodate a greater range of early nineteenth-century "voices" and make jokes that "tell outside of school" (*Essays of Elia* 123). I term these appropriations of school rhetoric "translations" because Lamb adapts a seemingly irrelevant classical discourse to the contemporary situation of the *London Magazine*. Lamb's translations are the inverse of the translations that James Chandler examines in Sir Walter Scott's novels.¹⁴⁸ Scott represents medieval customs, like the code of chivalry, in terms of a modern language of individual emotions that "allows for the fuller treatment of the passions...of the characters involved in the chivalric system" (Chandler 142). While novelists like Scott refract past manners through a present style, Lamb uses archaic style and forms to defamiliarize present controversies and show how present systems of power, including an emergent middle-class power, are dependent upon a residual classical rhetoric: The schoolboy declaimer is not only a useful pose for a periodical author, but the declaimer's games influence the most serious aspects of early nineteenth-century politics and society.

6.2 "ACTING A CHARITY" IN ELIA'S ESSAYS

In "The Old and the New Schoolmaster," Elia imagines how a teacher would respond to his digressive essays: "One of those professors, upon my complaining that these little sketches of mine were any thing but methodical... kindly offered to instruct me in the method by which young gentlemen in *his* seminary were taught to compose English themes" (*Essays of Elia* 123). Although Elia mocks the fictional teacher's pedantry, both agree that his "little sketches" lack

the recognizable organization of school exercises. Elia's "immethodical" writing is crucial to understanding Lamb's sophisticated translations of the classical curriculum. Rather than imitate school exercises whole cloth, Elia often combines several *progymnasmata* genres within a single essay. In this way, his rehearsal of past rhetorical practices is an innovative literary intervention in contemporary debates.

In this section, I look closely at "A Dissertation Upon Roast Pig," "The Praise of Chimney Sweeps," and "The Complaint Against the Decay of Beggars in the Metropolis," a group of Elia essays that question the "concept of Christian charity as it was sentimentalized" among the early nineteenth-century middle classes (Reiman 139). Lamb responds to the "innovation, standardization, and competition" of voluntary charitable institutions in the 1820s. According to the historian of eighteenth-century poverty, Joanna Innes, middle-class critiques of England's poor laws and aristocratic models of charity resulted in "self-governing voluntarily financed collective activities, not subject to more than the bare approval of church or state" by the turn of the nineteenth century (20). These voluntary charities touted the morality of middle-class donors over the *noblesse oblige* of the aristocracy. They were also highly bureaucratic organizations dedicated to distinguishing the "deserving" poor from "impostures," a criterion that their organizers found lacking in the aristocratic charities. Lamb's "Dissertation Upon Roast Pig," "Praise of Chimney Sweeps," and "Complaint," as Simon Hull has shown, mock voluntary charities' efforts to police middle-class generosity and deliver efficient, effective aid to the appropriate recipients.¹⁴⁹ However, in addition to challenging the politics of voluntary charities, I argue that Lamb parodies the structure of argumentative discourse itself. Through his reworking of classical school genres, Lamb undermines not only the terms but also the forms of early nineteenth-century conversations about charity.

6.2.1 "A Dissertation Upon Roast Pig"

I first turn to “A Dissertation Upon Roast Pig” where Lamb mixes declamation and *encomium*, or a discourse of praise, to mock the middle-class consumption of luxury goods. Critics such as Monsman and Denise Gigante have argued that “Roast Pig” is a satire on middle-class consumerism demonstrated by Elia's gluttony, and Lamb also satirizes middle-class appropriations of classical education in his celebration of pork and feasting.¹⁵⁰ Through Elia's status as epicure, Lamb criticizes and exposes the instability of his own position as a classically-educated author.

Elia deploys the declamation because he claims to advance an argument in his celebration of pig: “Of all the delicacies in the whole *mundus edibilis*, I will maintain [roast pig] to be the most delicate, *princeps obsoniorum*” (*Essays of Elia* 282). That is, he will argue that roast pig is the best meat in world. He bolsters what is essentially a non-argument for pig's superiority with argumentative meta-markers like “I will maintain” and “I will contend” throughout the essay (*Essays of Elia* 283). Through Elia's ludicrous attempt to validate individual taste, Lamb mocks the stilted arguments of school exercises.

In addition to this declamatory frame, “Roast Pig” is an encomium, a speech in praise of an exemplary person or thing. The key components of an encomium are the praise of ancestors, the praise of deeds, and the praise of intrinsic virtues.¹⁵¹ An encomium begins with a brief biography, highlighting the person's family and upbringing. The orator must elevate the person's inherent virtues and heroic deeds over wealth or advantages obtained by chance. The orator then performs a *syncretism* or comparison to demonstrate the exemplary person's merits through contrast. The encomium concludes with an epilogue “befitting a prayer,” calling the audience to celebrate and imitate the subject's virtues (Aphthonius 108).

In “Roast Pig,” Lamb plays with the major components of the encomium. The opening anecdote, a parody of eighteenth-century orientalist scholarship, serves as the requisite origins story. Lamb’s mock “Chinese” anecdote of Ho-ti and Bobo praises the pig’s ancestors, or the first Chinese piglets to be accidentally cooked. Just as the speaker of an encomium illustrates the age and dignity of a person’s family, Elia shows off the “antediluvian” origins of cooking pork and the exemplary ancestors of English pigs (*Essays of Elia* 277). Elia addresses the pig’s upbringing, the next major topic of an encomium. He emphasizes the pig’s pristine innocence: The piglet is “guiltless as yet of the sty—with no original speck of the *amor immunditiae*, the hereditary failing of the first parent.” This Edenic pig does not wallow in the mud! An encomiast emphasizes the mythical, miraculous events of a person’s childhood, and Elia likewise celebrates the pig with hyperbole, attributing its exquisite flavor to a prelapsarian innocence.

At this point in the “Dissertation Upon Roast Pig,” Elia alters the traditional order of an encomium. Ancient rhetorician Aphthonius explains that an encomiast addresses three types of deeds: mental virtues, heroic acts, and to a lesser extent, advantages obtained by fortune (108). Elia, however, conflates the inherent qualities of the pig with the human deed of cooking, the qualities bestowed upon it by external circumstances: He commends the pig’s youth, “a young and tender suckling” (Charles Lamb, *Essays of Elia* 283). He relishes the “crispy, tawny, well-watched, not overroasted *crackling*.” He lauds the “indefinable sweetness” of the fat. Elia even praises the cooking when he imagines the pig on a spit: “How equably he twirleth round the string!” According to Elia’s logic, the pig benefits from the gifts of fortune in addition to its inherent good taste. As critics like Monsman have noted, he treats the pig as a religious elect, an innocent soul “happily snatched away” from a dirty barnyard life and the fate of “rank bacon.” Elia frames the piglet’s salvation in terms of social class: Rather than become food for the

“coalheaver,” this pig is predestined for “the grateful stomach of the judicious epicure,” an elite expert who treats eating as a leisure activity. This appeal to the status of roast pig eaters anticipates Lamb's social satire later in the essay.

After praising the pig's culinary merits, Elia performs the *syncretis*, or the comparison section of an encomium. He contrasts pig to pineapple: “Pine-apple is great. She is indeed almost too transcendent” (*Essays of Elia* 285). But pig is better because he is “no less provocative of the appetite, than he is satisfactory to the...ensorious palate” (*Essays of Elia* 285). Elia further contrasts the piglet with human nature: “Unlike to mankind’s mixed characters, a bundle of virtues and vices...he is—good throughout. No part of him is better or worse than another. He helpeth, as far as his little means extend, all around.” At this height of the comparison, Lamb satirizes middle-class readers’ consumerism. He contrasts their selfishness, demonstrated by Elia’s eating habits, with the Christ-like pig who “helpeth... all around.”

Following the conventional *syncretis*, Elia interrupts the encomium by digressing into a critical reflection on his own lack of generosity. Elia turns to himself as an example of the human personality that fails to “helpeth all around”: “I am one of those who, freely and ungrudgingly impart a share of the good things in this life...to a friend” (*Essays of Elia* 285). This appeal is an antithesis to stress his love of roast pig since he confesses that he cannot bear to “extra-domiciliate or send out of the house, slightly (under pretext of friendship or I know not what) a blessing so particularly adapted, I may say, predestined, to my individual palate” as roast pig. To further stress the contrast between the pig's altruistic benevolence and his selective charity, Elia tells another anecdote about sharing his aunt's “plum cake” with a beggar: “In the vanity of self-denial, and the very coxcombry of charity, school-boy-like, I made him present of –the whole cake!” (*Essays of Elia* 286). He retrospectively regrets this random, “impertinent spirit of

alms-giving" as he insulted the aunt who gave him the cake. Elia's self-reflexive commentary recalls the logic of voluntary charity, which stressed the middle-class donor's heartfelt donation to a deserving recipient over the indiscriminate charity of the government and aristocracy. Elia, since his disappointing experience with the plum cake, has learned to regulate his donations, choosing recipients and alms "predestined" to his "individual" whims. The satire reaches a climax as Elia, the connoisseur, shows that he knows how to select the appropriate recipients for his charity.

Lamb's second satirical target, classical education, is introduced at the end of the essay. Elia refers to his previous expertise in porcine matters and training in declamation:

I remember an hypothesis, argued upon by the young students, when I was at St. Omer's, and maintained with much learning and pleasantry on both sides, 'Whether, supposing that the flavour of a pig who obtained his death by whipping (*per flagellationem extremam*) superadded a pleasure upon the palate of a man more intense than any possible suffering we can conceive in the animal, is man justified in using that method of putting the animal to death?' I forget the decision. (*Essays of Elia* 288).

Critics like Karen Fang connect the French Catholic St. Omer's school with the opening "Chinese" anecdote, as examples of distant cultural "others," but few have noted Lamb's reference to the practice of declamation, which was a common practice in *British* grammar schools.¹⁵² The exaggerated "hypothesis"—whether torturing a pig improves the flavor of the meat—recalls the melodramatic fictional cases of ancient Roman declamations. The rehearsal of arguments from "both sides" further recalls the grammar school exercise in which one speaker offers an argument, a second speaker offers a rebuttal, and a third summarizes the debate.

Through the St. Omer's declamation, Lamb demonstrates the absurdity of classical education in the early nineteenth century. Elia's indulgence in roast pig and celebration of luxury are products of a privileged aristocratic worldview, of which classical education also is a part. In this world, the outcome of the debate matters less than the empty display of words that validate a speaker's social status. Indeed, Elia "forgets" the outcome of the conversation at St. Omer's.

I dwell so much on the St. Omer's declamation because Elia participates in early nineteenth-century critiques of classical education even as he gleefully affirms this institution through his performance. While a debate about butchering techniques and the flavor of meat is silly, political critics like Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt used the term "declaimer" as a class-based insult. Lamb's friends, who shared his liminal relationship to classical education, attacked the competence of elite MPs and blamed the institution of classical education for parliaments' corruption and rhetorical inefficacy. By associating his "Dissertation" with the practice of declamation, Lamb ties middle-class readers' consumer habits to their equally ridiculous desire for the cultural capital of a classical education.

The final sentences of the "Dissertation" complete the satire on classical education. Aphthonius explains that an encomium should conclude in a manner "fitting a prayer," but Elia offers readers a different sort of orison:

Banish, dear Mrs. Cook, I beseech you, the whole onion tribe. Barbecue your whole hogs to your palate, steep them in shallots, stuff them out with plantations of the rank and guilty garlic; you cannot poison them, or make them stronger than they are—but, consider he [the piglet] is a weakling—a flower. (*Essays of Elia* 288)

Rather than give thanks for the pig, Elia commands a fictional servant and complains about her cooking. The barbequed hog with "shallots" and "garlic" recalls the coalminers' over-spiced sausages mentioned earlier in the essay. By ending with a condemnation of lower class taste, Elia upholds the artificial distinction that a classical education confers upon members of the middle class. Like a decadent feast amid the economic hardships of the early 1820s, classical education shows off new wealth in the worst ways.

Critics like Simon Hull have observed that Lamb sets up Elia as a callow representative of the middle-class in order to challenge their prejudices, and "Roast Pig" drives home this self-critique through Lamb's/Elia's emphasis on classical education.¹⁵³ From the opening mock "Chinese" anecdote to the concluding St. Omer's debates, "Roast Pig" explores the instability of the classically-educated periodical author. Classical education is both a satirical target and the rhetorical means of delivering the satire through Lamb's adaptations of the encomium and declamation. Although he ridicules the middle-class desire for status symbols, Lamb, through Elia, still boasts classical capital. In keeping with the limited critique of the *progymnasmata* and ludic rhetoric, "Roast Pig" leaves middle-class readers on comfortable ground. Lamb makes fun of their values without going too far, masking his critique with a lively celebration of roast pig. A "Dissertation Upon Roast Pig" lives up to its name as a credential because Lamb shows off his rhetorical acumen to establish his authorial position.¹⁵⁴

6.2.2 "The Praise of Chimney Sweeps"

As in "A Dissertation Upon Roast Pig," Elia's hybrid identity as a classically-trained charity scholar is both an object of satire and a means of satirizing middle-class voluntary charity in "The Praise of Chimney Sweeps." Lamb in this essay adopts the paradoxical encomium, or the

classical exercise dedicated to the praise of things "without honor" and conventional social merit.¹⁵⁵ The paradoxical encomium assumes shared definitions of "honor" among an audience of cultural equals, but faced with a middle-class audience who knows little about the subculture of chimney sweeps, Elia must construct new rhetorical relationships among himself, his readers, and the sweeps who constitute the object of his praises.

"The Praise of Chimney Sweeps" starts by praising sweeps as a class:

I like to meet a sweep—understand me—not a grown sweeper...but one of those tender novices, blooming through their first nigritude, their maternal washing not quite effaced from the cheek—such as come forth with the dawn, or somewhat earlier, with their little professional notes sounding like the *peep peep* of a young sparrow; or like to the matin lark should I pronounce them, in their aerial ascents not seldom anticipating the sun-rise? (*Essays of Elia* 249)

In this *proemium*, or introduction, the sweeps are temporarily displaced by Elia's metadiscursive moves—the self-corrective start in which he specifies young sweeps, the elaborate similes and self-correction comparing the sweeps to sparrows and then larks, the *hyperbaton* of "like to the matin lark should I pronounce them...?" This showy style continues as Elia draws attention to his own praise with first-person statements such as "I have a kindly yearning" and "I reverence." He further buries the sweeps in epithets such as "poor blots," "innocent blacknesses," and "young Africans," images that render them alien to English readers. The *proemium* advances a conventional paternalistic view of chimney sweeps because Elia compares the sweeps to diminutive priests who "preach a lesson of patience to mankind" through their dangerous labor (*Essays of Elia* 250). Elia's opening moves recall the moralistic commonplaces of school themes because he marks his superior status to the sweeps he claims to praise.

The praise of sweeps takes a critical turn when Elia amplifies their merits. After making the sweeps into a moral emblem, Elia offers personal testimony: "When a child, what a mysterious pleasure it was to witness their operation!" (*Essays of Elia* 250). The extended description of a sweep crawling through chimneys hints at the dangers faced by sweeps. Young Elia compares the chimneys to the "fauces Avernii" or the "jaws of hell," worries that the chimney sweeps "will be lost forever," and treats their safe emergence as a miracle. This anecdote ends in an ironic understatement by comparing another boy trapped in a chimney to "an awful spectacle" and to a scene in *Macbeth*. Although he seems to gloss over the "bad sweep's" death by turning it into a literary performance, the grotesqueness of the scene and Elia's childlike wonder undercut his earlier certainty about the inherent virtues of the sweep's lot.

The satire on middle-class paternalism becomes more apparent when Elia addresses the readers. He interrupts the encomium with a hortatory gesture: "Reader, if thou meetest one of these small gentry in thy early rambles, it is good to give him a penny" (*Essays of Elia* 250). He urges the readers to give a small donation to the sweeps, sarcastically adding that "if it be starving weather," they should give the boys a "tester" or six pence. This call to action takes the form of an extended self-correction since, after urging readers to give monetary donations, Elia then suggests that they treat the boys to a cup of "salop," or sassafras tea:

Regale him [the chimney sweep] with a sumptuous basin (it will cost thee but three half-pennies) and a slice of delicate bread and butter (an added half-penny)—so may thy culinary fires, eased of the o'er-charged secretion from thy worse-placed hospitalities, curl up a lighter volume to the welkin—so may the descending soot never taint thy costly well-ingrediented soups—nor the odious cry, quick-reaching from street to street of the *fired chimney*, invite the rattling

engines from ten adjacent parishes to disturb for a casual scintillation thy peace
and pocket! (*Essays of Elia* 254)

Lamb in this passage exposes the hypocrisy of voluntary charity by showing how concern for the sweeps' welfare translates into material benefits for members of the middle class. Not only is the meal of tea and bread cheaper than the "tester," but Elia also launches into a slippery-slope catalog of the ills that readers can avoid by feeding the sweeps. He emphasizes the benefits to the readers, including safer chimneys, better food, and money saved.

Elia's call to action recalls the exhortations of the Spital Sermons in which preachers stressed the ulterior benefits of giving to Christ's Hospital: "Use your endeavours and you will have your reward," Joshua Barnes commands in a 1701 sermon, while Peter Whalley in a 1763 sermon promises that donors will enjoy "the thanks of the applauding world" as well as "never-ending happiness for yourselves" if they continue supporting the school (Barnes 45; Whalley 19–20). The Spital Sermons not only depict charity as a spiritual reward but also as a preservation of the status quo. Preachers urged donors to support orphaned lower middle class boys in order to restore their family's former place in the community. Elia's greater concern for readers' "well-ingredienced soups" over the welfare of the sweeps thus resembles the logic of Spital Sermons demonstrated in Samuel Parr's appeal to the "peace of your [donors'] capital" (23).¹⁵⁶ The charity that Elia recommends does little to improve the dangerous conditions and poverty that sweeps face, but it does preserve the readers' "peace and pocket."

By urging readers to aid the sweeps for their own comfort, Elia establishes an identifiable *ethos* because he appeals to the prejudices and motives of middle-class readers, but he simultaneously must act as a translator of chimney sweep subculture. The numerous digressions throughout the "Praise of Chimney Sweeps" suggest that Elia presents activities and places that

are unfamiliar to a middle-class audience. For instance, he interrupts the praise to describe “salop,” a tea popular among “hard handed artisan[s]”:

There is a composition, the ground-work of which I have understood to be the sweet wood ‘yclept sassafras. This wood boiled down to a kind of tea, and tempered with an infusion of milk and sugar, hath to some tastes a delicacy beyond the China luxury. I know not how thy palate may relish it; for myself, with every deference to the judicious Mr. Read, who hath time out of mind kept open a shop...for the vending of this ‘wholesome and pleasant beverage, on the south side of Fleet-street, as thou approaches Bridge-Street—the only *Salopian house*,’--I have never yet adventured to dip my own particular lip in a basin of his commended ingredients.” (*Essays of Elia* 251)

Elia uses *ekphrasis*, the *progymnasmata* exercise in the description of a place or thing, to describe salop and the venues in which the working classes enjoy this beverage.¹⁵⁷ Elia preserves his middle-class status by admitting that he has not tried a beverage that seems averse to his delicate “stomach” and refined tastes. The assertion that “some” relish salop more than expensive Chinese teas also allies Elia and his readers at the expense of the socially lower salop-drinkers.

In the essay's second half, Elia deploys the *confirmation* exercise to demonstrate the sweeps' inherent virtue and explicate chimney sweep lore. The *confirmation* involves an interpretation of a well-known myth and an argument for why the tale is “clear,” “credible,” and “probable” (Aphthonius 104). In order to prove that sweeps have “a hint of nobility,” Elia tells an anecdote from Howard Castle about a sweep who fell asleep in a fancy bedroom and “slept like a young Howard”(Charles Lamb, *Essays of Elia* 257). He answers this anecdote with a series

of rhetorical questions: “Is it probable that a poor child...would have ventured, under a penalty as he would be taught to expect, to uncover the sheets of a Duke’s bed...is this probable, I would ask, if the great power of nature, which I contend for, had not been manifested within him, prompting such an adventure?” In appealing to the “probable,” Elia attempts to verify a country-house legend; he explains that the sweep’s untimely nap was “probable” on the grounds of a neo-platonic “pre-existent state” in which the poor boy was a nobleman in a former life. A *confirmation* of a narrative must “mention the good repute of the claimant,” or the source of the myth, and so Elia states that “Such is the account given to visitors at the Castle” (Aphthonius 105; Charles Lamb, *Essays of Elia* 257). Through his reworking of the confirmation, a classical exercise that upholds the myths of the dominant culture, Lamb lets readers judge for themselves the validity of the Howard Castle tale and Elia's retelling of it.

The final portion of the “Praise”—an extended account of a charity banquet for sweeps given by the London philanthropist James White— further validates Elia’s middle-class audience by once again shifting the focus of the encomium from chimney sweeps to their benefactors. Because encomiums typically provide audiences with virtues worthy of emulation, Elia turns to White as a model for how the middle-classes should treat chimney sweeps. White wants to “reverse the wrongs of fortune in these poor changelings” by serving the sweeps an annual meal of greasy sausages, a holdover of aristocratic charity (*Essays of Elia* 258). As the phrase “changeling” suggests, Elia treats the sweeps in this portion of the encomium with condescending epithets like “younger fry,” “sable youngers,” and “young desperado[s]” as he ventriloquizes White’s voice (*Essays of Elia* 258, 260). The encomium ends, not with praises for chimney sweeps, but with elegiac praises for White as a paragon of charity.

However, Lamb undercuts the praise of James White through strategic asides. For example, Elia reminisces, “O it was a pleasure to see the sable youngers lick in the unctuous meat, with *his* more unctuous sayings” (*Essays of Elia* 260). He then reports White’s flattering speech to the sweeps:

We had our toasts...which, whether they understood or not, was equally diverting and flattering; and for a crowning sentiment, which never failed, “May the [sweeper’s] brush supersede the Laurel.” All these, and fifty other fancies, which were rather felt than comprehended by his guests, would he utter, standing upon tables, and prefacing every sentiment with a “Gentlemen, give me leave to propose so and so,” which was a prodigious comfort to those young orphans.

In this mini *ethopoeia*, or representation of a character’s speech, White comes off as a manipulative rhetor who patronizes the sweeps with elaborate diction and mock-Parliamentary phrases like “Gentlemen, give me leave.” Lamb suggests that White’s poetic “Laurel,” his “diverting” and “fanciful” speeches, does indeed “supersede” the sweeper’s “brush.” White’s self-congratulatory speech recalls the structure of the “Praise” itself where the sweeps are constantly displaced by archaic epithets, anecdotes, and metamoves that draw attention to Elia’s performance. The critique of White becomes a self-critique as Lamb questions Elia’s showy performance and patronizing attitude towards the poor.

