

## “The History and Science of Feeling”: Wordsworth’s Affective Poetics, Then and Now

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According to the twenty-fifth best English-language nonfiction book of the twentieth century (Modern Library 2016),<sup>1</sup> the first affective turn in English poetics dates to the end of the eighteenth century, when “the concept of the urgency and overflow of feeling, from being only a part, and a subordinate part of poetic theory, became the central principle of the whole.”<sup>2</sup> As his allusion indicates, M.H. Abrams is referring directly to the “Preface” to *Lyrical Ballads*, in which William Wordsworth famously declares that “all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings” and, concomitantly, that “The Poet writes under one restriction only, namely, that of the necessity of giving immediate pleasure.”<sup>3</sup> Wordsworth thus correlates poetry’s affective origin in its author and poetry’s affective outcome in its audience. In so doing, he marks “the collapse of the neoclassical structure of criticism” based on rational imitation of an idealized external nature and its replacement by a theory in which internal feelings become “the center of critical reference.”<sup>4</sup>

The revolutionary decisiveness of this affective turn registers as much in what Wordsworth does not say in the “Preface” as what he does, in particular in his pointed refusal to take up the other horn of the poetic dilemma he necessarily poses in advocating the cause of “pleasure.” For a central concern of poetic theory throughout the eighteenth century had been, precisely, the

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proper balance of poetic *pleasure* or *entertainment* in relation to its Horatian opposite, poetic *instruction* or *education*. At the outset of the century, John Dennis opened his discussion of *The Grounds of Criticism in Poetry* (1704) by stipulating that, while both purposes of poetry are “attained by exciting passion,” the first, “to please,” is “subordinate” to the second or “final end” of poetry, “which is reforming the minds of men.”<sup>5</sup> At mid-century, Robert Lowth, in the first of his *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews* (published in Latin in 1753, in English in 1787), offered to refine Dennis’s widely accepted position by demoting pleasure from a subordinate “end” to an efficient “means”: “Poetry is commonly understood to have two objects in view, namely advantage and pleasure, or rather an union of both. I wish those who have furnished us with this definition, had rather proposed utility as its ultimate object, and pleasure as the means by which that end may be effectually accomplished.”<sup>6</sup> James Beattie, writing a quarter century later in the opening chapter of his “Essay on Poetry and Music, as They Affect the Mind” (1776), reverses Lowth by admitting as beyond doubt “[t]hat one end of poetry, in its first institution, and every period of its progress, must have been, TO GIVE PLEASURE ....”<sup>7</sup> But he does not thereby simply return to Dennis, with whom he so far agrees, for he proceeds to raise as an open question the necessity of the more essential “final end” that Dennis stipulated and to which Lowth still more firmly subscribed: “But is it not the end of this art, *to instruct*, as well as *to please*?” (9). Citing and contextualizing Horace’s *Ars Poetica* to justify his counter-claim, Beattie answers in the negative, in terms that effectively turn Lowth’s proposed refinement of Dennis on its head: “the ultimate aim of this art is to please; instruction being only one of the means (and not always a necessary one) by which that ultimate end is to be accomplished” (25).

In this inversion of the century’s priorities that crowns pleasure as the sole and sufficient end of poetic art, Beattie is a key forerunner of Wordsworth, except that Beattie’s anxiety to give the purpose of instruction its theoretical due defuses the potentially revolutionary charge of the pleasure poetics he advocates. For the single page it dedicates to the universally acknowledged purpose of pleasure, Beattie’s opening chapter devotes its remaining twenty to the evidently more significant issue of instruction, conceding at the outset that, insofar as “the true poet addresses his work, not to the giddy, nor the worthless, nor to any party, but to mankind,” he “means to please the *general taste*” and therefore “*must* often employ instruction as one of the arts that minister to this kind of pleasure” (10). This follows, Beattie claims, from the fact that “the human mind, unless debased by passion or prejudice, never fails to take the side of truth and virtue” (11). Conveniently, in the otherwise unaffected and unbiased mind, pleasure itself tends to be instructive and instruction pleasurable, so that, in Beattie’s best-case scenario at least, we seem to have a distinction without a real difference. Wordsworth implicitly accepts Beattie’s Occam’s-razor solution to the problem of poetry’s teleology, but, remarkably, the “Preface” to *Lyrical Ballads* never once invokes the term

"instruction" or its alternates in the century-long debate over poetic ends and means, such as "education" or "usefulness." By contrast, the 1802 "Preface" contains some 60 tokens of the stem "pleas-" (e.g., "pleasure," "unpleasant," "please," "pleasing," etc.) in fewer than 12,000 words (including the appendix on "Poetic Diction"), an astonishing proportion, testifying to the strength of Wordsworth's almost entirely unqualified commitment to pleasure as the uncontested end of poetic expression.<sup>8</sup>

I say "almost entirely unqualified" because Wordsworth does make one explicit bid for the reformatory power of his poetry, but this follows not from the co-existence of a supplementary instructive purpose (as it does in *Beattie*) but rather from the quality of feeling in which the poetry both originates and issues. A poet equal to his art, Wordsworth insists, is "a man who being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility ha[s] also thought long and deeply" (744–745). The implied causal link between unusual sensibility or capacity for feeling and consequent depth of thought ensures that the poet will "describe objects and utter sentiments of such a nature and in such connection with each other, that the understanding of the being to whom we address ourselves, if he be in a healthful state of association, must necessarily be in some degree enlightened, his taste exalted, and his affections ameliorated" (745). Wordsworth suggests a good deal here that will repay closer attention below, in particular concerning the specifically *affective* "nature" of the "objects" the poet describes and of the "connections" he draws between them, but for the moment, we may simply notice that, once again, poetry begins and ends in pleasurable feelings, with an unusually capacious organic sensibility providing the essential input to a process that has ameliorated affections as its ultimate output. As Wordsworth spells it out later in the "Preface,"

in describing any passions whatsoever, which are voluntarily described, the [poet's] mind will upon the whole be in a state of enjoyment. Now if Nature be thus cautious in preserving in a state of enjoyment a being thus employed, the Poet ought to profit by the lesson thus held forth to him, and ought especially to take care, that whatever passions he communicates to his Reader, those passions, if his Reader's mind be sound and vigorous, should always be accompanied with an overbalance of pleasure. (756)

Wordsworth's unshakeable trust in the natural and transmissible values of human feeling justifies his nearly exclusive focus on pleasure as the be-all and end-all of poetic communication. He can thus confidently deflect without directly addressing the objections and reservations of the many readers who would wish to urge, whether by conviction with Dennis and Lowth or by concession with *Beattie*, the purpose of instruction:

Nor let this necessity of producing immediate pleasure be considered as a degradation of the Poet's art. It is far otherwise. It is an acknowledgement of

the beauty of the universe ...: further, it is a homage paid to the native and naked dignity of man, to the grand elementary principle of pleasure, by which he knows, and feels, and lives, and moves. We have no sympathy but what is propagated by pleasure: I would not be misunderstood; but wherever we sympathize with pain it will be found that the sympathy is produced and carried on by subtle combinations with pleasure. We have no knowledge, that is, no general principles drawn from the contemplation of particular facts, but what has been built up by pleasure