Lamb’s satire on middle-class charity has another twist. He concludes with an elegy for the now-deceased White: “James White is extinct, and with him those suppers have long ceased...His old clients look for him...and missing him, reproach the altered Feast of St. Bartholomew, and the glory of Smithfield departed forever” (*Essays of Elia* 261). In this description of White’s demise, the end of the feasts, and the mourning sweeps, Lamb suggests

that the current generation has forgotten about the plight of chimney sweeps and that White's condescending suppers, a residually aristocratic gesture, were better than the current apathy. He encourages readers to compare past and present attitudes towards chimney sweeps. The concluding elegy thus becomes a call, not to action, but to rethink the broader cultural values and motives underlying charity.

6.2.3 "A Complaint Against the Decay of Beggars in the Metropolis"

While "The Praise of Chimney Sweeps" is a fractured encomium that reaccentuates elements of *ekphrasis*, *ethnopoieia*, and *confirmation*, "A Complaint Against the Decay of Beggars in the Metropolis" (*LM* June 1822) applies the *progymnasmata* to question the perceived "innovation" of voluntary charity. Lamb, through Elia, attacks the new Society for the Suppression of Mendicity (founded 1818) for its bureaucratic attempt to distinguish the deserving poor from imposters. While Simon Hull notes that Lamb dignifies beggars as professional performers and promotes a "liberal, tolerant attitude towards imposture," Lamb also reworks the exercise of the *law*, or an argument against a hypothetical case (143, 147). The "Complaint" is a sophisticated rhetorical performance in which Elia rehearses common literary stereotypes about poverty in order to refute the Society's criminalization of imposture. By speaking through his ludic persona, Lamb further complicates readers' attempts to distinguish the deserving poor from frauds through the performance of the essay itself.

Lamb attacks the Mendicity Society's efforts to regulate middle-class donations as a means of outing imposter beggars. The Mendicity Society was chaired by the Duke of Northumberland but managed by William Bodkin, a lawyer, and funded through middle-class subscribers.¹⁵⁸ Demonstrating the concern for delivering effective aid to the appropriate

recipients, the Society aimed to curtail begging by eliminating “indiscriminate alms-giving” among donors (Bodkin 12). The Society sold tickets to donors who gave them to mendicants in place of money; beggars could exchange these tickets for meals at shelters operated by the Society. Volunteer case-workers, often middle-class businessmen, then screened the mendicants to determine if they needed assistance or if they were fit to work in the Society’s workhouses.

In addition to mocking the bureaucratic pretensions of the Mendicity Society, Lamb criticizes the early nineteenth-century paranoia surrounding fraudulent poverty by speaking as a former charity school student, a position also liable to charges of imposture. In 1811, for example, Parliament began a lengthy investigation of Christ’s Hospital after the school was accused of admitting of wealthy boys as charity cases; Lamb’s “On Christ’s Hospital” responds to this scandal by defending the school’s admissions practices. The Chancery committee likewise upheld the policy of admitting children based upon “the credit of the sponsoring Governor,” thereby validating the sponsors as credible judges of the boys’ poverty (Treadwell 504). Just as the boys admitted to Christ’s Hospital required wealthier sponsors to vouch for their need, the Mendicity Society relied on its administrators and subscribers to distinguish imposter beggars. The “Complaint,” a performance by Lamb’s fictional charity schoolboy, dramatizes the problems inherent in this discourse on imposture through the discrepancy between Lamb, the author, and his Elia persona. Readers’ competence to judge Elia’s identity, and hence the reality of his poverty, is questioned due to the double voiced structure of the essay. By the end, readers are forced to accept imposture and the aristocratic model of charity that the Mendicity Society aims to abolish.

Lamb and Elia defend aristocratic charity with the equally anachronistic classical exercise called *law*. Ancient rhetorician Aphthonius defines the *law* as an exercise that deploys

“the headings by which you elaborate deliberation about future action”(124). In other words, the *law* follows Ciceronian arrangement starting with a *proemium* in which the rhetor announces the pending legislation and takes a stance. The next step is the *confirmatio*, where the rhetor elaborates his stance, giving arguments for or against the case. The rhetor continues with a section called the “contrary” in which he proposes objections (“antithesis”) and refutes them (“solution”). The *law* concludes with a peroration in which the orator summarizes his argument and calls the audience to action.

The "Complaint" begins with a *proemium* in which Elia paraphrases the Society's goal: "The all-sweeping besom of societarian reformation –your only modern Alcides' club to rid the time of its abuses—is uplift with many-handed sway to extirpate the last fluttering tatters of the bugbear Mendicity from the metropolis" (*Essays of Elia* 262). Just as a *law* turns real political cases into hypothetical situations, Elia translates the Society’s bureaucratic agenda into literary diction, such as “the all-sweeping besom of societarian reform” and the classical "Alcides’ club." Beggars are likewise transformed into the synecdoche of "fluttering tatters" and the abstract personification "Mendicity." Elia, as schoolboy declaimer, turns a real controversy into an opportunity for rhetorical play.

After this brief introduction, Elia states his stance in keeping with the conventions of a *proemium*: "I do not approve of this wholesale going to work.... Much good might be sucked from these Beggars"(*Essays of Elia* 262–63). As Hull has shown, Elia echoes Wordsworth’s address to the “Statesmen” in “Old Cumberland Beggar”:

Deem not this Man [the beggar] useless.--Statesmen! ye
Who are so restless in your wisdom, ye
Who have a broom still ready in your hands

To rid the world of nuisances; ...

.....

...deem him not

A burthen of the earth! ("The Old Cumberland Beggar, A Description" 67–73)

Like Wordsworth, Elia characterizes his opponents as impatient broom-wielders who fail to see the virtues of the itinerant poor. Like the poet, he also frames these virtues in terms of a use value. Wordsworth's litotes of "not...useless" are prosaically translated into the "good" to be "sucked" from London's homeless. In taking his stance against the Society's proposed reforms, Elia adopts the "ironic detachment" of a jaded middle-class reader by appealing to the advantages that they can glean from the poor (Hull 142).

Elia proceeds to the *confirmatio* where he elaborates his argument against the Society's plan. This section of the "Complaint" shows off his extensive reading because he dignifies beggars with literary allusions. He first claims that begging is "the oldest and the honourablest form of Pauperism" and supports this claim with examples of fictional beggars, such as the myth of Belisarius, the "Blind Beggar" from English ballads, and King Lear (*Essays of Elia* 263). Elia then argues the inherent worth of beggars with a second claim that they "are the only free men in the universe" because they lack property and thus fall outside of the social hierarchy (*Essays of Elia* 267). Lacking property, money, and a recognized career, beggars provide economically insecure and socially anxious middle-class readers with an opportunity to exercise "pity [un]alloyed with contempt," in contrast to the petty rivalries between professions (*Essays of Elia* 265). Elia concludes the *confirmatio* with a third claim that again paraphrases Wordsworth's "Old Cumberland Beggar." He makes beggars into moral lessons for the community: They are "the standing morals, emblems, mementos, dial-mottos, the spital sermons, the books for

children, the salutary checks and pauses to the high and rushing tide of greasy citizenry" (*Essays of Elia* 267). Elia translates Wordsworth's rural beggar, a "record which together binds / Past deeds and offices of charity," into a diverse array of moralizing texts for an urban "citizenry" who demand a greater variety of "records" (Wordsworth, "The Old Cumberland Beggar, A Description" 81–82). As part of his jaded middle-class act, Elia employs literary allusions with the condescension of a schoolboy quoting classical authors.

The second half of the "Complaint" resembles the "contrary" section of the *law* because Elia presents three antitheses and refutes them. He begins with a pathetic *ubi sunt*:

Whither are they [beggars] fled?Where hang their useless staves? and who will farm their dogs? Have the overseers of St. L—caused them to be shot? or were they tied up in sacks, and dropt into the Thames, at the suggestion of B--, the mild Rector of ---? (Charles Lamb, *Essays of Elia* 267–268)

Elia introduces the first antithesis in the form of the fictional "mild Rector." This "Rector," a straw-man representative of the Mendicity Society, advocates separating beggars from their dogs, placing the men in a "withering workhouse," and killing the animals.

To refute the "Mild Rector," Elia offers the first rebuttal or "solution." He defends the dogs by citing "The Dog's Epitaph," an eighteenth-century Latin poem by Vincent Bourne. Elia praises Bourne as "the most classical, and at the same time, most English of the Latinists" in a digression that temporarily displaces the debate about beggars (*Essays of Elia* 268). He commands readers to "peruse" the poem in order to judge for themselves if beggars and their canine companions "were of a nature to do more harm or good to the moral sense" of London citizens (*Essays of Elia* 268). By including William Cowper's English translation of "The Dog's Epitaph" alongside Bourne's Latin original, Elia appeals to middle-class readers and asserts the

beggars' cultural value: Mendicants inspired Bourne's "*gentle* poetry," which has in turn been translated for the *middle-class* reading nation to consume in the form of Cowper's more well-known work. To demonstrate the "goods" to be acquired from London's itinerant poor, Elia uses the controversy over charity to show off his classical acumen and demonstrate its profitability in a vernacular reading market.

Elia's second "antithesis/solution" pair addresses the "mild Rector's" charge that beggars are a criminal threat. He answers with an anecdote about a legless London beggar in a wooden wheelchair. On the one hand, he paints the disabled man as an entertaining spectacle; Elia calls him "half a Hercules," "the man-part of a Centaur," and "an Elgin Marble," references that connect the classically-educated author with the urban middle class who consumes classical art (*Essays of Elia* 271, 272).¹⁵⁹ On the other hand, these timeless stereotypes are shattered with a historical allusion: Elia observes that this beggar has a "sailor-like complexion" and was injured in "the riots of 1780," or the Gordon Riots (*Essays of Elia* 270). While the beggar's "sailor-like" appearance echoes the Mendicity Society's complaint about beggars "in the garb of seamen," the allusion to the 1780 Gordon Riots suggests that he literally has become paralyzed by socioeconomic unrest (Bodkin 9). This reference to a 1780s riot in an 1820s essay proves Elia's earlier, fanciful claim that the homeless constitute a historical "record" of urban life: Rather than register "offices" of middle-class "charity," the bodies of London's homeless people archive the oppression and violence of the recent past.

Concluding the story of the legless beggar, Elia informs readers that the "House of Commons' committee" has investigated the man and that "he is expiating his contumacy in one of those houses (ironically christened) of Correction" (*Essays of Elia* 272, 271). The Society and the government have failed to provide viable options for the disabled poor: "Was this [the

beggar's disability] a reason that he should be deprived of his chosen, harmless, nay edifying, way of life...?" (*Essays of Elia* 272–73). Elia condemns Parliament's and the Society's criminalization of beggars through a repressive campaign to remove them to workhouses. Elia's anecdote of a London beggar injured in the Gordon Riots gives a serious historical dimension to an essay that is otherwise a schoolboy rehearsal of stereotypes about poverty. Lamb, through Elia, reveals the repressive, hypocritical motives behind voluntary charitable organizations.

Elia's third "antithesis/solution" pair refutes the claim that beggars amass large sums of money without working: "Half of these stories about the prodigious fortunes made by begging are, (I verily believe) misers' calumnies" (*Essays of Elia* 273). Elia refutes the "misers' calumnies" with a story about a blind beggar and a modest "bank clerk" who supported him. In this anecdote, the beggar wills the generous clerk all of his money when he dies. Twisting the classical topic of the "probable," Elia asks: "Was this a story to purse up peoples' hearts, and pennies, against giving an alms to the blind?—or not rather a beautiful moral of well-directed charity on the one part, and noble gratitude upon the other?" This question is absurd because the anecdote fails to refute the charge. Indeed, Elia's observation that the blind beggar "had been half a century perhaps in the accumulating" seems to confirm the homeless' ill-gotten wealth. Rather than straightforwardly refute the charge, Elia turns the tale into another reminder of the moral and material advantages that middle-class readers can glean from the poor through "well-directed charity" in a parody of the Society's objective to regulate donations. Readers are invited to identify with the lucky clerk whose strategic benevolence paid off when he inherited a beggar's life savings.

However, Lamb disturbs his readers' sense of moral and social superiority. After the clerk anecdote, Elia confesses his own lack of charity when encountering beggars: "Perhaps I

had no small change” (*Essays of Elia* 274). Elia suggests his financial insecurity because he cannot spare any money for the mendicants. By confessing to relative poverty as a clerk and periodical author, Elia engages in the petty status wars among middle-class professions that beggars apparently quell. Thus, Elia reasons, the elimination of beggars will result in more complaints from people like him, members of the middle classes who lament their situation in the unstable post-Napoleonic wars economy. Elia’s appeal to his own poverty resembles the logic of the Spital Sermons that appeal to the financial instability of London’s middle-classes; preachers, like Joshua Barnes in his 1703 sermon, assert that “citizens are very subject to mischance” and suggest that the donors or their children may need aid in the future (23). On the surface, Elia plays into middle-class paternalism, but Lamb forces readers to confront their prejudices and vulnerability through Elia’s confession.

This self-reflection extends to the conclusion of “The Complaint” in which Elia exploits Spital Sermon conventions to reinforce his argument against the Mendicity Society. He ends with a stylized *peroration*, or call to action:

Reader, do not be frightened at the hard words, imposition, imposture—*give, and ask no questions*. Cast thy bread upon the waters. Some have unawares (like this Bank clerk) entertained angels.

Shut not thy purse-strings always against painted distress. Act a charity sometimes. (Charles Lamb, *Essays of Elia* 274)

In this impassioned plea, Elia parodies the Spital Sermons with his proclamation that “some unawares...have entertained angels.” Barnes’s sermon, for example, appeals to the hidden potential of bluecoat boys: “From this poor, despicable seed-plot of charity,...He [God] has in our own short memory, rais’d up Doctors to his Church, nay, rulers of his People, even Aldermen

and others of considerable reputation"(22). Thus donors "unawares" may "entertain" England's future bishops and city leaders through their support of Christ's Hospital. Elia, however, frames this auspicious giving in terms of its entertainment value by telling readers to treat beggars as "players" since they will "pay... money to see a comedian feign these things" (Charles Lamb, *Essays of Elia* 275). By stressing the benefits that readers obtain from imposter beggars, Elia grafts the paternalistic logic of the Spital Sermons onto the equally callow logic of voluntary charity.

However, Elia also reveals his identity as a type of imposter beggar in another twist on the conventions of the Spital Sermon. These sermons were spoken by a Christ's Hospital alumnus who acknowledges that the governors' "liberality hath enabled [him] to speak" from a position of religious authority (Barnes 31). Just as the preacher of a Spital Sermon speaks with a borrowed authority, Elia depends upon the readers of *London Magazine* for his status as an author, or the ability to "speak" on its pages. In the *peroration*, Elia ruptures his identification with middle-class readers by stating that they could be "reliev[ing] an indigent bachelor" when they give to a mendicant who impersonates "the father of a family" (Charles Lamb, *Essays of Elia* 275). This final anecdote recalls Elia's self-descriptions from his earlier essays in *London Magazine*, including his bachelorhood and fantasies of fatherhood in "Dream-Children" (*LM* January 1822) and his identity as a former charity schoolboy from "Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago." Elia (or "a liar") is the ultimate fraudulent beggar, a classically-educated "indigent bachelor" who plays a variety of roles to solicit readers' attention in his essays. Unlike the beggar on the street, Elia's claims to indigence are made even more unstable by the mediation of his performance in print.¹⁶⁰

As is common in 1820s magazine essays, Lamb and Elia conclude their mock defense of aristocratic charity with a reflection on the commercial enterprise of literary magazines.¹⁶¹ Lamb exploits readers' prior knowledge of Elia from the earlier essays to challenge their trust in middle-class donors as competent judges of imposture. Like the bluecoat boy at Christ's Hospital, Elia is dependent upon the readers of *London Magazine* to vouch for his merit as an author, and their subscriptions, like those of the Christ's Hospital Governors and the Mendicity Society members, sustain his "life." However, by paying to "hear" a quasi-anonymous author in a written text, they know that they could be supporting a fraud. Elia, after all, masterfully plays the parts of both the cynical middle-class donor and the beggar in this essay. At the end of "The Complaint," readers' confidence and competence as judges are undermined by the position of Elia's essay in the magazine and the conditions of reading itself.

Elia's imposture is aided by the technological innovation of print and the emergent form of the literary magazine, but Lamb in "The Complaint" also suggests the persistence of aristocratic values within new, early nineteenth-century models of charity. Namely, he satirizes the self-serving motives attached to charitable donations and the cultural "goods" that donors appropriate from the poor. Despite reformers' attempts to regulate donations and ferret out impostures, Lamb suggests that this hypocrisy towards the poor remains constant in both voluntary and aristocratic charity. Lamb skewers the vain paternalism of typical middle-class donors, or their residually aristocratic attitudes, through Elia's stylized diction and literary allusions. Elia's entire argument against the Mendicity Society is based upon a rehearsal of sentimental stereotypes about poverty: the inherent dignity of the homeless, their loyal canine companions, their public performances, and their ability to serve as the topics of stilted Latin poetry. His performance in the "Complaint" is undermined by the double-voiced tension that

comes to a climax when Elia admits his own poverty and hints at his imposter status. Lamb, through Elia, collapses the distinction between genuine and imposter performances and thereby refutes the logic of voluntary charity. While Elia's defense of charity seems to comfort middle-class readers by evoking familiar stereotypes of beggars, Lamb undermines their complacency through his satire on Elia.

Because Elia deploys the rhetorical moves of the *law*, Lamb's "liberal, tolerant attitude towards imposture" emerges from the essay's rhetorical moves. The "Complaint," through its double-voiced structure, eschews an overt "message" for readers to heed: Although Elia exhorts readers to "give," the defense of aristocratic charity is ironic at best. Elia and Lamb do not so much endorse an appropriate model of charity as destabilize readers' certainty—in judging impostures and in their own social superiority. Lamb, through his persona, invites readers to question widespread attitudes towards beggars and the rhetorical forms that perpetuate these commonplaces.

In short, Lamb's Elia performances demonstrate that "rehearsing continually the part of the past" can be more than the repetition of empty commonplaces and school rituals. By playing a sophisticated schoolboy declaimer, he transforms classical education into a "hopeful anachronism," a means of evaluating and responding to the political, economic, and intellectual changes of early nineteenth-century society. Lamb, through his playfulness, restores a serious rhetorical purpose to practices that have lost public relevance and political traction. In his performances, classical rhetoric once again becomes an available means of addressing new situations.

Lamb belies the timeliness of his responses because he resists a direct call to action in the Elia essays. As critics have observed, Elia is not trying to change readers' behavior or teach them

new “facts.”¹⁶² Instead, Lamb, speaking through his schoolboy persona, performs one of the most basic functions of epideictic rhetoric: He “challenges [readers]...to reevaluate their personal associations and ideals” and “affirms the worth and dignity of the individual life” through the playful repurposing of exercises like the *encomium*, *thesis*, and declamation (James 210; Nabholz, *My Reader My Fellow-labourer* 20). As a former charity scholar from the contested institution of Christ's Hospital, Lamb/Elia turns these rote exercises and celebrations to heteroglot ends, producing a literary prose capable of incorporating multiple, competing perspectives. Like the ancient *progymnasmata* that trained boys to become professional orators, Lamb's Elia essays train readers to rethink the cultural values that guide their decisions and lay the groundwork for revisions of early nineteenth-century British culture.

6.3 EPILOGUE: LAMB, DE QUINCEY, AND LITERARY MAGAZINES

Lamb's performances as a sophisticated schoolboy declaimer recall those of another schoolboy persona in the *London Magazine*, Thomas De Quincey's “Opium Eater.” In his “Confessions” (*LM* September, October 1821), De Quincey, as the Opium Eater, frequently appeals to his classical learning as a qualification to speak about opium addiction and literature. He recalls, for example, that he “was distinguished for [his] classical attainments” and “could harangue an Athenian mob” (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 2.14). In addition to comically redeploying their classical credentials, both Lamb and De Quincey synthesize classical rhetorical moves with Coleridgean rhetorical principles in their prose. They position their performances away from immediate political decision making. They embrace digression and uncertainty as productive

modes of inquiry and seek to actively engage readers. They admire seventeenth-century prose styles and adapt them to the modern setting of literary magazines.

However, Lamb's and De Quincey's ludic appropriations of classical rhetoric vary in tone and aim. While both participate in the reconfiguration of epideictic rhetoric as heteroglot discourse, De Quincey deploys his polyvocal prose to affirm established literary hierarchies and/or establish new ones. Whereas Lamb exploits the social ambiguity of his position as a charity schoolboy to democratize classical rhetoric, De Quincey uses his classical credentials to uphold his own claims to elite status in spite of addiction and financial difficulties. Lamb and De Quincey, develop different visions for literary magazines and consequently, literature as a discourse that shapes cultural values. In the next chapter, I discuss how De Quincey's adaptation of ludic rhetoric and hierarchical heteroglot prose furthered the agenda of *Blackwood's Magazine*. For now, I turn to Lamb's "Letter to an Old Gentleman Whose Education Has Been Neglected" (*London Magazine* April 1823) in order to amplify Lamb's and De Quincey's disparate views of magazines, literary prose, and classical education.

Lamb's Elia performance "Letter to an Old Gentleman" stages a meeting between the two Romantic prose declaimers: it is a response to and a parody of De Quincey's 1822 "Letters to a Young Man Whose Education Has Been Neglected." Just as De Quincey refutes Coleridge in the "Letters" by advising a young man to become a professional literary author and critic, Lamb mocks De Quincey's project by addressing an elderly autodidact. In "To the Editor," a preface to the main letter, Elia explains that his "bantering Epistle" was inspired by "some letters of your admirable Opium-Eater" ("Letter" 137). He praises the "Opium-Eater" for his "profound learning and penetrating genius" but explains that "the most serious things may give rise to an innocent burlesque; and the more serious they are, the fitter they become for that purpose"

(“Letter” 138). By parodying De Quincey’s “Letters,” Lamb hints at the residual classicism of magazines’ efforts to reframe literature as a shaper of cultural values and challenges the seriousness with which they frame their educational duties.

Lamb’s satire by way of De Quincey rests on Elia’s performance of conventional educational advice. Both Lamb’s and De Quincey’s “Letters” resemble Vicesimus Knox’s advice “On Late Learners” in *On Liberal Education*, which addresses self-taught middle-class men seeking a classical education. Whereas Knox earnestly insists on spreading “a taste for letters” and classical languages to adult students, Elia argues the futility of this enterprise (Knox, *Liberal Education, or, A Practical Treatise on the Methods of Acquiring Useful and Polite Learning* 1.272). Knox, for example, warns that “the late student must...be his own instructor” and recommends that the autodidact consult a “clergyman” to prescribe a course of reading (*Liberal Education, or, A Practical Treatise on the Methods of Acquiring Useful and Polite Learning* 1.267). Elia likewise cautions his pupil against “entering yourself at a common seminary” (Lamb, “Letter” 141). He suggests the old man seek “a man of deep and extensive knowledge” who is “willing to accommodate [himself] to the imperfection of the slowest and meanest capacities” (“Letter” 144).

Entering into a “wit combat” with De Quincey and Knox, Elia plays an arrogant schoolboy declaimer. At times, he insults or talks above his addressee. The following passage demonstrates this elitism as Elia contemplates the results of his pupil’s education:

Leaving the dialects of men (in one of which I shall take leave to suppose you by this time at least superficially instituted), you will learn to ascend ...to the contemplation of that unarticulated language, which was before the written tongue; and, with the aide of the elder Phygrian or Aesopic key, to interpret the

sounds by which the animal tribes communicated their minds—evolving moral instruction with delight from the dialogues of cocks, dogs, and foxes. Or marrying theology with verse...in your own native accents...you will keep time together to the more profound harpings of the more modern or Wattsian hymnics. (“Letter” 145)

Elia in this passage jokes that the old man will learn rare animal languages through the study of Aesop’s fables, mocking Knox’s suggestion that autodidacts should not “confine their attention to English books” and De Quincey’s stipulation that they master foreign languages (Knox, *Liberal Education, or, A Practical Treatise on the Methods of Acquiring Useful and Polite Learning* 1.261). Elia chides the autodidact’s slow progress by claiming that he will never get beyond the fables and *Watt’s Hymns for Children*, texts for beginning students in grammar schools. The complex sentences and archaic diction of this passage further enhance Elia’s *ethos* as a “learned” man who puts down middle-class readers.

Lamb exposes the hypocrisy of Elia, Knox, and De Quincey in the “Letter” by questioning the utility of a formal classical education. The above passage, for instance, suggests that Aesop’s *Fables* are primitive animal discourse, artificially propped up by a Latin “key” that lends these didactic tales an esoteric mystique. Elia further explains that the autodidact will “pronounce, dogmatically and catechistically who was the richest, who was the strongest, who was the wisest, and who was the meekest man that ever lived” (“Letter” 145). This description of his learning recalls the *progymnasmata*, and their eighteenth-century adaptations in grammar school themes, which involve quoting famous persons, ranking them, and listing their achievements. Lamb deflates the pretensions of the educated elites by reducing classical institutions to mechanical exercises and a handful of animal fables.

In this sense, Lamb bridges the gap between middle-class magazine readers and classically educated authors. At times, Elia is courteous to the fictional “old man” when he translates Latin phrases and celebrates the knowledge that the man has gained from periodicals. For example, when describing the old man's plan of education, Elia comments on his own speaking: “My dear sir, if in describing such a tutor as I have imagined for you, I use a style a little above the familiar one in which I have hitherto chosen to address you, the nature of the subject must be my apology. Difficile est de scientiis inscilter loqui, which is as much to say that ‘in treating of scientific matters it is difficult to avoid the use of scientific terms’. But I shall endeavour to be as plain as possible” (143). He later alludes to Rumford, “Peter, the Great Tsar,” and the adventures of Captain Cook as shared cultural references. In the case of Peter, who disguised himself as a labourer in order to learn the “art of shipbuilding,” Elia says that “You are old enough to remember him or at least to talk about him” (“Letter” 142). With this move, Lamb places Elia and his addressee on shared ground and suggests that the old man is “educated”—albeit in a different way than the graduates of the grammar schools and universities.

In the “Letter to An Old Man,” Lamb validates middle-class readers and Elia’s ludic performances of classical rhetoric by satirizing De Quincey’s pretentious vision for literary magazines. Lamb upholds the goals of the polyvocal, experimental *London Magazine* by creating forum where past and present culture, classical education and Kantian aesthetics, can be translated and made relevant to middle-class readers. Although De Quincey also espouses some of these ideals, I explain in the next chapter that he recombines classical rhetoric, Coleridgean rhetorical principles, and the experimental practices of *Blackwood’s Magazine* in the service of a more elitist project—redefining rhetoric as an exclusive, “Literary” discourse at a greater remove from current political and cultural debates.

7.0 DE QUINCEY'S RE-VISIONS OF CLASSICAL RHETORIC AND THE EMERGENCE OF "LITERATURE"

Throughout his long career, Thomas De Quincey discusses rhetoric extensively.¹⁶³ In his 1828 review of Richard Whately's *Elements of Rhetoric* and 1840 series on "Style," De Quincey validates the stylistic experiments of *Blackwood's Magazine* by reframing rhetoric as multiperspectival epideictic mind-play. He argues for a distinct literary prose and adapts the classical *quaestio infinita*, or the open-ended question, to invest literature with the power to build communities of readers. Despite his embrace of open questions, De Quincey, in his reworking of classical rhetorical practices for *Blackwood's*, promotes a closed or centripetal conception of epideictic rhetoric, in which the mind play takes place against a backdrop of already agreed-upon values and "Literature" comes to reflect timeless, universal themes. De Quincey's revision of classical rhetoric aids the Victorian construction of "Romanticism" and the emergence of "Literature" as a discourse that engages readers in conversations about core values while remaining separate from political institutions and debates.

Like William Hazlitt, De Quincey wishes to differentiate the literary "prose declaimer" from politicians, but he revives the term "rhetoric" to describe his work. Whereas Hazlitt uses "rhetoric" in the modern sense of manipulative discourse, De Quincey in his 1828 review of Whately redefines rhetoric as an art of arguing opposites. In the review, he refutes both the classical paradigm of rhetoric as persuasion, represented by Whately's neo-Aristotelian treatise,

and the late eighteenth-century paradigm of rhetoric as an art of communicating emotions, represented by the "author of the Philosophy of Rhetoric," George Campbell (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 6.156). De Quincey asserts that "where conviction begins, the field of rhetoric ends" and reimagines rhetoric as an art of "aggrandizing and bringing [a point] into sharp relief, by means of various and striking thoughts" (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 6.160). His praise for seventeenth-century theologian Jeremy Taylor exemplifies this reconception of rhetoric: "*Human life*, for example, *is short—human happiness is frail*: how trite, how obvious a thesis! Yet in the beginning of the *Holy Dying*, upon that simplest of themes how magnificent a descant! Variations the most original upon a ground the most universal..." (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 6.184). De Quincey applauds Taylor for embellishing a commonplace, the brevity of human life, in new and unexpected ways, presenting this "obvious," universal topic from a variety of perspectives. In the 1840 "Style" series, De Quincey also redefines rhetoric as an all-encompassing "management of our mother-tongue to all offices to which it can be applied" and citing Wordsworth, argues that style is "the *incarnation* of thoughts" rather than ornament (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 12.73, 46). Unlike the other "prose declaimers," De Quincey retains the old term "rhetoric" and expands its scope and functions to encompass literary activities.

Like Charles Lamb, De Quincey uses his classical education to construct a magazine career. However, he deploys classical rhetorical terminology more than any other "prose declaimer" and strives to connect ancient rhetoric with modern literary practices. As a contributor to *Blackwood's*, which featured "popular essays on the Classics," De Quincey wrote numerous essays on the ancient world including a biography of Cicero (1842) and the "Style" series, which treats ancient prose fiction and rhetoric (Wilson, "Noctes Ambrosianae No.

XXXVIII” 526). For instance, in the 1828 review of Whately, he traces a history of rhetoric from the ancient Roman *eloquentia umbratica*, or "shadowy eloquence," to the oratory of Edmund Burke. In the 1840 "Style" essays, De Quincey compares the economic and political factors that impeded style in the ancient world to those in early nineteenth-century print culture.

De Quincey's interest in the rhetorics of the ancient world hints at his imperialist politics that critics have noted in texts like *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*. Like Coleridge, De Quincey develops a centripetal vision of literary prose that creates and teaches the principles that ought to unite the British nation and empire. Echoing *Blackwood's* Schlegelian conception of literature, he promotes what Josephine McDonagh calls a “redemptive and nostalgic... attempt to stop the pollution of social disorder” associated with the proliferation of print culture in the 1820s and 30s (118). De Quincey plays with the "institutional heteroglossia" of literary magazines only to contain it and consolidate periodicals' commitments to unifying middle-class readers through the criticism of literature and culture.

Because of his interests in both rhetoric and literature, De Quincey has been claimed by rhetoricians and Romanticists alike. While Margaret Russett's, D. D. Devlin's, and the modernist Alina Clej's work on the rhetorical aspects of De Quincey's career inform my reading, for the purposes of this chapter, I will focus on critics' discussions of the 1828 review of Whately's *Rhetoric* and 1840 essays on style.¹⁶⁴ These two pieces not only have the most “crossover appeal” with rhetoricians and Romanticists but are also subject to divergent interpretations of De Quincey's rhetorical theory and practice.

In response to De Quincey's art of mind-play, rhetoricians, following William Covino, paint him as a “radical” who synthesizes classical rhetoric, eighteenth-century Scottish rhetorics,

and Wordsworthian-Coleridgean poetics (79).¹⁶⁵ This De Quincey uses “Romantic” methods to transform stale rhetorics into fresh ways of writing and thinking. Lois Agnew’s recent study typifies the rhetoricians’ position. In her attempt to place De Quincey in a neglected nineteenth-century history of rhetoric, Agnew argues that De Quincey promotes the “unrestricted pursuit of intellectual potential” and “language that fosters the intellectual empowerment of individuals rather than clear language that facilitates smooth business transactions” (*Thomas de Quincey* 10). While I agree that De Quincey reframes rhetoric as an enterprise that “need not be connected to practical decision making,” I find rhetoricians’ treatment of him problematic because they select the elements of De Quincey’s rhetorical theories that accord with their own at the expense of the historical, institutional factors that influenced De Quincey’s work (Agnew, *Thomas de Quincey* 15). In their quest to make De Quincey relevant to their field, rhetoricians overemphasize the originality of his ideas and treat them as precursors to late twentieth- and early-twenty-first-century academic expectations for effective writing.

While some Romanticists echo rhetoricians’ picture of De Quincey, more critics approach his rhetorical theory and practice as exponents of his conservative politics and the imperial ambitions of the era.¹⁶⁶ De Quincey, in his studies of style, reinforces class-based language hierarchies and justifies imperial expansion by fantasizing about the circulation of English culture and language in literary texts. In addition to McDonagh’s Foucauldian interpretation of De Quincey as an imperialist theorist of language, Daniel Sanjiv Roberts argues that De Quincey extends Coleridge’s language philosophies to address the changing literary and political scene: “De Quincey’s imperialist fantasies and literary theory may now be seen to be related” because he proposes an “English Coleridgean solution...to the problems of proliferation and complexity engendered by a vast colonial empire” (D. S. Roberts 239). De Quincey adapts

what I call the "Coleridgean rhetorical principles" to promote a hierarchical conception of literature in the face of a growing print market, diverse audiences, and an expanding global empire. Romanticists, using the tools of new historicism, view De Quincey's rhetorical theories as a conservative, even reactionary, enterprise—a means of stifling, rather than fostering, "intellectual empowerment."

While my argument that De Quincey envisions literary prose as a centripetal epideictic rhetoric leans towards the Romanticists' interpretations, I argue that De Quincey reworks classical rhetorical practices that these scholars overlook in their accounts of his imperialist rhetorical theories. In addition to classical allusions and descriptions of the Roman Empire, classical rhetoric informs De Quincey's and by extension, *Blackwood's*, vision of literature as a creator and teacher of cultural values. In this chapter, I show that De Quincey repurposes several forms of classical rhetoric—declamation, the ludic rhetoric of display, and Ciceronian rhetoric—in order to position the Romantic "prose declaimer" as a powerful shaper of cultural values. In the first section, I examine how De Quincey justifies *Blackwood's* writing practices in his review of Whately's *Elements* and furthers the magazine's commitment to challenging middle-class readers with stylistic experiments. In the second section, I connect De Quincey's interest in the "Literature of Knowledge/Literature of Power," a concept familiar to Romanticists, with his equally pervasive interest in the *quaestio infinita*, or the open-ended question in classical rhetoric. De Quincey adapts *quaestio infinita* across his career to reframe literature as epideictic rhetoric that unites readers in a celebration of unchanging, universal values. In his various adaptations of classical rhetoric, De Quincey submits multiperspectival rhetorical play to the unifying impulses of the individual rhetor and the dominant culture, a stance that anticipates later Victorian conceptions of "Romanticism" and "Literature" itself.

7.1 DE QUINCEY'S RHETORIC IN 1828 AND THE MISSION OF *BLACKWOOD'S*

As Jon Klancher observes, the early nineteenth-century “writer had to become institutional to survive,” and De Quincey’s review of Whately’s *Elements of Rhetoric* reflects the institutional *ethos* of *Blackwood’s Magazine*, where his work was intermittently published from 1824 to 1859 (*The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790-1832* 48)¹⁶⁷. De Quincey, in his redefinition of rhetoric as a *bravura* performance, supports the magazine’s mission to shape middle-class readers into serious judges of British culture through stylistic experiments. De Quincey bases his 1828 redefinition of rhetoric upon the ancient rhetorics of display in which the rhetor’s aim is to showcase his versatility and stimulate the audience’s thinking about a commonplace subject.¹⁶⁸ Through his reworking of these practices, he underscores the residual, and occasionally comic, classicism at the heart of *Blackwood’s* “modern” prose experiments.

Classical epideictic rhetoric drives De Quincey’s 1828 review of Whately’s *Elements of Rhetoric*. Whately, an Oxford professor, promotes a Neo-Aristotelian view of rhetoric as “argumentative composition,” and De Quincey launches his attack on such rote classicism with appeals to his own classical credentials (6). He mocks Whately’s reliance on Aristotle: “But as all parties may possibly fancy a confirmation of their views in Aristotle, we shall say a word or two in support of our own interpretation of that author, which will surprise our Oxford friends” (DeQuincey, *The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 6.157). He announces his redefinition of rhetoric as an art of proving opposites by mentioning that he made his discovery “when studying the Aristotelian rhetoric at Oxford” and that this view “will surprise our Oxford friends.” With this display of classical capital, De Quincey speaks as a schoolboy declaimer engaging in “paradox,” or an exaggerated argument against a conventional position. He challenges Whately’s and

Oxford's rote classicism in order to orientate rhetoric from an art of persuasion to an art of epideictic display.

In addition to this schoolboy move, De Quincey's re-vision of rhetoric as multiperspectival mind-play is based upon ancient epideictic practices. As I discussed in Chapter 1, declamation, the practice of arguing hypothetical cases on both sides of the question, and the rhetorics of display were common epideictic practices in the ancient world. De Quincey, by redefining rhetoric as an art of displaying opposite sides of the question, invokes declamation, and he hints at the rhetoric of display when he yearns for the *eloquentia umbratica* of the Romans: "Rhetoric...may be called an *eloquentia umbratica*; that is, it aims at an elaborate form of beauty, which shrinks from the strife of business" (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 6.161). For De Quincey, *eloquentia umbratica*, or "shadowy eloquence," is incompatible with the technical details of judicial and legislative cases that are presented in political institutions. It is an art of "eddy about [one's] own thoughts," an "Aurora Borealis," and a process of "intellectual activity" that takes place in the "shade" outside the forum or the courtroom (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 6.181, 163, 165). Borrowing Coleridge's description of *The Friend*, De Quincey describes rhetoric as the "flux and reflux of thought" in which the rhetor displays his process of inquiry (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 6.181). Through the pageantry of rhetoric, the rhetor shows off his skills and moves audiences to thought by surveying topics from multiple angles.

As Romanticists and rhetoricians alike have noticed, De Quincey's 1828 review essay practices what it theorizes.¹⁶⁹ Not only does De Quincey wander from topic to topic before addressing Whately's *Elements*, as is common in early nineteenth-century book reviews, but he also enacts the "flux and reflux of thought" on the sentence level.¹⁷⁰ For example, while praising

Taylor, De Quincey observes that "old thoughts are surveyed from novel stations and under various angles: and a field absolutely exhausted throws up eternally fresh verdure under the fructifying lava of burning imagery" (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 6.184). De Quincey, like Coleridge, values rhetoric that "dissolves, diffuses, [and] dissipates, in order to re-create," or produces "fresh verdure" from worn-out philosophical topics (Coleridge, *Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 7.1.304). De Quincey's metaphorical illustration demonstrates these principles because he uses metaphor as self-correction. He begins by comparing the rhetor's work to an unchanged landscape viewed from "novel stations and under various angles." However, the other metaphor about the volcano, offered as a second illustration, does not correspond to the first because it suggests a process of destruction and renewal, rather than just a change of perspective. The rhetor in the second metaphor is figured in a more active position than that of the landscaper viewer in the first. By offering these two uneven metaphors, De Quincey dramatizes the concept that he seeks to illustrate.

De Quincey in the volcano metaphor further practices what he theorizes because he reuses imagery from William Stevenson's 1824 *Blackwood's* article, "On the Reciprocal Influence of Periodical Publications and the Intellectual Progress of This Country." Stevenson argues for the improvement of literary culture in the decades following the French Revolution. He justifies the Revolution as a catalyst to this progress and describes the uprising as "a moral earthquake, bringing to the surface the lava which destroys and overwhelms all in its progress; but this lava itself...is converted into a fertile soil, fitted to nourish and rear, not only the common produce, but also those seeds to germinate, which but for this convulsion, would have lain dormant and useless in the bosom of earth" (Stevenson 522). Like De Quincey, Stevenson deploys the figure of self-correction, first comparing the Revolution to an "earthquake" and then

to "lava" which "converts" barren land to "fertile soil." He frames the burst of literary activity that we call "Romanticism" as those rare "seeds" that would have lain "useless" and makes *Blackwood's* the crowning achievement of this revitalization. In 1828, De Quincey relocates Stevenson's lava metaphor from the political events of the Revolution to the rhetor's power over commonplaces. Like the "lava" of "burning imagery" itself, De Quincey creates "fresh verdure" from another author's commonplace metaphor.

By reworking an image that previously appeared in *Blackwood's*, De Quincey participates in the magazine's writing practices and mission to continue the post-Revolutionary cultural progress. As I explain in Chapter 1, the editors and contributors at *Blackwood's* (also called *Maga*) adopted the German critic Friedrich Schlegel's conception of literature as a shaper of "national character," a form of epideictic rhetoric that reflects and creates the cultural values that underwrite specific political decisions. The magazine's "Coleridgean synthesis of German theory and Burkean politics" was complemented by a mission to mold middle-class readers into judges of British culture by challenging their expectations of periodical prose (Duncan 48). As Klancher explains, *Blackwood's* "acts as a force field for the power of thought" and seeks to build the "national mind" by creating a group of serious middle-class readers (*The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790-1832* 58). The major contributors, including John Wilson, John Gibson Lockhart, and James Hogg, had a "penchant for trying out styles not commonly associated with intellectual argument" in order to train readers as active thinkers (Klancher, *The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790-1832* 52). These contributors eschewed forms of expository prose that communicated facts to readers for forms that encouraged readers to participate in the writer's motions of mind. The authors at *Blackwood's* followed Coleridge's advice and made readers their "fellow-labourers" in the criticism and construction of culture.

De Quincey demonstrates *Blackwood's* "experiment with turning the form of a discourse into a layer of its content" in the 1828 essay when he praises Edmund Burke (Klancher, *The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790-1832* 55). He introduces Burke as an exception to the lackluster oratory of the eighteenth century:

"All hail to Edmund Burke, the supreme writer of his century, the man of the largest and finest understanding. Upon that word, *understanding*, we lay a stress: for oh! Ye immortal donkeys, who have written 'about him and about him,' with what an obstinate stupidity have ye brayed away for one third of a century about that which ye are pleased to call his 'fancy'. Fancy in your throats, ye miserable twaddlers! As if Edmund Burke were the man to play with fancy, for the purpose of separable ornament. He was a man of fancy in no other sense than as Lord Bacon was so, and Jeremy Taylor, and as all large and discursive thinkers are and must be: that is to say, the fancy which he had in common with all mankind, and very probably in no eminent degree, in him was urged into unusual activity under the necessities of his capacious understanding" (DeQuincey, *The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 6.176).

This passage, which riffs on Coleridge's distinction between "fancy" and "imagination" in *Biographia Literaria*, makes its argument for Burke's superiority through colorful metadiscursive moves.¹⁷¹ De Quincey "hails" Burke and hails Burke's critics with the *ad-hominem* epithets, "Ye immortal donkeys" and "ye miserable twaddlers." He "lays a stress" upon "the word understanding" by distinguishing "fancy" as "separable ornament" from the "understanding" which fuses figures and the content of the discourse. De Quincey commends the sophistication with which Burke incorporates figurative language to advance his arguments. He later clarifies

the distinction between "fancy" and "understanding" by adding that Burke "think[s] in and by his figures" (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 6.177). De Quincey in this section combines a celebration of Burke's intelligent style with his own refutation of the shortsighted critics who simply applaud the beauty of Burke's speeches. By crafting prose that imitates the motions of his mind, De Quincey adapts and endorses *Blackwood's* style of "thinking in and by figures."

De Quincey's comic delivery of polemic—styling Burke's critics the "immortal donkeys"—recalls how the authors at *Blackwood's* used comedy to model complex thinking. Despite its serious mission to train a nation of intelligent middle-class readers, the writers at *Blackwood's* included rhetorical play within their repertoire of stylistic experiments. Ian Duncan, in a recent study of *Maga*, describes how contributors integrated comedy into their prose performances: "the magazine infiltrated its essays and reviews with fictional devices such as disguised or fictitious contributors and narrative and dramatic frames. Ethnographic sketch and satirical mock-autobiography graduate insensibly into outright works of invention, with historical and imaginary characters jostling each other on the page" (35). This mixing of fact and fiction, satire and earnest, challenges and entertains readers, who gain the privilege of being in on the contributors' jokes. Because they resist an easy delivery of facts to readers, *Blackwood's* contributors experimented with the tone as well as the genre of their pieces.

Although playful experimentation seems (post)modern, the genres that *Maga's* contributors rework—dramatic dialogue, satire, mock autobiography—are actually forms of the ancient ludic rhetoric of display. Roman satirists, like Lucian and Fronto, entertained court audiences and showed off their skills with mock encomia about flies and smoke. They also composed dramatic dialogues in which characters debated art and oratory with coded political commentary.¹⁷² In his history of the novel, Mikhail Bakhtin sees these ancient ludic genres,

including the well-known Mennippean satire, as precursors to the "verbal-ideological decentering" that characterizes modern novels due to their mixing of diverse characters' voices, past and present settings, parodic and serious tones (370). I dwell so much on this ancient rhetoric of display because De Quincey, in his 1828 re-vision of rhetoric, accentuates the classicism of *Blackwood's* experimental practices. Major contributors, like "Professor" John Wilson, were classically-educated and turned this outdated cultural capital to modern ends in their experiments.

Blackwood's serious classicism is well-known because its foundational articles, "On the Sculpture of the Greeks" and "Remarks on Greek Drama" (April 1818) use the art of the ancient world to comment upon nineteenth-century British literature and culture. However, I want to stress the equally classical roots of *Maga's* experimental, comic genres. The *Noctes Ambrosianae*, a series of dialogues among fictional versions of the magazine's contributors, exemplifies this ludic classicism. As Duncan observes, the *Noctes* were a "symposium of Tory goodfellows" that mimicked the male-dominated commercial and intellectual scene of nineteenth-century Edinburgh and served as free advertising for William Blackwood's publications, but these imaginary meetings at Ambrose's Tavern are also sites for the rhetorical mind-play that De Quincey espouses (Duncan 43). Characters, like Christopher North (Wilson), the Shepherd (James Hogg), and the English Opium Eater himself, extend topics treated in other articles, declaim for and against popular authors, and reflect on the business of managing a magazine. In addition to the symposiastic dynamics of wining, dining, and (fake) impromptu speeches, the *Noctes* are a carnivalesque schoolroom, where readers learn *Blackwood's* cultural values by following the characters' lively exchanges. The *Noctes* challenge readers to connect the discrete articles of each issue as the characters reinterpret these pieces. In the next

paragraphs, I discuss how two articles from the December 1828 *Blackwood's*, where De Quincey's review was published, demonstrate and respond to his theory of rhetoric.

The December 1828 *Noctes* alludes to De Quincey's redefinition of "rhetoric" as epideictic performance through the characters' praise of Jeremy Taylor. In addition to the usual food fights and masculine camaraderie of the *Noctes* series, the characters in this installment debate the benefits of education reforms and whether basic religious instruction is sufficient literacy training for the poor.¹⁷³ North, hinting at Coleridge's model of the author as Anglican preacher, defends the religious instruction provided by the clergy, and the Shepherd jokingly suggests that he publish "a few Volumes o' Sermons": "I dinna fear to say, 'cause I believ't true, that in that department Christopher North would be noways inferior to Jeremy Taylor" ("Noctes Ambrosianae No. XL" 685). The Shepherd's allusion to Taylor turns the declamation into an encomium as North praises the seventeenth-century author:

Jeremy Taylor had a divine spirit. The divine spirit pervades, permeates all he
ever embodied in words. Each sermon of his is like a star, a star that is not only
framed of light, and self-burning, unconsumed in its celestial fire, but hung in
light as in an atmosphere, which it does not itself create, and thus blended and
bound in links of light to all the rest of the radiant Hosts of Heaven. Thus it is that
all of his sermons are as a galaxy. Read one of them and it is

'Fair as a star, when only one

Is shining in the sky'

Read many and you think of some beautiful and sublime night...

("Noctes Ambrosianae No. XL" 685)

The Shepherd agrees that Taylor “served in the sanctuary, the inner shrine. Others can only bow down and adore at the threshold,” and both conclude that there is literary or stylistic value in Taylor’s sermons beyond the didactic lessons that they convey (“Noctes Ambrosianae No. XL” 686).

I cite this digression on Taylor in the *Noctes* because both the content and form of the men’s praises reinforce De Quincey’s re-vision of rhetoric that appears in the same issue of the magazine. North echoes De Quincey’s admiration for seventeenth-century authors when he describes Taylor’s work as a “self-burning” display of thoughts and a “galaxy” of sublime imagery. Moreover, both North and De Quincey imitate the epideictic mind-play that they admire in seventeenth-century authors. North employs an accumulation of star metaphors to describe Taylor’s sermons culminating in a quote from Wordsworth’s “She Dwelt Among Untrodden Ways” that shows off his reading and rhetorical skill. He transfers the Wordsworthian poet’s praise for Lucy to the act of reading Taylor’s sermons. De Quincey in the 1828 review likewise adapts the style of Thomas Browne’s *Urne Buriall* in praise of that text: “What a melodious ascent as of a prelude to some impassioned requiem breathing from the pomps of earth, and from the sanctities of the grave!....Time expounded, not by generations or centuries, but by the vast periods of conquests and dynasties; by cycles of Pharaohs and Ptolemies, Antiochi, and Arascides!” (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 6.169). By adapting seventeenth-century prose styles, North and De Quincey dramatize their changing thoughts and orchestrate disparate voices (Taylor, Browne, and Wordsworth) and time periods.

Lastly, the praise of Jeremy Taylor in the December 1828 *Noctes* demonstrates the centripetal, hierarchical model of rhetoric that De Quincey endorses. North and the Shepherd suggest that the sublime aspects of Taylor’s writing are not teachable, are the products of his

genius, and are only accessible to a small group of privileged readers, a group synonymous with the middle-classes who comprise *Blackwood's* audience.¹⁷⁴ Despite their stylistic play, the characters in *Noctes* advocate for the status quo: limited, religious education for poor audiences incapable of appreciating literature; the superiority of the tastes that *Blackwood's* imparts to middle-class readers; and more bookselling opportunities for Blackwood with North's proposed "volume" of sermons. The conservative social order and values behind *Blackwood's* rhetoric of display resembles the Roman art of *eloquentia umbratica* as De Quincey imagines it:

To hang upon one's own thoughts as an object of conscious interest, to play with them, to watch and pursue them through a maze of inversions, evolutions, and Harlequin changes, implies a condition of society either like that in the monastic ages, forced to introvert its energies from mere defect of books...or if it implies no absolute starvation of intellect, as in the Roman rhetoric, which arose upon a considerable, (though not very various) literature, it proclaims at least a quiescent state of public, unoccupied with daily novelty, and at leisure from the agitations of eternal change." (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 6.163–164)

In this passage, De Quincey longs for the hierarchical societies of the Roman Empire and the Middle Ages as the conditions under which rhetoric as epideictic mind play flourishes. A small elite in these societies had the leisure to read and write a few books. They produced their *bravura* rhetorical performances, the record of their active minds, amid stable, undisputed cultural values, "at leisure from the agitations of eternal change." They produce variations on commonplaces that are implicitly accepted and undebated rather than dispute these topics. De Quincey later specifies that the ideal "rhetorical" societies are imperial, living off the "plunder of conquest" and the "foreign alms" of their colonies and feudal territories (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 6.164).

Despite the technological, economic, and social changes of the early nineteenth-century, De Quincey and *Blackwood's* intend to revive this older rhetoric and the values that sustain it by making members of the middle-classes into its patrons and practitioners.

While the *Noctes* exemplify De Quincey's redefinition of rhetoric as a *bravura* performance, "Flies" (December 1828) demonstrates the interrelated comic classicism of De Quincey's and *Blackwood's* rhetoric. "Flies," written by "K," is a Tory satire on the rival Whig party wrapped up in a paradoxical encomium for the insect. Because the author purports to "command the approbation of mankind...[for] that dipterous nuisance," "Flies" resembles ancient Roman rhetorician Lucian's "The Fly," an epideictic piece that describes the insect and persuades audiences to appreciate it (832). For example, Lucian addresses the lifestyle of flies: "Knowing not labour and living at large, the fly enjoys the fruits of the toil of others and finds a bounteous table set everywhere. Goats give milk for her, bees work for flies... and cooks sweeten food for her....She does not make a nest or habitation in any one place" ("The Fly" 91). Likewise the author of "Flies" describes the insects' invasive eating habits: "Go where you will, it is not possible to escape these 'winged reptiles'. They....hover in impending clouds over the sugar basin at tea; in the pantry it is buz; in the dairy it is buz; in the kitchen it is buz" (K 834). The contributor "K" adapts a classical epideictic genre to assert the magazine's Tory sympathies when he quips that "no earthly creature, of the same insignificant character and pretensions, is the agent of nearly so much mischief as the fly—a modern Whig excepted." By mingling contemporary satire with the ancient rhetorics of display, "Flies" participates in the playful reworking of classical rhetoric that De Quincey advocates and performs.

De Quincey in his 1828 review of Whately's *Elements* endorses the kinds of texts that he and the other *Blackwood's* authors produce. He reimagines rhetoric as an epideictic enterprise in

which the rhetor renovates commonplace topics through a dazzling display of changing thoughts. This model of rhetoric, which has classical roots, captures both *Blackwood's* serious mission to teach cultural values and the experimental, sometimes playful, ways in which its contributors educate middle-class readers. Although he frames rhetoric as an intellectually liberating enterprise for the rhetor, De Quincey upholds the conservative values of *Maga* by associating this epideictic mind-play with classical genres, highly stratified imperial societies, and a select group of authors and readers. Through this centripetal configuration of rhetoric, De Quincey and *Blackwood's* set the stage for the emergence of "Literature" as a repository of unifying cultural values and universal human emotions. In the next section, I explain how De Quincey adapts the classical *quaestio infinita*, or the open-ended question, in the service of this model of literature.

7.2 DE QUINCEY'S VARIATIONS ON *QUAESTIO INFINITA* AND THE EMERGENCE OF "LITERATURE"

De Quincey was always preoccupied with the status of literary prose and his position as a prose author, but the need to distinguish literary writing from specialized journalistic and academic discourses becomes more pressing in the 1840s due to factors such as imperial expansion, the technological innovation of stereotyped printing, and the emergence of Literature as an academic discipline.¹⁷⁵ His essays on "Style" take a defensive stance against readers who "set the matter above the manner" and the "bookish precision" of newspapers that foster their ignorance of style (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 12.6, 12). De Quincey desires to elevate literature in order to preserve a class of intellectually curious, active readers. Central to De Quincey's project is the *quaestio infinita*, or the open-ended question in which an orator argues from his own knowledge

as opposed to just arguing from the external evidence provided by the case. The *quaestio infinita* gives literature the power of epideictic rhetoric to shape cultural values while simultaneously removing it from the technical details that characterize the rhetoric of political institutions. In this section, I discuss the *quaestio infinita* as interpreted by Cicero and reinterpreted by De Quincey before assessing how this concept influences De Quincey's division of "Literature of Knowledge/Literature of Power." As he matures, De Quincey describes his own writing as a form of *quaestio infinita* and claims this rhetorical practice as the province of the literary author who addresses "grand and transcendent themes" (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 11.34).

The division of rhetorical cases into "definite" cases that address specific persons and incidents and "indefinite" ones that treat general issues is common in classical rhetoric, but in his fourth essay on "Style," De Quincey attributes the concept to Cicero (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 12.71). In *De Oratore*, Cicero's character Crassus explains that "every speech on civil affairs is employed on one or other of these two kinds of questions, either that of a definite controversy limited to certain times and parties; as, 'Whether is it proper that our captives be recovered from the Carthaginians by the restitution of theirs?'; or on an indefinite question, inquiring about a subject generally; as, 'What should be determined or considered concerning captives in general?'" (3.28). He locates the three rhetorical genres—the judicial, the deliberative, and the epideictic—within the realm of the definite question because these deal with specific people and situations, while the *quaestio infinita* or indefinite question belongs to the genre of "consultation." Historian of rhetoric Marc Fumaroli explains that Ciceronian consultation evolved into the "counsel" or epideictic rhetoric practiced by Renaissance courtiers in their poetry, but De Quincey transforms the *quaestio infinita* into a multidimensional literary prose that's independent of political advice-giving.¹⁷⁶

While speculating on the conditions conducive to his kind of rhetoric, De Quincey introduces the classical *quaestio infinita*. He distinguishes literary prose from emergent forms of scientific writing:

A man who has absolute facts to communicate from some branch of study, external to himself, as physiology, suppose, or anatomy, or astronomy, is careless of style....But he who has to treat a vague question, such as Cicero calls a *quaestio infinita*, where every thing is to be finished out of his own peculiar feelings, or his own way of viewing things (in contradistinction to a *quaestio finita*, where determinate *data*, from without, already furnish the main materials,) soon finds that he manner of treating it not only transcends the matter but very often...*is the matter*" (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 12. 71).

Whereas a scientist is limited to the empirical findings of his experiment (the *quaestio finita*), a writer faced with a *quaestio infinita* must rely on his own thoughts, and his presentation of the case in language, his style, can increase the efficacy of his response. De Quincey thus extends Cicero's treatment of *quaestio infinita* and grafts stereotypical "Romantic" elements, like the writer's "own feelings" and "his own way of viewing things," onto this classical concept. He even compares the *quaestio infinita* to lyric poetry in which the poet "projects his inner mind" (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 12. 71). De Quincey suggests that an argument from *quaestio infinita* "depends entirely upon the command over language" just as his 1828 redefinition of rhetoric privileges the rhetor's display of skill over a rehearsal of political minutiae. In this reframing of a classical rhetorical concept, De Quincey turns a minor part of Cicero's oratorical education into the major purpose of literary prose.

Although he often opposes his brand of rhetoric to the practical decision-making of Parliamentary debate, De Quincey's interpretation of the *quaestio infinita* allies his epideictic model of rhetoric closer to the deliberative or senatorial rhetoric than the judicial rhetoric of the courts. He reprises "Cicero's distinction between a *quaestio infinita* and a *quaestio finita*" to explain that a House of Commons speech treats the infinite question because it involves an assessment of the state of the nation: "The main staple of any long speech must always be some general view of national policy; and in Cicero's language, such a view must always be *infinita*—that is...shaped and drawn from the funds of one's own understanding" (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 12. 72). De Quincey repeatedly appeals to Cicero to justify his own interpretation of *quaestio infinita* as the rhetor's meditation on an open-ended topic or philosophical question. By associating the *quaestio infinita* with deliberative oratory, De Quincey invests literary prose, which treats such open questions, with the ability to shape cultural values even as he dissociates literature from specific decisions and cases. In the "Style" series, the *quaestio infinita* helps De Quincey to reinforce the Schlegelian conception of literature that shapes "national character."

De Quincey's revisionist lesson on Cicero is one of several variations upon a theme in the "Style" series through which he drives home the message that style is the "incarnation" of thoughts and a defining feature of literary prose. Likewise, his explicit discussion of *quaestio infinita* in 1840 is just one variation on this classical concept throughout his writings. From the 1820s until his death in 1859, De Quincey reconfigures the relationship of "infinite" and "finite" questions in literary discourse. In the paragraphs below, I trace De Quincey's variations on the *quaestio infinita* in "Letters to a Young Man" (*London Magazine* 1823), "Brief Appraisal of Greek Literature" (*Tait's* 1839), "Suspiria De Profundis" (*Blackwood's* 1845), and review of *The Works of Alexander Pope* (*Blackwood's* 1848). De Quincey, through his re-visions of the

quaestio infinita, gradually reimagines literature as a bastion of agreed-upon, unchanging cultural values; by the end of his career, he participates in the Victorian interpretations of "Romanticism" that continue to shape our understanding of both the period and literature in general.

7.2.1 "Letters to a Young Man" (1823)

I begin with De Quincey's division between "Literature of Knowledge" and the "Literature of Power," a concept familiar to Romanticists, because this division relies upon the classical rhetorical distinction between definite and indefinite questions. As I discuss in Chapter 3, De Quincey first proposes the "Knowledge/Power" division in the 1823 "Letters to a Young Man Whose Education Has Been Neglected" (*London Magazine*), and he revisits this concept in the 1848 review of Pope for *Blackwood's*. In the 1823 "Letters", De Quincey asserts that "all, that is literature, seeks to communicate power; all, that is not literature, to communicate knowledge" (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 3. 71). Under this model of literature, the texts that communicate knowledge resemble Cicero's *quaestio finita* because in these texts, "the matter to be communicated is paramount to the manner or form of its communication" (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 3. 70). The author of "a dictionary, a grammar, a spelling-book...a parliamentary report, a system of farriery, a treatise on billiards" selects and arranges a set of discrete facts in order to educate or persuade readers, just as an orator arguing the definite question deals with specific evidence in a limited situation (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 3.69–70). By contrast, the literature that communicates power resembles the *quaestio infinita* because it treats open-ended, philosophical topics and the emotions associated with them. To illustrate this difference, De Quincey contrasts the "space" of geometricians with Milton's vivid

representations of a vast, old universe: “Milton has been able to *inform* this empty theatre—peopling it with Titanic shadows, forms that sat at the eldest counsels of the infant world, chaos and original night....so that, from being a thing to inscribe with diagrams, it has become under his hands a vital agent on the human mind” (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 3. 71). Space in Milton’s hands has become as boundless as the *quaestio infinita* in contrast to the finite coordinates that constitute mathematical or cartographical treatments of space. As in the classical division between finite and infinite cases, the texts that communicate knowledge and the literature that conveys power in De Quincey’s 1823 configuration are entirely separate genres, the one a rehearsal of limited facts, the other a *bravura* meditation on large philosophical questions, questions that present unlimited potential for reinterpretation.

7.2.2 "A Brief Appraisal of the Greek Literature" (1839)

De Quincey reconfigures the relationships between “Knowledge” and “Power,” definite and indefinite questions, in his 1839 “Brief Appraisal of the Greek Literature.” He teaches readers about ancient Greek writing by comparing Greek and Roman oratory. The Romans, he finds, were superior to the Greeks because they “embellish [their] orations with a wide circuit of historic, or of antiquarian, nay, even speculative discussion” (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 11.32). The Romans address the epideictic *topoi* that De Quincey associates with rhetoric but the Greeks, in their senatorial and judicial speeches, presented “the cause and nothing but the cause,” or the facts pertaining to specific political or legal decisions (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 11. 33). In accounting for the Romans’ greater use of epideictic *topoi*, De Quincey realigns the *quaestio finita* and the *quaestio infinita*:

in cases like these, when the primary and ostensible objects of the speaker already, on its own account, possess a command attraction, yet it will often happen that the secondary questions, growing out of the leading one, the great elementary themes suggested to the speaker by the concrete case before him....these comprehensive and transcendent themes are continually allowed to absorb and throw into the shade, for a time, the minor but urgent question of the moment through which they have gained their interest. (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 11. 34).

He proposes the “primary” and “secondary questions” for the classical terms, definite and indefinite questions. Like the *quaestio finita*, the “primary question” is a “concrete case” and a “minor but urgent question of the moment,” such as a law. The “secondary question” is like the *quaestio infinita* because it reflects the “great elementary themes” that surround the immediate case and that may also be at stake in a heated debate. De Quincey gives the example of the eighteenth-century debates over the Test Acts discriminating against Catholics and Dissenters, which provoked broader questions about religious and national identity than the wording of the laws themselves.

In this passage from the “Brief Appraisal,” De Quincey suggests that the primary and secondary questions coexist in the same discourse. The cultural values at stake in particular debates eclipse or “absorb and throw into the shade” the urgent case at hand, even as this case is the catalyst for the rhetor’s performance. With this description, De Quincey transforms the relationship between *quaestio finita* and *quaestio infinita* from separate genres into complementary modes that the rhetor can deploy in a single speech. These modes also vary with the situation as when his work is re-read by audiences historically removed from the original

debate. As De Quincey explains, speeches with more appeals to the secondary questions, such as Cicero's and Burke's oratory, have greater retrospective value than those with less. By "exalting mere business...into a field for the higher understanding; and giving to the mere necessities of our position as a nation the dignity of great problems for civilizing wisdom or philosophic philanthropy," rhetors transform deliberative speeches into epideictic masterpieces (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 11. 34). De Quincey's emphasis on dignifying the "nation" with "civilizing wisdom" and "higher understanding" resembles the popular Schlegelian configuration of literature in the early nineteenth century that made literature a repository of national values. The secondary question in rhetoric, like literature, creates and reflects the values that build community and undergird political institutions.

7.2.3 "Suspiria de Profundis" (1845)

In the "Brief Appraisal," De Quincey describes the infinite, secondary question as an "*excursus* from the mere thorny path of absolute business," and the classical figure of *excursus*, or digression, shapes De Quincey's thinking about literary prose in "Suspiria de Profundis" (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 11.32). The "Suspiria" essays extend his "Confessions of an English Opium-Eater," and in the introductory essay, he justifies digression as an organizing principle in his writing about addiction. He explains the "secondary question" in a *bravura* display of metaphors and shifting analogies. De Quincey addresses the relationship between his hallucinatory performances and the scientific discourses on opium that he uses as expert appeals: His writing is

a *caduceus* wreathed about with meandering ornaments, or the shaft of a tree's stem hung round and surmounted with some vagrant parasitical plant. The mere medical subject of the opium answers to the dry withered pole, which shoots all the rings of the flowering plants, and seems to do so by some dexterity of its own; whereas, in fact, the plant and its tendrils have curled round the sullen cylinder by mere luxuriance of *theirs*. (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 15.135)

In this series of metaphors, De Quincey's writing transforms from the snake-entwined staff of ancient mythology, to a tree encrusted with "parasitical" vines, to a trellis for ornamental plants, and these metaphors correspond to the primary and secondary questions of rhetoric as well. De Quincey suggests that the pole or dead tree represents the "mere medical subject of the opium." Because the medical discourse on opium involves empirical facts, it (and the pole) corresponds to the primary question in the 1839 "Brief Appraisal." Likewise, De Quincey's writing, the "meandering ornaments" or "parasitical plants," corresponds to the secondary question because he develops his thoughts in a dazzling performance spurred by the "primary" material of the medical discourse.

As in the "Brief Appraisal," De Quincey presents the *quaestio infinita* as supported by and growing from the *quaestio finita*. He modifies the explanation of a "dry withered pole" covered by "the plant and its tendrils": "So, the ugly pole—hop pole, vine pole, espalier, no matter what—is there only for support. Not the flowers are for the pole, but the pole is for the flowers" (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 15.135). In the case of De Quincey's writing, medical discourses on opium and addiction serve as the prop for his digressive, hallucinatory performance, and this "manner" of writing becomes the "matter" as readers experience his

motions of mind. The primary question supports or serves as a catalyst for the dynamic rhetorical performance as the rhetor embellishes a limited topic.

De Quincey not only enacts his vision of rhetoric in “Suspiria” with these sequences of changing metaphors, but he also hints at the distinct ability of literary prose to draw the infinite question out of definite cases. He concludes the introduction with a justification of his previous work:

The true object in my ‘Opium Confessions’ is not the naked physiological theme—on the contrary, *that* is the ugly pole, the murderous spear, the halbert—but those wandering musical variations upon the theme—those parasitical thoughts, feelings, digressions, which climb up with bells and blossoms round about the arid stock; ramble away at times with perhaps to rank a luxuriance; but at the same time, by the eternal interest attached to the *subjects* of these digressions, no matter what were the execution, spread a glory over incidents that for themselves would be—less than nothing. (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 15.135)

De Quincey draws upon all the “flowers” of rhetoric to reinterpret his older “Confessions” essays and theorize his practice as a prose writer. Like Lamb’s “surmises... half-intuitions, semi-consciousnesses,” De Quincey favors “parasitical thoughts, feelings, digressions” that obscure his attempt to make an argument about or communicate facts about opium use (Charles Lamb, *Essays of Elia* 137). These “luxuriant” performances instead illuminate for readers the larger cultural values and philosophical questions within his life and theirs, or “spread a glory over incidents that for themselves would be—less than nothing.” Because he emphasizes the

celebration of ‘incidents’ that “would be—less than nothing,” De Quincey’s digressive writing is a serious model of the paradoxical encomium; the comic praise of things without honor, as in Lucian’s and *Blackwood’s* writings about flies, has become a “Romantic” validation of the individual life and its relation to the broader community. In the introduction to “Suspiria,” De Quincey, in metaphorical form, attributes to his own writing the principles of rhetoric that he discussed in previous essays. He illuminates dry or commonplace topics in order to show the “eternal interest” of the broader cultural values that arise from them.

7.2.4 The Works of Alexander Pope (1848)

Throughout his career, De Quincey continues to transform the *quaestio infinita* and *finita* from separate genres into complementary modes that a writer deploys to maximize a discourse’s intellectual and emotional effects. In the review of *The Works of Alexander Pope* (1848), he revises “The Literature of Power” along these lines. This review reappraises the eighteenth-century poet in light of a new edition, but De Quincey digresses on the changing definitions of “literature” in the first decades of the nineteenth century: “What is it that we mean by *literature*?....The most thoughtless person is easily made aware that in the idea of *literature* one essential element is—some relation to a general and common interest of man, so that what applies only to a local –or professional— or merely personal interest...will not belong to literature” (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 16.335). In this backhanded compliment to magazines like *Blackwood’s*, De Quincey paraphrases his 1823 definition of literature and suggests that this model is well-known among middle-class readers in the 1840s. He stresses the distinction between Literature of Knowledge, that which “teaches,” and Literature of Power, that which “moves” readers’ emotions (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 16. 336). Like the

distinction between texts that communicate knowledge and power in 1823, Literature of Knowledge responds to the definite questions and communicates facts, while Literature of Power attends to the indefinite questions.

However, De Quincey is more anxious in 1848 to elevate the Literature of Power, and so he alters the function and scope of this mode. First, he states that the Literature of Knowledge and Literature of Power "may blend and often *do*" (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 16. 336). While De Quincey in 1823 associated the Literature of Knowledge and Power with discrete genres (i.e. poetry vs. cookbooks), he now frames them as complementary modes that can coexist in a single text. This configuration of Knowledge and Power accords with De Quincey's earlier reconfiguration of the rhetorical *quaestio infinita* as something which grows from the limited case at hand, his insistence in "Suspiria," that fantastical literary performances can blossom from the dry wood of medical and scientific topics.

In 1848, the limited facts of Knowledge can inspire a writer to the emotional and philosophical flights of Power Literature, and these insights will interest readers long after the facts are forgotten or disproven by subsequent generations. De Quincey thus amplifies the Literature of Power's tendency to celebrate allegedly "universal" values, feelings or experiences, and he stresses its timelessness. For example, he explains that "it is the grandeur of all truth which can occupy a very high place in human interests, that it is never absolutely novel to the meanest of minds, it exists eternally..." (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 16.336). While this passage echoes the "transcendent themes" of the secondary question from 1839, De Quincey proposes a static, hierarchical model of literature as a discourse that reflects unchanging, uncontestable values. This conception of literature resembles the centripetal "principles" that Coleridge intended to teach because De Quincey explains that Power Literature addresses the

“great moral capacities of man” and that it endures “as finished and unalterable amongst men” (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 16.337, 338). Whereas De Quincey in 1823 defines the Literature of Power as an emotional exchange between author and readers, in 1848, he focuses on the moral and philosophical values that the author conveys. The multiperspectival mind-play around commonplace topics and rhetorical engagement that De Quincey previously valued gives way to “finished and unalterable” principles. In order to secure the superiority of Literature to the ephemeral texts that merely communicate knowledge, he privileges the stable repository of the text over the rhetorical interactions of the people who read and write.¹⁷⁷

In addition to elevating the finished statement over the process of displaying thoughts, De Quincey narrows the range of literature. He contrasts Isaac Newton's scientific treatises with poetry and drama: Aspects of Newton's theories were disproved as scientists made new discoveries, but "the Prometheus of Aeschylus,--the Othello or King Lear—the Hamlet of Macbeth—and the Paradise Lost, are ... triumphant for ever as long as the languages exist in which they speak" (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 16.338). The argumentative tone of Newton's writing yields to the display of "universal" themes and emotions in literary texts that had become canonical by the mid-nineteenth century.¹⁷⁸ Moreover, De Quincey limits the Literature of Power to narrative fiction, poetry, and drama through his examples and emphasis on "poetic justice": "Tragedy, romance, fairy-tale, or epopee, all alike restore man's mind the ideals of justice, of hope, of truth, of mercy, of retribution" (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 16.337). This framing of literature as fiction, as Raymond Williams observes, divorces literature from contemporary political debates by framing it as imaginary, untenable representations of the world.¹⁷⁹ De Quincey participates in this shift when he highlights the universal values and idealized situations that literary authors supposedly represent. Whereas Literature of Power in

1823 comprehended the entire *literae humaniores*, the subjects we associate with the "humanities" today, De Quincey in 1848 reduces its scope in his effort to make Literature into a celebration of permanent cultural values.

The model of Literature that De Quincey advocates by the late 1840s upholds already-agreed-upon values. As he explains in the Style essays, literature succeeds "by the principle of sympathy," uniting disparate factions in times of internal political strife: Style, as the "incarnation" of thoughts, "kindles something far more than merely the ambition and rivalry of men...genial love and comprehension of the qualities fitted to stir so profound and lasting an emotion" as the author's performance (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 12.53). Political and religious disputes in a modern society are counterbalanced by readers' contemplation of the shared values that emerge when the "manner" becomes the "matter" in a literary text. De Quincey describes his own literary prose in terms of this model of literature. In the introduction to his collected works, *Selections Grave and Gay* (1853), De Quincey divides his writing into three genres: memoirs such as his 1840s "Autobiographical Sketches" that "amuse" readers with anecdotes; "essays" that teach readers by arguing complex philosophical questions; and the "impassioned prose" of the "Confessions of an English Opium-Eater" and "Suspiria de Profundis," which he considers the best, most original pieces ("Preface"). As the term "impassioned prose" suggests, De Quincey's best, most Literary, writing is emotional, aesthetic discourse as is all true Literature. De Quincey unites readers in an admiration of his passionate performances and the "universal" emotions that they supposedly evoke. By theorizing and collecting these pieces, he further transforms literary work into a statement of national values.

As Margaret Russett argues, "De Quincey prefigures the modalities of a response to a monumentalized great tradition" or promotes the *topoi*, like "genius and talent," that came to be

"Romanticism" (7, 2). By the 1840s, he characterizes the period from the 1790s to the 1820s as the "volcanic eruption of the British genius" marked by literary "originality" (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 12. 53), but I stress the classical rhetorical roots of De Quincey's Romanticism. Throughout his career, the centrifugal potentials of rhetoric, like the multivocal experiments of *Blackwood's*, are gradually replaced by centripetal "Romantic" *topoi*, which are themselves variations on classical rhetorical practices. Even De Quincey's late, hyper-Literary mode is punctuated by his vision of classical rhetoric. For instance, in the introduction to *Selections*, De Quincey revives his 1828 fantasy of premodern societies when he compares "Confessions of an English Opium-Eater" to Augustine's *Confessions*: "The very idea of breathing a record of human passion, not into the ear of the random crowd, but of the saintly confessional, argues an impassioned theme" (DeQuincey, "Preface"). This image of an "impassioned" author far from the "random crowd" sounds Romantic, but De Quincey also evokes the *eloquentia umbratica*, the "shadowy" rhetoric of display that he associates with the Middle Ages and Roman Empire. What's most "Romantic" about this conception of literature is that De Quincey's "saintly confessionals" *are* widely disseminated in print and that De Quincey is theorizing these performances in a paratext that advertises his collected works. In the face of early nineteenth-century modernity, De Quincey reinvents the epideictic rhetor as a prose artist whose rehearsals of thoughts and emotions play with and reaffirm commonly-held values.

De Quincey constantly adapts classical models of epideictic rhetoric throughout his long career as a "prose declaimer." Classical rhetorical practices, in addition to orientalist fantasies or visions of Roman legions, drive De Quincey's imperial vision of literature as the celebration of shared cultural values in impassioned language, a model that he shares with literary magazines like *Blackwood's*. De Quincey reworks the high Ciceronian rhetoric of ancient Rome because he

imagines literary texts as amplifications of the *quaestio infinita* that call for a reassessment or reaffirmation of the broad cultural values. This serious vision of literature is also informed by the “lowest” classical practices—schoolboy declamations and the comic rhetoric of display. Like the primary question that fosters the growth of the secondary question, classical rhetoric provides the basic tools for De Quincey's imperial vision of literature and his gradual reconception of Literature as representations of allegedly timeless feelings and values. Through his reworking of classical rhetorical concepts, De Quincey does not so much project as reveal the classicizing impulse of *Blackwood's* practices and the broader Schlegelian discourses on literature as an index of cultural values. He reinvents the prose writer as an epideictic rhetorician and adapts the classical rhetorical practices (that he sees as) essential to building a nation and an empire.

7.3 DE QUINCEY AND ARNOLD

De Quincey's late-career thinking about literature proved to be a durable model, and elements of it resurface in more “typical” Victorian interpretations of “Romanticism” and “Literature.”

Although he does not cite De Quincey, Matthew Arnold, writing a decade after De Quincey's death, has a lot in common with the “English Opium Eater” as a proponent and practitioner of epideictic rhetoric.¹⁸⁰ Arnold, in his concept of Culture, turns a model of multiperspectival mind-play into a concrete program of education. As in De Quincey's writings, the centrifugal activity of tweaking commonplaces and orchestrating disparate perspectives gives way to a centripetal dissemination and celebration of cultural values.

Both Arnold and De Quincey criticize their respective eras' fascinations with narrow-minded political debates and advocate the "free, spontaneous play of consciousness" to correct these problems (Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy* 145). In *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), Arnold proposes "Culture" as a space removed from the immediate debates in which readers can "turn a stream of fresh and free thought upon our stock notions and habits" (*Culture and Anarchy* 5). Just as De Quincey applauds seventeenth-century authors for complicating trite religious themes, Arnold imagines "Culture" as the texts and practices that complicate middle-class readers' habitual patterns of thinking and the dominant values of Victorian society. Culture is an "inward process" of comparing conflicting perspectives without the pressure of reaching a decision or course of action (Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy* 28). Readers suspend their established beliefs and weigh arguments for all sides of the question.

Arnold's Culture is actively opposed to the rhetorical practices of parliament and the leading political parties. Just as De Quincey argues that "where conviction begins, the field of rhetoric ends," Arnold suggests that where persuasion begins, the open-ended inquiry of Culture ends. In the Introduction to *Culture and Anarchy*, he contrasts Culture with the "machinery of politics" in which orators advocate a course of action based upon personal or party prejudices (*Culture and Anarchy* 28). He further faults politicians for "indoctrinat[ing] the masses with ...the creed of their own profession or party" (*Culture and Anarchy* 53). For Arnold, persuasion is a crude attempt to win audiences to one's side with narrow-minded arguments and statistics that "elaborat[e] down to the smallest details a rational society for the future" (*Culture and Anarchy* 48). Victorian politicians enforce their party's biases and overemphasize the minutiae of proposed legislation at the expense of broader questions.

Like the Romantic “prose declaimers” and literary magazines, Arnold reconfigures the relationship between politics and culture when he privileges broader values and multiple perspectives over the one-sided arguments and technicalities of parliamentary discourse. He observes that “at the present juncture, the centre of movement is not in the House of Commons. It is in the ferment of the mind of the nation” (*Culture and Anarchy* 155). Like *Blackwood’s Magazine* fifty years earlier, Arnold aims at perfecting the “national mind,” or cultivating strong middle-class readers who (re)define the values that ought to unite the nation. These readers must be challenged by new ideas and opportunities to “float [their] stock habits of thinking” in order to resist the reductive rhetoric of political factions (Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy* 145).

With its opposition to the rhetoric of political institutions and emphasis on discovering the values that potentially unite British society, Arnold’s *Culture* is a form of modern epideictic rhetoric. Arnold insists in *Culture and Anarchy* that *Culture* is not a “pedantic” set of texts or institutions but rather a process of determining the “best” values by learning about new perspectives and debating them: “Not a having and a resting, but a growing and becoming, is the character of perfection as *Culture* conceives it” (*Culture and Anarchy* 36). Arnold’s emphasis on process over a static “perfection” resembles De Quincey’s configuration of rhetoric as a *bravura* performance of the rhetor’s changing thoughts. Because *Culture* compensates “our inaptitude for seeing more than one side of a thing,” it is a modern form of epideictic rhetoric that acknowledges and synthesizes the disparate “voices” of nineteenth century society (Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy* 37). Arnold, like De Quincey who exploits the institution of magazines to establish his own brand of prose, turns the factitious, commercialized chaos of his moment to profit. The proponents of *Culture* reassess the clashing “voices” of their era and reassemble them towards a common project of affirming “the beauty and worth of human nature”(Arnold, *Culture*

and Anarchy 36). As epideictic rhetoric, Arnold's Culture is both a celebration of the "best" and a process of debating what's "best" through ongoing exploration.

Moreover, Arnold, like De Quincey, claims a classical precedent for his re-vision of public discourse. Although he chides the "smattering of Latin and Greek" that constitutes nineteenth-century classical education, Arnold roots Culture in the "Hellenism" that he attributes to the ancient Greeks (*Culture and Anarchy* 31). Hellenism involves "imaginatively acknowledging the multiform aspects of the problem of life and of thus getting itself unfixed from its own over-certainty," similar to the "free play of thought" (*Culture and Anarchy* 105). This "ancient" philosophical mindset contrasts and complements the decisive industriousness of the Judeo-Christian "Hebraism," which Arnold sees as the dominant value of the Victorian middle-classes. As a classically-inspired practice of weighing arguments for both sides of the question, Hellenism is Arnold's *eloquentia umbratica*, a process of thinking that shrinks from immediate practical decisions in order to survey all sides of an issue.

Arnold recognizes that the classical practices of Hellenism must be adapted to the modern world. Just as De Quincey argues that English rhetoric combines the intellectual curiosity of the ancient world with the theology and sublime imagery of early modern Protestantism, Arnold advocates a balance of Hellenism and the Hebraism that the middle-classes currently revere: "By alternations of Hebraism and Hellenism, of man's intellectual and moral impulse...the human spirit proceeds" and society functions (*Culture and Anarchy* 103). With this balance of Hellenism and Hebraism, Arnold's program of Culture prepares the middle-classes to become better citizens: "The desire to help our neighbor, the impulses towards action...come in as part of the grounds of culture (*Culture and Anarchy* 34). Culture provides them with ways of thinking through current problems without prescribing a course of action,

because, as Arnold later explains, “the main business of our action is not so much to work away at certain crude reforms of which we have already the scheme in our own mind, as to create...a frame of mind out of which really fruitful reforms with time, may grow” (*Culture and Anarchy* 147). As in contemporary conceptions of epideictic rhetoric, Culture shapes the long term values, attitudes, and habits of thinking that inform individuals’ political decisions and gradually reforms political institutions.

While Arnold’s implementation of Culture as an indirect agent of reform seems to clash with De Quincey’s “impassioned prose,” both are committed to centripetal models of epideictic nation-building discourse and to securing literary authors’ roles in that enterprise. De Quincey’s rhetoric and later conception of literary prose is liberating only for the individual author, and so too is Arnold’s Culture for the middle-class “Man of Culture.” As Marxist critics like Raymond Williams and Terry Eagleton point out, Arnold seems to reinforce rather than challenge the dominant Victorian values because the business of mind-play demands the education and leisure limited to the middle-classes and aristocracy.¹⁸¹ Arnold’s denizens of Culture thus resemble De Quincey’s imperial Roman citizens who rely upon the labor of others in a vast empire for the resources to complicate their “stock ideas.” As Allan Richardson argues, literature, in the view of Arnold and other mid-nineteenth-century critics, was “constituted as a socializing and socially unifying force, positioned beyond politics (and for that reason considered politically efficacious)” (266). Arnold believes that literary texts can consolidate and reinforce middle-class readers’ political and economic power. Arnold’s Culture, much like De Quincey’s rhetoric, promotes existing hierarchical values and mask unequal power relations with the myth of a unified nation or empire.

More importantly, in Arnold's and De Quincey's visions, the centrifugal activity of mind-play is counterbalanced by the centripetal process of disseminating new ideas to constituencies. Both De Quincey and Arnold imagine the literary prose writer as a rhetor who transforms the "free play of the mind" into values that might unite readers. Arnold's "On the Function of Criticism at the Present Time" provides a compelling example of this centripetalizing tendency. Although Arnold distinguishes Literature from criticism, he associates both with "the best that is known and thought in the world" ("The Function of Criticism at the Present Time" 18). Both Literature (poetry, drama, fiction) and the writing that evaluates it traffic in broad cultural values and "universal" themes. Criticism is a "creative activity" because the prose writer cultivates the "free play of the mind" in order to fairly assess literary texts. Arnold explains that the critic must "make the best ideas prevail," "propagate" them, and "thus establish a current of fresh and true ideas" ("The Function of Criticism at the Present Time" 6, 41). The critic is "a companion," rather than a "lawgiver," who engages in the "subtle and indirect action" of determining the best ideas and texts ("The Function of Criticism at the Present Time" 41, 27). These images of cultivation suggest that the critic is a teacher of cultural values. Even as he challenges some to rethink their established prejudices, the critic unites readers in a contemplation and discussion of the "best" ideas in Literature.

Arnold, writing in an era of greater authorial specialization, produces a different conception of the critic than De Quincey's "impassioned" prose writer. Arnold distinguishes the purely intellectual work of criticism from the "great movement of feeling" in literature, whereas De Quincey, in theory and practice, blurs the lines between the producers of emotional and intellectual discourses (Arnold, "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time" 11). Yet despite these differences, Arnold builds upon a model of literary prose that is Romantic: He worries that

“the notion of the free play of the mind upon all subjects...being an essential provider of elements without which a nation’s spirit...must in the long run, die of inanition hardly enters an Englishman’s thoughts” (“The Function of Criticism at the Present Time” 18). This belief that speculative, rhetorical play shapes cultural values that undergird the “nation” and the fear of its disappearance echoes De Quincey’s early thinking about rhetoric and descriptions of his prose writing. By explaining how the “free play of the mind” and literature, as agents of Culture, contribute indirectly to political decisions and enhance the nation, Arnold completes an epideictic feedback loop discussed by De Quincey and the other Romantic “prose declaimers.” By elevating the critic as a privileged judge of the “best that is thought,” Arnold extends De Quincey’s centripetal model of literature as epideictic rhetoric into the enduring Victorian conceptions of Literature.

De Quincey’s late-career interpretations of “Romantic” literature also resemble Arnold’s Victorian (re)constructions of Romanticism, which were written within a decade of De Quincey’s death. While Arnold imagines the writers of his own era as public educators, he relegates Romantic authors to the producers of imaginative, emotional discourse. In “On the Function of Criticism,” for instance, he laments that “the burst of creative activity in our literature, through the first quarter of this century, had about it in fact something premature” as authors allegedly cultivated extreme emotions at the expense of serious thought (“The Function of Criticism at the Present Time” 7). In “The Literary Influence of Academies,” Arnold takes Romantic prose to task: it is “extravagant prose, prose too much suffered to indulge its caprices...prose in short with the note of provinciality,... it is *Asiatic* prose, as the ancient critics would have said; prose somewhat barbarously rich and overloaded. But the true prose is Attic prose” (“The Literary Influence of Academies” 69). Arnold turns to the classical concept of “Asiatic” and “Attic”

styles in order to “other” Romantic prose. Romantic authors practice the “extravagant,” “barbarous,” and capricious styles associated with the despotic ancient Asia Minor rather than the stately, balanced sentences associated with ancient Grecian democracy. In an era when Hugh Blair’s “perspicuity” became the watchword of writing instruction and the historian Thomas Macaulay set the standards for nonfiction prose, Arnold considers Romantic prose at once exotic and “provincial.”¹⁸² It communicates wild emotions to a narrow coterie of readers, rather than foster a shared Culture. Romantic literary prose is not exportable across disparate groups of readers nor is it translatable across colonies or nations. For literary criticism and serious writing, Arnold desires a “cosmopolitan” prose in which the ideas or “matter” to be communicated are free from the “manner” of the author’s feelings or stylistic experiments (“The Literary Influence of Academies” 69). English literary prose is generally inferior to English poetry, and Romantic prose, the product of immature era, is particularly flawed. Through his re-visions of “Romanticism” and “Literature,” Arnold invents, in part, the criteria by which Romantic prose authors were relegated to secondary status.

7.4 CONCLUSION: ROMANTIC PROSE DECLAIMERS

In “The Literary Influence of Academies,” Arnold conflates the “Attic” prose style with what he calls the “classical style” as in “the problem is how to express new and profound ideas in a perfectly sound and classical style” (“The Literary Influence of Academies” 70). I call attention to Arnold’s opposition of Romantic prose to a “classical style” because Coleridge, Hazlitt, Lamb, and De Quincey *did* rework “classical” rhetoric in their prose and in the cases of Coleridge and De Quincey, *did* identify their writing with “classical” styles. Classical rhetoric—in the form of

the school curriculum, parliamentary debates, and the works of ancient orators—was an available “means of persuasion” for early nineteenth-century authors working in response to the emergent institution of literary magazines. As I have found, these Romantic “prose declaimers” adapt classical rhetorical practices, including the most “trivial” forms of schoolboy rhetoric, to create literary prose capable of engaging the era’s debates and building new communities of readers.

Historians of rhetoric and literary scholars alike have argued that classical education was replaced over the nineteenth century by vernacular literature, but few have noticed how classical rhetorical practices were refunctioned to invent “Literature.” In addition to the adaptations of classical philology that standardized English grammar and paved the way for the academic study of literature, authors reworked the rhetorical practices from classical education in response to new forms of print culture, such as magazines, where early nineteenth-century debates about the relationship of literature and politics were joined. Coleridge, Hazlitt, Lamb, and De Quincey transformed rote classical rhetorics into dynamic literary performances that engage new audiences in the era’s debates.

In this dissertation, I drew upon the work of rhetoricians as well as the work of Romanticists. The resources of rhetoric, most notably the concept of epideictic rhetoric, allowed me to connect Romantic authors’ literary experiments with the historical institutions and practices of rhetoric that were familiar to them. Topics such as classical education and until the past 15 years, rhetoric itself were often “off limits” in Romantic scholarship with the assumption that Romantic authors simply opposed the rigid classical curriculum at the turn of the nineteenth century and the goal-driven persuasion of political oratory. However, drawing upon the concept of the epideictic, in both its classical and contemporary formulations, I have shown that they creatively transformed classical rhetorical practices in their prose writing, reusing ossified

rhetorical practices to synthesize and evaluate the multiple perspectives of a "modern" early nineteenth-century society. Hazlitt redeploys the classical exercises of the *progymnasmata* and the techniques of political orators that he finds lacking in his oppositional literary prose. Charles Lamb turns his classical training at Christ's Hospital into a literary career through Elia's playful essays. De Quincey revises Cicero's concept of the *questio infinita* into a thoroughly "Romantic" literary discourse centered on the author's changing thoughts and feelings.

I have also found that these authors turned the debated topic of classical education itself into "literary" careers. The mature Coleridge, for instance, invents the professional literary prose writer as a classically-educated scholar, while Hazlitt criticizes classically-educated politicians and authors in *The Eloquence of the British Senate* and *The Spirit of the Age*. Lamb, writing both as himself and as Elia, argued for the utility of classical education and charity grammar schools, and De Quincey frames his literary practice as a modern variation the ancient *eloquentia umbratica*. Most importantly, the Romantic "prose declaimers" used classical rhetorical practices to respond to the period's political debates while carefully differentiating their work from that of political orators.

Paul De Man's deconstructive rhetoric notwithstanding, rhetoric, specifically classical rhetoric, has made few inroads among Romanticists.¹⁸³ Studies of classical allusions or themes in Romantic literature abound as is expected for an era that witnessed the British acquisition of the Elgin Marbles and an imperial expansion, but rhetoric, as a metadiscourse that complements classical imagery or responds to these changes, is rarely discussed.¹⁸⁴ The dearth of attention to classical rhetoric itself in Romantic scholarship might be explained by the limited ways in which it has entered the study of English literature more broadly. In addition to critics, like Brian Vickers, who trace classical tropes and figures in English literature, Terry Eagleton made a

reductive application of classical rhetoric to literature in his popular *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. At the conclusion of this widely read and taught history of criticism, Eagleton turns to classical rhetoric to counteract what he sees as overly specialized late twentieth-century literary theories: "Rhetoric, which was the received form of critical analysis all the way from ancient society to the eighteenth century, examined the way discourses were constructed in order to achieve certain effects" (*Literary Theory: An Introduction* 179). He suggests that contemporary authors and critics can use classical rhetoric to expose how discourses enforce "existing systems of power" (Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* 183). Eagleton figures rhetoric as a means to political ends, or "the strategic goal of human emancipation." Classical rhetoric is a tool for modern literary authors and scholars to expose current and historical abuses and advocate for political change.

Like the historians of rhetoric, Eagleton suggests that classical rhetoric ceased to influence literature by the end of the eighteenth century. His call for a revival of classical rhetoric comes at the expense of the nineteenth-century Romantic and Arnoldian literary theories which he regards as complete breaks with the older discipline and practices of rhetoric.¹⁸⁵ More importantly, Eagleton's re-vision of classical rhetoric as political critique and the kinds of readings it permits emphasize the deliberative and judicial aspects of rhetoric at the expense of the resources provided by epideictic rhetoric. To borrow Richard Lockwood's phrasing, Eagleton does not account for how literary texts "exhibit the self-conscious shaping of form and the lack of direct utility" that characterize the techniques of epideictic rhetoric (Lockwood 11). While classical epideictic, the rhetoric of "praise and blame" or the oratory of display, focuses on the (re)affirmation of accepted values, current rhetoricians have expanded this mode to encompass the practices in which literary authors uphold or challenge the status quo while remaining

separate from political and legal orators. Literary authors are “not oriented to direct persuasion as much as a political or judicial speech” and instead draw upon rhetorical practices to assess the broader values that undergird specific political decisions and institutions (Lockwood 12).

Epideictic rhetoric is also a meta-discourse through which authors explore how political values form or whether audiences can be moved to action through verbal persuasion alone.¹⁸⁶ In the Romantic period, epideictic rhetoric characterizes how authors often simultaneously position their literary texts as contributions to and escapes from the political debates of the period, as Coleridge does in *The Friend*, as Hazlitt does in the *Spirit of the Age* sketches, as Lamb does in his Elia essays, as De Quincey does in his writings on style.

Epideictic rhetoric in both its classical and modern iterations explains, in part, how classically-educated authors in the nineteenth-century invented the types of “literature” that they did. Classical practices of epideictic rhetoric, while not the continuous tradition that Eagleton imagines, survived into the late eighteenth-century curriculum (albeit in reduced forms) and influenced authors’ thinking about literature, including the post-Kantian German theories that became popular in Britain. Schlegel’s vision of literature as a reflector and shaper of national values incorporates elements of classical epideictic as a celebration of shared ideals. Romantic authors transform monologic models of epideictic from the ancient *polis* and the grammar schoolroom into heteroglot epideictics suitable to a society marked by competing “voices,” new, disparate communities of readers, and political factions. By reworking classical rhetorical practices, Romantic “prose declaimers”—as well as Wordsworth, Shelley, Leigh Hunt, and Schlegel himself—negotiate their era’s competing voices and place them within new constructions of unity. Romanticists have acknowledged how the institution of literary magazines facilitated a process of disassembling and reassembling the heteroglossia of the age

through the production and evaluation of literary texts. While they emphasize the influence of new nineteenth-century academic disciplines and philosophies on these magazines' practices and criticism, older rhetorical practices were also reworked to invest literature with the community-building functions of rhetoric.

Epideictic rhetoric also plays a role in the evolution of the professional literary author in the nineteenth century. As critics like Lucy Newlyn have argued, the decline of an aristocratic patronage system contributed to an "anxiety of reception."¹⁸⁷ Literary writers created the position of the professional author from their uncertainties about the commercialized print market, large constituencies of readers, and the partisan reviews of the early nineteenth century. Others like Brian Goldberg have shown how Romantic writers reused their credentials in the old classically-educated "professions" of law, theology, and medicine to establish a "professional" identity for their authorship.¹⁸⁸ In this dissertation, I have found that the Romantic "prose declaimers" envisioned the professional author as a reinvention of the epideictic rhetor: the emergence of the professional author parallels changes in epideictic rhetoric at the turn of the nineteenth century. Just as epideictic was transformed from a celebration of a unified set of values to a means of orchestrating competing social "voices," so too, the validation of authorship migrated from the aristocratic court, where epideictic rhetoric was cultivated in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, to the diffuse, commercial sites of publishing houses and periodicals. Romantic authors not only appropriated traditional professional credentials to describe their work, but they also repurposed the rhetorical skills from this professional training in order to reinvent themselves as literary authors. Through their reworkings of classical rhetorical practices, they helped expand the role of the epideictic rhetor from a ceremonial figurehead associated with official institutions to an often multivocal author with a wider range of audiences, topics, and

political orientations towards those topics. As Arnold's Culture and model of the critic illustrate, the classical rhetorical aspects of professional authorship extended throughout the nineteenth century and form a residual part of our notion of "Romantic" authorship.

At the beginning of this dissertation, I suggested that the Romantic "prose declaimers" demonstrate Jerome Christensen's concept of "hopeful anachronism" in their adaptations of classical rhetoric. Coleridge, Hazlitt, Lamb, and De Quincey used outdated rhetorical resources to respond to the political and economic uncertainties of their era. Yet despite their repurposing of older rhetorics, the "prose declaimers" defy some aspects of Christensen's thesis. Christensen sees "hopeful anachronisms" as a means of criticizing the status quo through literary performances. However, my study of the Romantic "prose declaimers" reveals the limits of expecting all "hopeful anachronisms" to conform to our twenty-first-century American notions of effective critical writing or political progress. With the exception of Hazlitt, who deliberately reinvented the literary prose writer as oppositional epideictic rhetor, other "prose declaimers," Coleridge and De Quincey, promote centripetal, even conservative, visions of the prose writer and literature in response to their era's political upheavals, new print formats like the literary magazine, and changing conceptions of politics and culture. These models, adopted by magazines like *Blackwood's*, proved more influential in the constructions of Literature later in the nineteenth-century than Hazlitt's oppositional model. To contemporary scholars of literature, these Arnoldian models of "Literature" as a celebration of cultural values and unchanging, "universal" emotions seem just as rote and stifling as the classical themes and declamations were to the Romantics.

Through their repurposing of classical rhetoric into literary prose, the Romantic "prose declaimers" illustrate the limits of literary heteroglossia as politically liberating discourse.

Bakhtinian medievalist Thomas Farrell's observation about Chaucer is also true of the Romantic period: Critics assume that "what is good in Chaucer—what we like—must also be dialogized" or that the playful, heteroglot *Canterbury Tales* anticipate our political values and aesthetic tastes (141). Likewise, Romanticists assume that "what we like" about authors' literary experimentation must also "be dialogized," or that their texts can be used to support a critique of our current status quo. In my dissertation, I have found that Romantic prose writers display a spectrum of political orientations and ends in their reuses of rhetoric. On the one hand, Coleridge, Hazlitt, Lamb, and De Quincey develop heteroglot literary practices from classical rhetoric in response to the era's new audiences, political debates, and print culture. Their writing is densely multivocal, shot through with famous quotations, alternative perspectives, and borrowed rhetorical practices. These authors often take a playful or ludic stance towards their topics as well as the rhetorical moves themselves. Lamb, for instance, reuses classical rhetorical exercises to gently satirize emergent middle-class norms and practices. On the other hand, some authors, like Coleridge and De Quincey submit the centrifugal activities of rhetorical play and experimentation to centripetal models of literature that rally readers around (new) sets of unifying values. Heteroglot literary performances do not always accord with our current political goals or sense of "progress," but the "prose declaimers'" reconfigurations of rhetoric and literature have important implications for our own conceptions of Romanticism and the parameters of English studies as a discipline. Epideictic rhetoric, in both its contemporary and classical modes, helps us to trace the centripetal and centrifugal dynamics of Romantic prose that led to popular, lasting assumptions about Literature and the Romantic period itself.

Despite the centripetal ends to which literature as epideictic rhetoric evolved, the Romantic "prose declaimers" suggest that this path is not inevitable. These authors themselves

repurposed rote classical rhetorical practices to create something new, and their adaptations of classical rhetoric might be further reimagined. In his recent book on classical rhetorical education, Jeffrey Walker argues that ancient declamation was “an exercise in civic theater in which success is defined as fully realizing in performance the complex rhetorical and philosophical potential of the fictive situation” (*The Genuine Teachers of This Art: Rhetorical Education in Antiquity* 190). Declamation allowed students to interpret fictional situations carefully and to imagine alternative, democratic responses at odds with the despotic political conditions of the Roman Empire; as declaimers, they shared these views with audiences through their performances. Walker argues that such classical exercises might be useful in today’s pedagogy: They are essentially practical exercises, helping students learn how to do things with writing, while the speculative, imaginative aspects of these exercises form the basis for teaching “rhetorical approaches to literature or to discursive art in general” (*The Genuine Teachers of This Art: Rhetorical Education in Antiquity* 289).

Compared to Walker’s declaiming Romans, Romantic authors are relatively closer to our own era, confronting, in emergent forms, such phenomena as partisan politics, commercialized mass media, and the dynamics of public personae in those media. One future direction of my research would be to explore the potential of Romantic prose rhetoric for the teaching of writing and literature: What we might learn from Romantic prose authors’ experiments with classical rhetoric? As I have shown, Romantic authors played with the classical exercises of the schoolroom, translating rote genres into timely literary interventions in contemporary debates: How might we encourage students to experiment with the *topoi* and received forms of academic discourse? Romantic prose writers, with their emphasis on performing inquiry over communicating facts, epideictic performance over practical decision making, are at odds with

current norms for academic writing. Their experiments explain, in part, how such norms evolved since the eighteenth-century as the distinctions between literature and rhetoric, literature and science writing, literature and journalism, fiction and nonfiction became sharper and more divisive. Might rhetorical Romantic prose techniques, alter the aims of academic prose in the humanities? As theorists and practitioners of a modern, heteroglot epideictic rhetoric, Romantic authors invite us to explore the history and resources of this rich, wide-ranging rhetorical mode.

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NOTES

¹ Felicity James discusses Lamb's and Coleridge's readings of Unitarian Dissenter texts in the 1790s (30–34).

² According to Lawrence Needham, declamation began as a way of training lawyers in ancient Rome, but "gradually was divorced from the practices of the courts...and pursued in and of itself" (51). For another interpretation of ancient declamations, see Jeff Walker (*The Genuine Teachers of This Art: Rhetorical Education in Antiquity* 156–212). Christopher Reid most recently discusses declamation as a part of the training of eighteenth-century British Members of Parliament (*Imprison'd Wranglers: The Rhetorical Culture of the House of Commons, 1760-1800* 135–143).

³ For discussions of the decline of classical education at the turn of the nineteenth century, see Allan Richardson, Thomas Miller, Jennifer Wallace, and M.L. Clarke. Clarke, a historian of English grammar schools, suggests that classical education declined in the eighteenth-century when Latin ceased to be the international language of politics and scholarship (47), while Richardson similarly contends that classical education became a mere status symbol by the turn of the century (90). Wallace surveys the range of late eighteenth-century political critiques against classical education from working-class radicals like Thomas Paine, to Dissenting intellectuals like Joseph Priestley, to elite radicals like Godwin who called for a reformed approach to the classics (20–29). Miller's history of the modern composition field traces the decline of classical education against the rise of Scottish rhetorics which brought "the language of public life into higher education" through their focus on the English language and vernacular texts (7).

⁴ In addition to Walker's landmark study, *Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity*, recent American rhetoricians have revised and expanded the category of epideictic rhetoric: Cynthia Sheard explores epideictic rhetoric as a community-building discourse that either affirms or challenges the dominant values (765–794). Richard Lockwood, adapting the post structuralist "rhetoric" of Paul De Man to classical rhetorical paradigms, argues that the epideictic mode allows rhetors to create "reader's figures" or reflect on the performance and reception of their texts (11–34). More recently, Lois Agnew draws on the Bakhtin school's theories to posit "an epideictic genre that not only engages with cultural values that are recognized by the audience but also involves speakers and audiences in ... exploring new ways of conceiving those values" ("The Day Belongs to the Students" 149). For other late twentieth-century reassessments of the epideictic mode, see Gerard Hauser (5–23), Dale Sullivan ("The Epideictic Character of Rhetorical Criticism" 339–349; "The Ethos of Epideictic Encounter" 113–133), and Lawrence Rosenfield (131–156).

⁵ Expanding or criticizing Jerome McGann's Marxist reading of a mystifying "Romantic Ideology" (McGann 1), scholars have explored how Romantic authors actively participated with and against the grain of the era's political and cultural debates. Marilyn Butler was among the first to argue that for Romantic authors, "literature...is a collective activity, powerfully conditioned by social forces" (*Romantics, Rebels, and Reactionaries: English Literature and Its Background, 1760-1830* 8–9). James Chandler likewise examines Romantic literature in relation to the changing discipline of history: authors in the period are "aware of [their] place and as history" (4). Following this vein, Cox focuses on how Leigh Hunt and the authors of the "Cockney School" created a "group opposed to the powers-that-be" through a network of literary texts (3). Among these critics, the relationship of politics to culture and the evolution of "literature" are the unifying *topoi* of the Romantic period. Paul Keen, for example, maps the "metacritical" debates about the scope and function of literature in conjunction with the political instability of the

late eighteenth and early nineteenth-centuries (1). John Guillory ("Literary Study and the Modern System of the Disciplines" 19–43; Guillory, "Enlightening Mediation" 37–63) also examines the changing configurations of literature among other academic disciplines, including rhetoric, over the course of the century. Jon Mee more recently suggests that literary authors helped to reconfigure "culture as a conversation" in contradistinction to the messier "social talk" of political discourse (30). For other recent Romanticists' takes on the relations among politics, culture, and literature in the period, see Ian Duncan (xi–xix), Anne Frey (1–20), and Jerome Christensen, whom I discuss below.

⁶ Newlyn was among the first to argue that Romantic authors theorized an "anxiety of reception," or a fear of the reading public in the face of the "consumerism and anonymity which characterized the publishing-world" (14). Likewise, Franta notes that Romantic authors reflected on the circulation of their texts among mass readerships: for authors like Wordsworth, Byron, and Shelley, "how views become public and the forms in which they circulate are often more significant than the views themselves" (Franta, *Romanticism and the Rise of the Mass Public* 18). Other Romanticists position authors as theorists of print culture. Paul Magnuson, for example, argues that Romantic authors engaged the "mediation" of their texts in the public press, in which the literary is transformed when its rhetoric is echoed in the public discourse"; for Magnuson, Romantic literary texts are experiments that appropriate and recontextualize "public" nonliterary genres (3). Andrew Piper more recently suggests that Romantic authors reshaped literature by "think[ing] in and about books" as physical media (11).

⁷ In response to Hans Aarslef's argument that "language study was a mixture of philosophy and philology" at the turn of the nineteenth century, Romanticists beginning in the 1980s have been interested in literary authors' contributions to the changing boundaries of language disciplines (5). Olivia Smith was among the first to discuss the political ramifications of these changes, including "the achievement of an informal printed language capable of expressing political ideas," and relate Wordsworth's theory of language in *Lyrical Ballads* to the progressive, critical scholarship of Horne Tooke, Thomas Spence, and William Cobbett (x). Angela Esterhammer argues that poets like Wordsworth and Coleridge were invested in emergent philosophies of performative speech, or "the Romantic concept of speech as action, which is characterized by the inseparability of the political and the epistemological" (21). Marcus Tomalin, in his study of Hazlitt's *Grammar of the English Tongue*, stresses "the centrality of linguistic concerns during the Romantic period" as the vernacular language began to be studied and standardized by grammarians (7). More recently, Elfenbein (1–17) and Turley (xv–xxii) have discussed Romantic authors' responses to the changing terrain of philology as new notions of "standard" versus "literary" language evolved in the first decade of the nineteenth century.

⁸ Since the 1990s, Romanticists and rhetoricians have tentatively explored classical rhetorical practices in the period, challenging the Deconstructionist adaptation of "rhetoric" as the impossibility of addressing audience. Don Bialostosky's study of Wordsworth's "dialogic" poetics and adaptations of classical rhetorical figures was among the first to approach classical rhetoric in Romantic poetry (200–230). Bialostosky and Lawrence Needham also edited a collection of articles by Romanticists and rhetoricians, *Rhetorical Traditions and British Romantic Literature* (1–10). Among rhetoricians, James Berlin (62–74) and Rex Veeder ("Coleridge's Philosophy of Composition" 20–29; "Romantic Rhetoric and the Rhetorical Tradition" 300–320) first argued for Coleridge as a Romantic rhetorician. James Mulvihill likewise argues for a "cultural shift for rhetorical practice in Romantic England" (19); in a study of Romantic political theory, he draws upon Hazlitt and Wordsworth to show how progressive and conservative rhetors exploited similar moves to achieve politically disparate ends. The Romantic period also features in some revisionist histories of classical rhetoric. William Covino, for instance, discusses Byron and De Quincey in his reframing of rhetoric as a speculative "art of wondering" (79–120) and James Kasteley includes Jane Austen's *Persuasion* in his study of rhetoric and philosophy (145–167). More recently, Jason Camlot (1–9) and Matthew Bevis (1–28) have included the Romantic period in studies of nineteenth-century literature that combine literary and rhetorical scholarship. Camlot treats De Quincey's rhetorical theory and practice as a prelude to the work of Victorian prose critics (73–87). Bevis places Byron, as a Member of Parliament, among nineteenth-century literary authors like Tennyson whose literary careers overlapped with, and grew from, their involvements in politics (29–85).

⁹ Blair, for instance, limits demonstrative eloquence to "Panegyrics, Invectives, Gratulatory and Funeral Orations" (288). He ranks this rhetorical mode as the lowest type in which "the Speaker has no farther aim than merely to shine and to please" (266). Adam Smith observes that demonstrative speeches "were merely for ostentation delivered in the assemblies of the whole People.... The Subjects of such discourses were generally the Praises or

Discommendation of some particular persons....As it was more safe to comment than discommend men or actions, these discourses generally turned that way”(63–64).

¹⁰ Christensen explains that for De Quincey and Coleridge, archaic disciplines “shape inchoate notions of professionalism” and “figures the possibility of success within industrial society for those *soi-disant* unproductive laborers otherwise made redundant by political economy” (*Romanticism At the End of History* 50).

¹¹ See, for instance, Bourdieu's essay, “The Field of Cultural Production” (29–73).

¹² Following in Klancher's wake, David Higgins, Mark Parker, Mark Schoenfield, and most recently David Stewart study how Romantic magazines served as arbiters of culture. Echoing Bourdieu, Parker argues that “the world of literary magazines is a kind of arena, where what's often at stake both for readers and contributors is one's own image” (Parker 20). David Higgins likewise casts Romantic periodicals as dialogic battlefields for defining “genius.” For Higgins, these magazines expose “cultural production and cultural prestige as the result of subjective agency working within the lines of force created by institutional, generic, and social structures”(10). Mark Schoenfield further argues that periodicals “allowed and foreclosed possible self-representations for writers and celebrities”(4). David Stewart likewise characterizes Romantic magazines as contested sites: magazines “offer their literariness as an uncertain response to a culture which was increasingly relegating such writing to the status of context” (*Romantic Magazines and Metropolitan Literary Culture* 13).

¹³ In addition to Klancher's use of Bakhtin and Bialostosky's Bakhtinian approach to rhetoric in Wordsworth's poetry, Alan Richardson extends Bakhtinian heteroglossia by focusing on the sociopolitical implications of representing “another's speech,” or the ways in which “literary” texts refract the “‘other voice[s]’ of contemporary educational and related institutional discourses and are thus by no means ideologically inert”(32). For another Bakhtinian approach to Romanticism, see Michael Macovski (1–40).

¹⁴ Although studies of single “prose declaimers” are discussed in subsequent chapters, I would like to point out John Nabholz, Thomas McFarland, Annette Cafarelli, and Margaret Russett as among the first to study multiple prose writers from the period. Nabholz “examines formally the varieties of prose style” in Lamb's *Elia* essays, Hazlitt's *Table Talk*, and Coleridge's *The Friend* (*My Reader My Fellow-labourer* vii), while McFarland treats Hazlitt, Lamb, and De Quincey as “essayists” and traces “Romantic *topoi*” in their writings (19). By contrast, Cafarelli and Russett frame the Romantic prose writers as critics. Cafarelli treats Hazlitt and De Quincey as biographers who deviate from Samuel Johnson's biographical criticism of poets (1–29), while Russett theorizes Romantic critics' roles as “minor authors” who sacrifice their identities to authorize the poets (1–13).

¹⁵ Kneale argues that Romantic authors deploy classical tropes and figures to stage their ambivalence towards classical rhetoric: “the ‘Other’ that Romanticism at once turns to and away from is what I designate as the classical rhetorical tradition” (4).

¹⁶ “Literaturization” to describe the similarities between rhetoric and literature in societies like the Roman Empire and early modern European courts comes from the Italian “letteraturizzazione.” See Walker (*Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity* 18) and Pernot (196).

¹⁷ Menander's treatise describes sixteen types of civic speeches and their component parts (75–225), while Pseudo-Dionysius treats seven major genres(362–381). In addition to these treatises, Aristides's *Hymns to the Gods* are performances that amplify common *topoi* for describing Greek and Roman gods(Aristides and Behr). Book III, chapter 7 of Quintilian's *Institutes of Oratory* also discusses the arrangement of the epideictic encomium, or speech of praise.

¹⁸ David Ginsberg, in his article on Wordsworth's *Poems, in Two Volumes* (1807), discusses the history of the paradoxical encomium in early modern English poetry (112).

¹⁹ For a detailed history of declamation in the ancient world see Walker (*The Genuine Teachers of This Art: Rhetorical Education in Antiquity* 156–212).

²⁰ As Kenneth Burke observes, “the rhetoric of pure display comes closest to the appeal of poetic in and for itself” (K. Burke 72). Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca also explain that “the epideictic [sic]

genre of oratory ... seemed to have more connection with literature than with argumentation" and "helped to bring about the disintegration of rhetoric"(48–49).

²¹ See (Pernot 193)(Walker, *Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity* 21, 258).

²² In *Rhetoric*, Aristotle explains that the audience for epideictic orations is "the mere spectator, of the ability of the speaker" (I. 3.3).

²³ Nearly every recent rhetorician connects the epideictic mode to societies with a lack of political freedom. See, for instance, Pernot who explains that "[b]earing in mind the political and social conditions, it was a time for ceremonial, official ideology and the State religion. This fact explains the rise of the encomium, an oratorical form that explored the spaces open to persuasion in an imperial system" (Pernot 181). Fumaroli also argues that in early modern absolute monarchies, courtiers "had recourse to the deliberative only through the epideictic" and could persuade the monarch only through performances of praise (258).

²⁴ See Latour (30–37).

²⁵ Lockwood argues that because "epideictic speech reflects on or represents its own production, and in particular its reader," theoretical or pedagogical treatments of rhetoric "function as epideictic practice" (21).

²⁶ For readings of Burke's performance in *Reflections*, see Mulvihill (126–129) and Franta (*Romanticism and the Rise of the Mass Public* 21–35).

²⁷ For a discussion of Lamb's education at and writings about Christ's Hospital, see Treadwell (499–521) and Watters (114–128). H. W. Stephenson has treated Hazlitt's time at Hackney New College (Stephenson), while Steven Burley has compiled a set of archival materials on Hazlitt at Hackney (59–66). In his "Preliminary Confessions," De Quincey announces that he "was very early distinguished for my classical attainments" and criticizes "coarse, clumsy, and inelegant" exercises of his grammar school masters (DeQuincey, *The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 2.13, 14). For recent discussions of De Quincey's education, see Agnew (*Thomas de Quincey* 20–28) and Clej (136–140).

²⁸ For additional histories of British classical education, see (Clarke) and (Tompson). In addition to Clancey's study of Wordsworth's education, romanticists have also discussed poets' experiences with classical education. See Wallace (19–31).

²⁹ This list comes from Kennedy's recent translation of four ancient *progymnasmata* books (xiii).

³⁰ Ernst Curtius discusses common classical *topoi* and the literary applications of *topoi* in ancient and medieval poetry (79–105).

³¹ On the uses of *progymnasmata* in early modern English education, see Donald Clark (259–263) and Mack (1–21).

³² Kennedy explains that "a major feature of the exercises was stress on learning refutation or rebuttal: how to take a traditional tale, narrative, or thesis and argue against it" (x).

³³ I am paraphrasing the ancient rhetorician Aphthonius's description of the *chreia* in his textbook of *progymnasmata* (97).

³⁴ Howells, for instance, explains that the classical paradigm of rhetoric as persuasion was challenged by new philosophies such as the Cartesian worldview and the resulting forms of scientific discourse, which relocated the "invention," or the content of the discourse, to empirical evidence external to the rhetor's mind (*Eighteenth-Century British Logic and Rhetoric* 441–446). Thomas Miller makes a similar argument in his history of rhetorical education (1–29). Guillory likewise observes that "a new conception

of language use emerges that is oriented toward the goal of *communication* rather than *persuasion*" by the eighteenth century ("Enlightening Mediation" 39).

³⁵ See, for example, *A New Plan, or Method for Instructing the Children in the Grammar School at Christ's Hospital (A New Plan)*, which emphasizes translation and mastery of grammar rules.

³⁶ For a late eighteenth-century critique of classical education, see Vicesimus Knox's *Liberal Education*. Knox, a proponent of classical learning, laments the "useless forms and customs" of contemporary grammar schools and asserts that the "improvement of education and the reformation of the universities are great national objects" (*Liberal Education, or, A Practical Treatise on the Methods of Acquiring Useful and Polite Learning* 1.xiii, xiv).

³⁷ At the beginning of *Rhetoric*, Aristotle explains that rhetorical performance is necessary "when speaking of converse with the multitude" (I.1.12).

³⁸ For discussion of Scottish rhetorics' influences on the teaching of writing and literature, see Thomas Miller (23–24) and Susan Miller (106–144), as well as the collections, *Scottish Rhetoric and Its Influences* (Gaillet) and *The Scottish Invention of English Literature* (Crawford). Also, Jean Carr, Stephen Carr, and Lucille Schultz discuss American textbook treatments of Blair in composition courses (Carr, Carr, and Schultz 20–80).

³⁹ See, for instance, Engell's "The New Rhetoric and Romantic Poetics" (217–231) and Veeder's "Romantic Rhetoric and the Rhetorical Tradition" ("Romantic Rhetoric and the Rhetorical Tradition" 300–320).

⁴⁰ Barbara Warnick, for example, traces the classical elements of the eighteenth-century Scottish rhetoricians to their adaptations of seventeenth-century French neoclassical treatises (14–17).

⁴¹ See, for instance, ("A Reply to the Calumnies of the Edinburgh Review Against Oxford") (April 1810); ("Remarks on the System of Education in Public Schools") (August 1810); and ("Public Schools of England-Eton") (April 1830). Reviews of books by ancient authors, such as ("Strabonis Rerum Geographicarum Libri XVII [Review of a Book on Strabo's Philosophy]") and ("The Works of Plato [Review of Thomas Taylor's 1804 Translation of Plato]") (July 1809) also criticize classical education in grammar schools and universities.

⁴² For a discussion of Coleridge's *Blackwood's* pieces and the politics of the magazine, see Morrison 27–40.

⁴³ For a discussion of Lockhart's translation of Schlegel and its influence on *Blackwood's* as an institution, see Duncan (47–48; 57–58).

⁴⁴ Klancher, for example, asserts that whereas eighteenth-century periodicals frequently published contributions by readers, the "monthly and quarterly journals" of the early nineteenth century "often merg[ed] writer, editor, and publisher into a corporate, collective 'author' institutionally set apart from its readers" (*The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790-1832* 48). Using the *Edinburgh Review* as a case study, Schoenfield likewise describes the sharpening of reader/ author roles in nineteenth-century periodicals that sought to 'sell' knowledge and culture through articles by 'expert' authors (69).

⁴⁵ I draw upon Paul Keen's treatment this eighteenth-century conception of "literature" as learned "works in any subject" (1–5).

⁴⁶ Cite paratexts from the actual magazines as well as Schoenfield observes that "History was *Maga's* foundational discourse" (100), and the magazine's inaugural, April 1817 notice describes it as an "Antiquarian Repository" for "unpublished manuscripts" from private archives and "such materials as

may some throw light upon the disputed points of British history...and the state of society in former ages" ("Repository" 1).

⁴⁷ Parker, for example, describes a "range of modalities within periodical" by which some editors asserted greater control or cohesion over disparate contributors and their perspectives (5). Schoenfield likewise explains that literary magazines "marshall[ed] clashing and allied voices across different discourses" and sometimes used this mixture of voices to "reduce that about which [they were] silent to nonexistence" (1, 6).

⁴⁸ For histories of *Blackwood's* in the Romantic era, see Duncan (46–65) and Schoenfield (99–108). Finkelstein also places the magazine in the context of William Blackwood's publishing empire (1–20).

⁴⁹ Duncan treats "On the Sculpture of the Greeks" and "Remarks on Greek Tragedy" as foundational articles that ally *Blackwood's* with post-Kantian German philosophies of literature and national identity (56–57).

⁵⁰ In his 1840 *Blackwood's* essays on "Style," De Quincey treats "publication" as the distribution of texts in any medium, including live theatrical performances (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 12.75–81).

⁵¹ For example, *The London Magazine and Monthly Chronologer* (1741–94) and *The London Magazine and Gentleman's Intelligencer* (1732–1829).

⁵² For example, in the introduction to "Confessions," De Quincey argues that "nothing, indeed, is more revolting to English feelings, than the spectacle of a human being obtruding on our notice his moral ulcers or scars" and offers a mock apology to readers: "so nervously am I alive to reproach of this tendency, that I have for many months hesitated about the propriety of allowing this...to come before the public eye" (*The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 2.9).

⁵³ For a detailed analysis of the events leading to the duel, see Parker (20–26) and Morrison.

⁵⁴ See Gilmartin (1–10).

⁵⁵ For the publication history of *The Friend*, see Coleman (7–20).

⁵⁶ Guillory observes that eighteenth-century rhetorical theory is marked by a shift away from "the traditional goal of persuasion and toward the goal of *communication*" ("Literary Study and the Modern System of the Disciplines" 22). Rather than study rhetoric as a civic art of persuasion, according to the classical paradigm, rhetoricians like Adam Smith, Hugh Blair, and George Campbell focused on the communication of thoughts, feelings, and knowledge in all written genres or "the transfer of [a] speaker's thoughts and feelings accurately to the minds of the auditors" (Guillory, "Enlightening Mediation" 40).

⁵⁷ In his study of Hazlitt, Lamb, and De Quincey as "Romantic essayists," MacFarland also suggests "the influence of Coleridge on all three lives and their works" (24).

⁵⁸ See *1795 Lectures On Politics and Religion* (*Collected Works* Volume 1), for the *Conciones* and other early lectures where Coleridge advocates for unifying "principles" as the basis for politics and cultural values.

⁵⁹ See Coleridge's *Lay Sermon* (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 6.156–169).

⁶⁰ Veeder, a late twentieth-century rhetorician, also discusses the influence of eighteenth-century preaching rhetorics on Coleridge's poetry and literary theory ("Romantic Rhetoric and the Rhetorical Tradition" 305–311).

⁶¹ For another twentieth-century interpretation of epideictic rhetoric's centripetal, conservative tendencies, see Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (48–51). Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca argue that epideictic rhetors

“secure a proper degree of adherence” to dominant value and rally readers by “appeals to a universal order”(49, 51).

⁶² Berlin was among the first rhetoricians to "make the case for Coleridge" using the "Essays on Method" from *The Friend* (62). Veeder in "Coleridge's Philosophy of Composition" similarly seeks to "claim" Coleridge for the fields of "rhetoric and composition" by figuring him as a composition teacher who was "always working on curriculum" ("Coleridge's Philosophy of Composition" 20). Myers reads *The Friend* as "hints towards a practical treatise" of rhetoric(8).

⁶³ In Book I of *Rhetoric*, Aristotle hesitates about the ethics of teaching rhetoric as an art of arguing opposite sides of the case. For example, "the orator should be able to prove opposites, as in logical arguments; not that we should do both (for one ought not to persuade people to do what is wrong), but....that which is true and better is naturally always easier to prove and more likely to persuade" (1.1.11–12).

⁶⁴ Honeycutt translates this passage of the *Institutes* thusly: "there can be no communion of good and evil in the same breast, and to meditate at once on the best things and the worst is no more in the power of the same mind than it is possible for the same man to be at once virtuous and vicious"(12.1.4).

⁶⁵ See, for example, the editor's footnotes to the passages cited above (Coleridge, *Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 6.144–146).

⁶⁶ Anderson also observes that "Coleridge's prose dramatizes his process of thought"(264).

⁶⁷ See, for example, the first installment of the "Noctes Ambrosianae" (Wilson, "Noctes Ambrosianae No. I" 362).

⁶⁸ Christensen observes that Coleridge's repeated metaphor of the winding stream represents the figure of *excursus*. The stream/*excursus* is the "master metaphor of *The Friend* because...it represents movement as temporal process" (*Coleridge's Blessed Machine of Language* 196).

⁶⁹ Covino extends rhetoric from a civic, persuasive enterprise to "the elaboration of ambiguity" that showcases the dramatization of the rhetor's thoughts (2).

⁷⁰ Although it is beyond the scope of this dissertation, early nineteenth-century American critics recognized Coleridge's figure of the active reader and used his writings as a form of advanced pedagogy. See for example James Marsh's introduction to the American edition of *Aids to Reflection* (1829).

⁷¹ In his study of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century print culture, St. Clair observes that the period's widely-circulating "canon" excluded many sixteenth-and seventeenth-century authors: "It included no contemporaries of Shakespeare, no Drayton, no Herrick, no Lovelace, no Marvell, no Herbert, and no women authors. Donne was reprinted once...but did not feature in the many collections which followed"(128)

⁷² For the development of eighteenth-century Scottish rhetorics from "French antecedents," see Barbara Warnick (1–16).

⁷³ Clej also notes that De Quincey's "emphasis on organizing passions... suggests a far more technical activity that has more in common with the rhetorician's disposition" than with a stereotypical "Romantic" poet's process of invention (198).

⁷⁴ For instance in "Mackery End," Elia depicts himself "hanging over (for the thousandth time) some passage in old Burton"(*Essays of Elia* 173). Lamb, in an "obituary" for his character, further describes Elian style as "an affected array of antique modes and phrases"(*Essays of Elia* 344). Felicity James

recently argues that Lamb and Coleridge shared views of reading and writing on account of their participation in Dissenter circles in the 1790s (13–54).

⁷⁵ Park explains that Lamb chose not to publish this review because he was afraid of exacerbating a rivalry between Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt because the review chastises what Lamb sees as Hazlitt's thinly-veiled caricatures of Hunt (299–300).

⁷⁶ Park (11–12), Milnes (324–341), and Duff (127–134) see "Imperfect Sympathies" as Lamb's philosophy of essay writing.

⁷⁷ Nabholz argues that "Lamb's rhetorically strenuous paragraphs involve the reader's transformation" and that readers "must shed completely [their] unimaginative, spectator-like role" in order to fully participate in Lamb/Elia's performance (*My Reader My Fellow-labourer* 12, 13).

⁷⁸ Like Elia in "Imperfect Sympathies," revisionist theorists of epideictic rhetoric privilege the interaction between rhetor and audience over the "contents" of the discourse. For example, Lockwood asserts that "epideictic rhetoric is characterized by a functional use of reflexive considerations of its own speaking" and involves an audience's "metadiscursive judgment of the [rhetor's] ability to produce discursive effects" (27, 74). Rosenfield similarly sees the epideictic rhetoric as a participatory experience: "Our acknowledgement of the epideictic speaker's *ethos* is a joining with him...to behold that which is excellent in a spirit of loving attention" (146).

⁷⁹ Eagleton, one of the first to counter Abrams, observes that Hazlitt is invested in "form itself as the bearer of political values which are secreted in linguistic tones and inflections" ("William Hazlitt: An Empiricist Radical" 110). Bromwich was among the first to address the "rhetorical" dynamics of Hazlitt's writing: Hazlitt is a "master of persuasion" who cultivates a "truth established by his effect on the audience and which they themselves disclose by words and actions" (408). Hazlitt and *The Eloquence of the British Senate* also figure largely in Mulvihill's study of political rhetoric in early nineteenth-century Britain (74–88). For other discussions of a rhetorical Hazlitt, see Richard Tomalin who discusses Hazlitt as a politicized philosopher of language in the tradition of Horne Tooke. Following Olivia Smith, Tomalin reads Hazlitt's *English Grammar* as a philosophical text that uses language to "problematize broader, more fundamental social conflicts" in early nineteenth-century society (3). Likewise, Mark Schoenfield (11–128), Mark Parker (59–105), Daly (29–43), and David Higgins (102–126) have explored Hazlitt's work in the context of early nineteenth-century periodicals.

⁸⁰ Abrams cites Hazlitt's introductory lecture from *Lectures on the English Poets* in order to depict him as mouthpiece for "expressivism": "Hazlitt's 'On Poetry in General' reads as though it were itself a spontaneous overflow of feeling without logical sequence, but it incorporates in a very short scope a surprising number of current aesthetic ideas" (54). See also Abrams (50–52, 140–142). Likewise, Thompson frames Hazlitt as a "patrician friend of the people" whose "fertile allusiveness and studied manner" alienate the working-classes with whom he sympathizes (747).

⁸¹ For the history of Hackney New College, see Stephenson (1–20) and McLachlin (246–255). Stephen Burley has recently published a collection of archival sources relating to Hackney and provides another account of the school's history (12–18).

⁸² For an interpretation of Priestley as a theorist of academic discourse, see Thomas Miller (98–106).

⁸³ Keen notes that late eighteenth-century Dissenters like Priestley "celebrated knowledge as power, believing that they could use it to change the world by encouraging political reform in the public sphere, and moral reform in the private" (30). They invested in reading and writing as a "communicative process in which all rational individuals could have their say...and judge the merits of different arguments for themselves" (Keen 4).

⁸⁴ Paulin discusses how Priestley's politics and rhetorical theory "shaped the young Hazlitt" (10). He particularly discusses the influence of the *Lectures on Oratory and Criticism* (52–53, 237–238).

⁸⁵ Schoenfield argues that early nineteenth-century society and literary practices were caught between "the highly ritualized world...of aristocratic symbols and the complex marketplace of print" (47).

⁸⁶ The "division of labour" plays a major role in Hazlitt's criticism. In "On Genius and Commonsense" (*Table Talk*), Hazlitt explains that "the division of labour is an excellent principle in taste as well as in mechanics" to argue that comic and tragic playwrights ought to be judged by separate criteria based on their disparate rhetorical purposes" (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 8. 49). In the review of *The Conquest of Taranto (A View of the English Stage)*, he appeals to the "division of labour" and asserts that a playwright "is supposed to write for the stage...not for the loneliness of the closet" (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 5. 367). In *Lectures on the English Comic Writers*, he likewise explains that "In all things, there is a division of labour; and I am as little for introducing the tone of the pulpit or reading-desk on the stage, as for introducing plays and interludes in church-time" (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 6. 157).

⁸⁷ For an example of Hazlitt's anger at the "Lake Poets," see his review of the *Excursion* in *The Round Table* (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 4. 105–120).

⁸⁸ For similar interpretations of this passage, see Kinnaird (110–113), Mahoney (146–159), and Natarajan (167–168).

⁸⁹ Kinnaird observes an unacknowledged connection between Hazlitt's model of the prose author and Arnold's critic: "Arnold is the nineteenth-century critic with whom Hazlitt, in his sense of the moral centrality of literature in society, has most in common, but Arnold makes not a single reference to Hazlitt by name" (365).

⁹⁰ Hazlitt began compiling *Eloquence* around 1806. The first edition of *Eloquence* was published in 1807 by a Quaker printer, Thomas Ostell. It was reprinted in 1808 by Murray, who acquired part of Ostell's business upon his death. For an account of the genesis of *Eloquence*, see Wu, (109–124).

⁹¹ Hazlitt includes full-length essays on Oliver Cromwell, Bulstrode Whitlocke, Lord Belhaven, William Pulteney, Lord Chesterfield, John St. Aubin, Robert Walpole, William Pitt (Earl Chatham), Lord Mansfield, Lord Cambden, Edmund Burke, Charles Fox, and William Pitt (the younger).

⁹² See, for example, George Chalmers's *Parliamentary Portraits* (1795), which profiles MPs from the 1780s and 1790s.

⁹³ Natarajan has also noticed the performative dynamics of Hazlitt's theoretical writing. She reads Hazlitt as a "philosophical critic" who abandons the formal treatise genre for "a more felicitous, if less conventional expression" of his theories in essay form (Natarajan 1).

⁹⁴ In addition to Mulvihill and Paulin, Newlyn briefly discusses *Eloquence* in her study of Romantic authors and reception (Newlyn 361–362), and Hessell reads *Eloquence* alongside Hazlitt's later career as a parliamentary reporter (Hessell 97–128).

⁹⁵ For a discussion of the history of parliamentary reporting practices, see Sparrow (1–24), Wahrman (83–113), Reid ("Whose Parliament?" 122–134). Nikki Hessell most recently discusses eighteenth- and nineteenth-century parliamentary reporting practices in her study of literary authors who were also reporters (1–18).

⁹⁶ For a discussion of the Wilkes Trial and the public image of the press as defenders of English liberty, see Sparrow (16–23).

⁹⁷ See, for example, *The Beauties of the Late Right Honorable Edmund Burke* (London: Myers and West, 1798).

⁹⁸ Although shorthand was invented in the sixteenth-century, Parliamentary reporters did not use it as the earliest reporters were denied paper in the galleries (Sparrow 41).

⁹⁹ See Bolter and Grusin(44–45).

¹⁰⁰ Cobbett published his *Parliamentary History* as well as reports of contemporary speeches under Hansard, and in 1812, he sold publication rights to the printing firm. Cobbett's collections evolved into the *Hansard's* guides, which were the leaders of published parliamentary oratory in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. See Williams (*Cobbett* 11) and Bevis (18).

¹⁰¹ Parliamentary anthologies parallel the agendas of mid-to-late eighteenth-century poetry anthologies which fashioned themselves as repositories for "fugitive" texts that "became the social or national responsibility of right-minded, patriotic readers" (Benedict 195).

¹⁰² The funeral oration is a standard genre in ancient epideictic manuals. In eighteenth-century Britain, Blair too defines epideictic or "demonstrative" rhetoric as "Panegyrics, Invectives, Gratulatory, and Funeral Orations" (288).

¹⁰³ Natarajan notes that Shakespeare serves as an exception to Hazlitt's theory of innately egotistical poets (9).

¹⁰⁴ For a full discussion of "high eloquence," see Blair (266–268).

¹⁰⁵ Mulvihill agrees that *Eloquence* presents a narrative of Parliamentary decline beginning in the eighteenth century: "If for [Thomas] Browne the Walpole administration represents a high point in British rhetoric, in Hazlitt's view, this is where it all began to go wrong"(74–75).

¹⁰⁶ Compare Hazlitt's comment to Wordsworth's *Essays Upon Epitaphs*: In eighteenth-century poetry, Wordsworth charges that "Those feelings which are pure emanations of nature...are abandoned for their opposites....Language, if it do not uphold, and feed and *leave in quiet*, like the power of gravitation or the air we breathe, is a counter-spirit, unremittingly and noiselessly at work to derange, to subvert, to lay waste, to vitiate, and to dissolve"("Essays Upon Epitaphs" 2. 85).

¹⁰⁷ Coleridge likewise complains in his March 19, 1800 *Morning Post* editorial that Pitt's speeches are not amenable to print transcriptions: "Not a sentence of Mr. Pitt's has ever been quoted, or formed the favourite phrase of the day—a thing unexampled in any man of equal reputation" (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 1. 224).

¹⁰⁸ Hazlitt's comment on Whitlocke anticipates T. S. Eliot's concept of the "Dissociation of sensibility." Paulin(57–58), Bromwich(129–130), and Kinnaird (211–212) have noted this connection.

¹⁰⁹ On Hazlitt's career-long fascination with Burke, see Paulin(118–141), Bromwich(288–300), and Gilmartin(231).

¹¹⁰ Hazlitt's transcript of Burke's budget speech is more detailed than other transcripts of this speech from eighteenth-century newspapers. Other transcripts of this speech, such as those in the *General Evening Post* (10 February 1780); *London Chronicle* (10 February 1780); *London Evening Post* (10 February 1780); *St. James's Chronicle* (10 February 1780); *Morning Chronicle* (12 February 1780); and *Public Advertiser* (12 February 1780) transpose the speech into third person, eliminate the Latin quotes, and paraphrase most of the speech.

¹¹¹ For instance, Burke later compares himself to a "physician" diagnosing the "disorders" and "infirmities" of the country (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 2. 241); compares inefficient, outdated

government positions to corpses(*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 2. 245); and reinforces his exhortation to the Commons by figuring them as doctors: "we know the exact seat of the [financial] disease and how to apply the remedy" (*The Eloquence of the British Senate* 2. 261).

¹¹² For instance, Schlegel explains that literature is an art of words that "energise[s] only in thought and speech" and "display[s] intellect as embodied in written language" (10, 11).

¹¹³ Story also notes that Hazlitt's sketches of politicians such as George Canning, James Mackintosh, and Francis Burdett "depict the way ruling passions influence the use of language in swaying popular opinion," suggesting breakdown of language in the 1820 (88). For other readings of *Spirit*, see Higgins who argues that Hazlitt's sketches are "so much better than other literary galleries of the time" because "the adversarial attitude the essayist takes towards many of his subjects creates a fascinating sense of tension and intellectual conflict"(65). See also Parker(153–155), Paulin (229–247), and Fay(151–175).

¹¹⁴ For the history of *The New Monthly Magazine*, see Klancher (*The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790-1832* 62–68)and Parker (135–156).

¹¹⁵ Blair, for instance, explains that ends of "eloquence" are "to instruct, to persuade, or to please" (Blair 264).

¹¹⁶ In his introductory lecture, Blair explains the "tasteful" benefits of the study of rhetoric for clergymen and other professionals: "How then shall these vacant spaces, those unemployed intervals...be filled up? How can we contrive to dispose of them in any way that shall more agreeable in itself, or more consonant to the dignity of the human mind, than in the entertainments of taste and the study of polite literature? He who is so happy as to have acquired a relish for these, has always at hand an innocent and irreproachable amusement for his leisure hours" (8).

¹¹⁷ Klancher notes the rise of public lectures in the early nineteenth-century("Prose" 281–282). For a recent discussion of the physical settings and social practices of Romantic lecturing, see Esterhammer and Dick(4–18).

¹¹⁸ Hazlitt himself attended Mackintosh's 1799 lectures at Lincoln's Inn (Wu 74).

¹¹⁹ Hazlitt describes Mackintosh's facility with quotes: "The writings of Burke, Hume, Berkeley, Paly, Lord Bacon, Jeremy Taylor, Grotius, Puffendorf, Cicero, Aristotle, Tacitus, Livy, Sully, Machiavel, Guicciardini, Thuanus, lay beside him, and he could instantly lay his hand upon the passage, and quote them chapter and verse to the clearing up of all difficulties, and the silencing of all oppugners"(*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.99).

¹²⁰ In this essay, Hazlitt opposes works of "genius" to those of "cleverness [which] is a certain *knack* or aptitude at doing certain things, which depend more on a particular adroitness and off-hand readiness than on force or perseverance, such as making puns, making, epigrams, making extempore verses, mimicking the style..." (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 8.83).

¹²¹ Hazlitt, despite his admiration for Scott's talents, argues that the novels' nostalgic medieval settings support a conservative political vision: Scott "would make us conceive a horror of all reform..."(*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 11.66).

¹²² For an earlier sketch of Byron that touches on similar issues, see Leigh Hunt's sketch of Byron in *The Feast of Poets*. Hunt admires Byron's poetry but regrets its self-absorption and lack of political engagement: Byron should "study politics more and appear oftener in Parliament," which would allow him to not only serve his country politically...[but] acquire a stronger ambition to serve it poetically (Hunt, *The Feast of the Poets* 127, 129).

¹²³ Paulin also observes that "[v]oice is one of the leitmotifs of the collection"(246).

¹²⁴ At the conclusion of his study, Kinnaird states that Hazlitt has “the intelligence of the novelist”(373).

¹²⁵ My reading of Hazlitt's Gifford sketch agrees with Turley: in response to reactionary critics' attacks, Romantic authors "found themselves obliged to mimic rhetorical features of hostile reviews in order to subvert them" (Turley 67).

¹²⁶ In *Free Thoughts*, a pamphlet protesting the Pitt regime, Hazlitt quotes *Paradise Lost* to describe how Pitt avoids censure through “evasive” arguments:

No force could bind the loose phantoms, and his mind...soon rose from defeat unhurt
‘And in its liquid texture mortal wound
Receiv’d no more than can the fluid air...’

(Hazlitt, “Free Thoughts on Public Affairs” 18)

In Book VI of *Paradise Lost*, this passage refers to Satan and demons, who as spiritual entities cannot be physically harmed, and Hazlitt is arguing that Pitt puts forth vapid ideas to avoid blame and responsibility since politicians take his statements to mean what they wish. He thus draws upon Milton to suggest the diabolical nature of Pitt's politics. Demonstrating the “double-voiced” potential of quotes, Hazlitt later uses the same lines from *Paradise Lost* to describe Percy Shelley's radical politics in “On Paradox and Commonplace” (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 8.148).

¹²⁷ Hazlitt mistakenly blames Gifford for the harsh review of Keats, which in fact was written by John Croker.

¹²⁸ Aphthonius gives a typical description *syncretism* as well as the “Hector/Achilles” example in his widely adapted *Preliminary Exercises* (113).

¹²⁹ See Benedict (4).

¹³⁰ Hazlitt's stock metaphors of Scott's reflective mind and Byron's illuminating mind anticipate the central “mirror and lamp” *topoi* of M H Abrams's interpretation of British Romanticism.

¹³¹ Like Le Grice, Hazlitt makes fun of antithesis in “Indian Jugglers”: “If the Indian juggler were to play tricks in throwing up the three case-knives, which would keep their positions like the leaves of a crocus, he would cut his fingers. I can make a very bad antithesis without cutting my fingers”(The Complete Works of William Hazlitt 8.80).

¹³² Chandler argues that *Spirit* challenges a “historicist configuration of cultural epochs and exemplary corpses” in which individuals served as moral or artistic “exemplaries” for a given era(177). Cafarelli also suggests that Hazlitt defies an eighteenth-century paradigms in which poet's lives were used as didactic examples (118,150).

¹³³ Cafarelli, for example, notes that in Hazlitt's collection “the spirit of the age encompasses everyone...implicates the narrator and reader also”(132).

¹³⁴ Bromwich, for example, argues that Hazlitt “had many shared aims, but few shared words, with the working-class revolutionaries”(8).

¹³⁵ For a discussion of Arnold's lack of regard for Hazlitt, see Kinnaird (365–367).

¹³⁶ See “On Gusto” (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* 4.77–79). The term “gusto” not only plays a major role in Abrams's assessment of Hazlitt as an “expressivist” critic, but also in Bromwich's and Paulin's later studies of Hazlitt.

¹³⁷ Lamb's 1823 essay collection *Elia* (also known as *Essays of Elia*) contains essay published in the *London Magazine* from 1820-1823. A second collection, *The Last Essays of Elia*, was published in 1833.

¹³⁸ See Simon Hull, (96–105). See also Richard Clancey, "Lamb, Horace, and the Ring of a Classic," who reads the *Elia* essays alongside Horace's *Epistles* ("Lamb, Horace, and the Ring of a Classic" 150–160). James Treadwell focuses on the class politics of "Recollections of Christ's Hospital" and "Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago." He contends that the later *Elia* essay refutes Lamb's earlier "defense of the school" by presenting the perspective of a marginalized student who experiences the schools' bias towards wealthier boys (Treadwell 507). Reggie Watters likewise reconstructs Lamb's extracurricular reading at Christ's Hospital, arguing that the adventure novels popular among schoolboys reinforced the school's middle-class, imperialist agendas: these books "formed part of a mythology which Christ' Hospital boys could easily absorb...which might later lead them to the Pacific or to the islands of the East or West Indies, or to the office of the East India company..." (122).

¹³⁹ Monsman argues that Lamb offers "sly critiques of the central dogmas of Romanticism," or the Wordsworthian-Coleridgean model of the poet's role, due to his involvement with urban institutions ranging from the East India Company to the theatre to literary magazines (*Confessions of a Prosaic Dreamer* 16). Fred Randel, another early critic of Lamb, interprets the *Elia* essay as Lamb's attempts to "define his identity in contrast to" Wordsworth and Coleridge's model of poetic vocation: "The author of the *Elia* essays shows himself to be allergic to the presumptuousness of the poets...religious and moral exhortations have been supplanted by an irony which mocks their pretensions even while he remains open to their worth" (6). Thomas MacFarland likewise suggests that Lamb is a "serious cultural figure" and "an exemplar of the Romantic movement" (25, 26). Most recently, Simon Hull examines Lamb's career in *London Magazine* and places Lamb at the head of a "metropolitan" group that includes Leigh Hunt, Thomas De Quincey, and Hazlitt (1). Felicity James likewise credits Lamb with "an alternative narrative of Romanticism" that prefers the city to the country, social interaction to solitude, and political open-mindedness to the increasingly narrow views of the 1810s Lake Poets (210). For other contemporary readings of Lamb in historical context, see Roy Park (1–42), Mark Parker (30–58), David Stewart ("Charles Lamb's 'Distant Correspondents'" 89–107), and Karen Fang ("Empire, Coleridge, and Charles Lamb's Consumer Imagination" 815–843).

¹⁴⁰ For a full history of Christ's Hospital, see G.T. Allan.

¹⁴¹ On the challenges to charity grammar schools, see Richard Tompson.

¹⁴² Clancey discusses this "renewed zeal in classical study" in the late eighteenth century (*Wordsworth's Classical Undersong* xiv).

¹⁴³ For a discussion of Boyer's methods, see S. E. Winbolt (Winbolt). Also Vicesimus Knox argues for a return to the "practices of the old schools" and urges regular writing practice (*Liberal Education, or, A Practical Treatise on the Methods of Acquiring Useful and Polite Learning* 1.63). Charity grammar schools thus advocated an "increased emphasis on combining Latin and English" (Tompson 49).

¹⁴⁴ I refer to the reprint of this poem in E. V. Lucas, *The Life of Charles Lamb*, 54–55.

¹⁴⁵ See Elledge for a description of "Speech Days" at the elite grammar schools (4–11).

¹⁴⁶ For another discussion of ludic rhetoric as "schoolboy escapades," see Walter Ong, (113–141).

¹⁴⁷ Mary Wedd and Clancey observe that *Elia*'s classical allusions and puns on Latin word origins surpass his claims to a minimalist classical education. Wedd notices that "we must surely be pulled up short when he comes to 'small Latin' seeing how the *Essays*...are sprinkled by quotation from or reference to classical texts" (165) (165), and Clancey adds that "Lamb was a fine classicist" with copious reading beyond the texts of the grammar school curriculum ("Lamb, Horace, and the Ring of a Classic" 151).

¹⁴⁸ See Chandler(140–147).

¹⁴⁹ See Hull (121–148).

¹⁵⁰ See Monsman (“Satiric Models for Charles Lamb’s ‘A Dissertation Upon Roast Pig’” 1–27), and Gigante (102–116) .

¹⁵¹ This is a paraphrase of Aphthonius' description of the encomium as a school exercise(108–110).

¹⁵² See Fang (“Empire, Coleridge, and Charles Lamb’s Consumer Imagination” 826)

¹⁵³ Hull explains that "Elia provides the means for Lamb to appeal to the reader as one city dweller to another, by meeting the disaffection...with an ironic, provocative mode of detachment" (122).

¹⁵⁴ Wedd, Fang, and Monsman discuss “Roast Pig” as a parody of late eighteenth-century orientalist scholarship.

¹⁵⁵ David Ginsberg discusses the history of the "paradoxical encomium" and Wordsworth's poetic adaptations of it(108–121) .

¹⁵⁶ Parr offers another variation on the Spital Sermon *topos* of material and spiritual rewards: "The example of your predecessors, and your royal founder, a lively and generous sense of own duty, the peace of your capital, the credit of your country, the honour of your religion...the intellectual and moral improvement of the young...all conspire in summoning the whole force of your minds, and the whole weight of your authority, to this momentous task"(23).

¹⁵⁷ Unlike the modern concept of "ekphrasis," a text that celebrates a work of art, "ekphrasis" in the ancient *progymnasmata* was a vivid description of person or place, "bringing what is shown clearly before the eyes"(Aphthonius 117).

¹⁵⁸ For a history of the Society, see Roberts (“Reshaping the Gift Relationship” 201–231).

¹⁵⁹ Hull reads the Elgin Marbles allusion as Lamb’s "urban appropriation of the Romantic fragment to a practical, social cause," (7). Cox discusses the popularization of classical art and mythology in the early nineteenth century, (146–151).

¹⁶⁰ In addition to the deconstructionist readings by De Man and his followers, Romanticists have discussed the instability of the author's identity in print from a historical, material standpoint. See, for instance, Lucy Newlyn.

¹⁶¹ For a recent discussion of self-reflexivity in periodical writing, see Stewart, *Romantic Magazines and Metropolitan Literary Culture*(*Romantic Magazines and Metropolitan Literary Culture* 1–13).

¹⁶² Park, for example, notices Lambs “rejection of all theorizing, philosophical or theological” as a defining characteristic of his essays (5). Wedd likewise notes that “Elia does not normally deal with current affairs or controversial philosophical or political ideas”(167).

¹⁶³ Rhetorician Lois Agnew identifies five essays in which De Quincey treats rhetoric writ broadly: a review of Whately’s *Elements of Rhetoric* (*Blackwood’s* 1828), “A Brief Appraisal of Greek Literature” (*Tait’s* 1839), the series of four “Style” essays (*Blackwood’s* 1840–41), “On Conversation” (*Tait’s* 1847) and “On Language” (c. 1858) (*Thomas de Quincey* 46–49). I add to her list “Letters to a Young Man” (*London Magazine* 1823) and “The English Mailcoach” (*Blackwood’s* 1849) because De Quincey’s interest in the circulation of texts and national identity in these essays complements his view of rhetoric as materially and historically contingent.

¹⁶⁴ Because De Quincey writes so frequently about his career as a professional magazine essayist, borrowings from other writers, and the artificiality of the author/reader relationship in early nineteenth-

century print culture, contemporary critics frame his work in terms of rhetoric. Devlin was among the first to read De Quincey as a serious theorist of prose writing who "wished to explore new worlds of experience and needed a new prose for the purpose" (110). Russett argues that De Quincey "developed strategies for promoting [his] literary dignity while conforming to editorial policy" through his personae (99). Clej likewise treats classical rhetoric as a key component of De Quincey's reinvention of identity as "a postromantic form of subjectivity based on transgressive techniques, simulation and bricolage" (vii); see also Clej's chapters on De Quincey and rhetoric (117–140). For discussions of De Quincey's prose practice as excursive display, see also Proctor (273), Cafarelli (157–162), and Butler (*Romantics, Rebels, and Reactionaries: English Literature and Its Background, 1760-1830* 162–164). Others such as Newlyn (174–179), Frey (140–164), Franta ("Publication and Mediation in 'The English Mail Coach'" 323–330), McGrath (847–862), North (99–122), Duffy (Duffy 7–22), Whale (35–53), and Stewart ("Commerce, Genius, and De Quincey's Literary Identity" 775–789) have studied De Quincey's fascination with the material production, distribution, and reception of texts. All of these critics discuss DQ's reactions to increase in printed texts, the expansion of empire, and the need to distinguish the literary merits of his work.

¹⁶⁵ In addition to Covino and Agnew, Howells (*Poetics, Rhetoric, and Logic* 192–214), Needham (48–64), Jason Camlot (74–90) discuss De Quincey from the perspective of rhetorical histories. Howells reads De Quincey's essays on rhetoric and style as incoherent pastiches of classical and eighteenth-century Scottish rhetorics, while Needham interprets De Quincey's rhetorical theory in light of ancient Roman declamations and epideictic practices. Camlot interprets De Quincey's essays as a highly performative rhetorical theory that criticizes early nineteenth-century periodical practices: "DQ's essay on style does not function as a manual of style...but as a history of style with the purpose of explaining the actual conditions under which the best kind of un-mechanical prose can arise" (85).

¹⁶⁶ John Barrell was among the first to discuss De Quincey's participation in "an early, but well-established imperialist culture" through his orientalist imagery in *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* (7). For a discussion of De Quincey's rhetoric and style essays in relation to empire, see McDonagh (91–120) and Roberts (113–152).

¹⁶⁷ For a discussion of De Quincey's erratic relationship with *Blackwood's* in late 1810s and early 1820s, see Morrison (27–40).

¹⁶⁸ See Needham (51–52).

¹⁶⁹ Among rhetoricians, Covino observes that "we engage in the very rhetoric [De Quincey] conceives" when we read the essays on rhetoric and style (118). Needham agrees that De Quincey's essays are "a bravura performance of verbal display" (49). Camlot reads the 1840s Style essays as an example of De Quincey's Literature of Power: In these essays, the critic or theorist of rhetoric "is allowed to become indistinguishable from the producer of that kind of literature" (80). Among Romanticists, Burwick was among the first to notice that De Quincey's essays are "a rhetorical act, based upon paradox and developed with polemical skill" (Burwick ix). Devlin likewise suggests that De Quincey's essays on rhetoric perform what they theorize through an "organic and exploratory" style (106). More recently, Roberts treats De Quincey's essays as an invitation to participate in his motions of mind: "We must not attempt to patch up De Quincey's critical thought, but must be prepared to follow its eccentricities" (215).

¹⁷⁰ Butler, for example, traces this sort of book review to eighteenth-century periodicals. Unlike modern reviews which "focus on the performance of the author," "the nature and value of the field might itself become the matter the reviewer set out to investigate," and this practice of connecting a single book to broader issues continued in the nineteenth-century *Edinburgh Review* (Butler, "Culture's Medium: The Role of the Reviews" 127).

¹⁷¹ For Coleridge's distinction between "fancy" and "imagination," see *Biographia Literaria* (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 7.1.82–86).

¹⁷² In addition to Lucian's "Fly," which I discuss in this chapter, see also Lucian's "Essays on Portraiture" ("Essays in Portraiture" 256–335), "In Praise of Demosthenes" ("In Praise of Demosthenes" 237–301), and Fronto's "eulogy of Smoke and Dust" (38–49).

¹⁷³ For instance in the December 1828 *Noctes*, the men have a feast, and a food fight breaks out when the "Shepherd carves the haggis" ("Noctes Ambrosianae No. XL" 688–689). Because they "live" in the pages of the magazine, they nearly "drown" when food is spilled on them and the table. For a summary of the Sunday School debates about educating the poor, see Richardson(82–86).

¹⁷⁴ For example, North suggests that the 'true' sublime meaning of literary works cannot be directly taught to readers: "who, that is wise in humanity, can think that the mere cultivation of understanding may ever give an insight, or an in–hearing, in such truths of our being as such men as Taylor and Milton have communicated to the race in a kind of dimmer revelation?" (Wilson, "Noctes Ambrosianae No. XL" 686).

¹⁷⁵ Although these topics are beyond the scope of this dissertation, St. Clair, for example, discusses the development of stereotyped printing in the mid-nineteenth century(182–185). Richardson discusses the interrelated imperial expansion and expansion of public education in Britain and argues that the retrospective invention of "Romantic literature" was incorporated into vernacular education throughout the empire (260–272). De Quincey in his 1840–41 "Style" essays discusses changes in print media and the increased circulation of texts more frequently than he does in his 1820s essays about rhetoric and literature. In these later essays, he is more anxious to differentiate the "literary" qualities of his own writing from journalism, popular fiction, and increasingly specialized academic writing.

¹⁷⁶ See Fumaroli's article on adaptations of Cicero in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century French courts (253–273)

¹⁷⁷ Anne Frey also suggests that De Quincey reimagines literature as a repository of unchanging values as part of his "top down model of nationality" in essays like "The English Mail-Coach"(144).

¹⁷⁸ On the place of Shakespeare and Milton in the late eighteenth-century "old canon," see St. Clair(122–158).

¹⁷⁹ On the "falsification—false distancing—of the 'fictional'" in nineteenth-century conceptions of literature as imaginative writing, see Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (*Marxism and Literature* 147–150)

¹⁸⁰ My interpretation of Arnold coincides with Bevis who discusses Arnold as a practitioner and theorists of epideictic rhetoric (5–15). For an early comparison of Arnold and De Quincey, see Devlin (92–94). Agnew also briefly compares De Quincey and Arnold as rhetoricians who frame literary critics as public intellectuals (*Thomas de Quincey* 129).

¹⁸¹ Eagleton reads Arnold as an champion of bourgeois Victorian ideals who denies agency to working-class readers (*Literary Theory: An Introduction* 21–23). While he gives a more nuanced reading of Arnold than Eagleton, Williams likewise asserts that Arnold is a paternalistic proponent of Victorian "new humane liberalism" who slights the working class: "Arnold feared a breakdown, into violence and anarchy, but the most remarkable facts about the British working-class movement...was its conscious and deliberate abstention from general violence" (Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780-1950* 114, 125).

¹⁸² Elfenbein discusses the role of Macaulay and Blair in establishing nineteenth-century prose as the perspicuous communication of ideas (144–185).

¹⁸³ See, for instance, De Man's famous reading of Wordsworth's *Essays Upon Epitaphs* as a text that enact the breakdown of language that Wordsworth protests (67–82). This essay influenced Romanticists' interpretations of "rhetoric" in the 1980s and 1990s.

¹⁸⁴ Jonathan Sach's *Romantic Antiquity* (3–48) and Jeff Cox's "Cockney classism," in which writers like Leigh Hunt deployed comic, eroticized treatments of classical myth, are compelling examples (Cox 146–186).

¹⁸⁵ See, for example, Thomas Miller (1–7). Howells likewise argues that rhetoric nearly died in the nineteenth-century: Rhetoric was "made a ceremonial term or dropped altogether" in nineteenth-century studies of literature and communication (*Eighteenth-Century British Logic and Rhetoric* 714).

¹⁸⁶ Lockwood suggests, for instance, that "if epideictic practice seems to function by theoretical self-reflection, perhaps much is to be learned by considering how theoretical reflections function as epideictic practice" (21). Walker also discusses the centrality of the epideictic mode to the formation of rhetoric as an ancient discipline (*Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity* 1–16).

¹⁸⁷ See, for example, Newlyn (3–48) and Franta (*Romanticism and the Rise of the Mass Public* 1–18). Bennett also discusses Romantic authors' fears about the reception of their texts from a deconstructive perspective (11–37).

¹⁸⁸ Goldberg argues that poets like Wordsworth and Coleridge embarked upon "an attempt to redeem the idea of professional work for the practice of poetry, an attempt that was sometimes frustrated, but other times energized by what eighteenth-century intellectual was actually turning into" (4). Rhetorician Rex Veeder also discusses how Romantic authors adapted the rhetorical training of ministers and the sermon genre to create a "professional" identity for their poetry ("Romantic Rhetoric and the Rhetorical Tradition" 300–320).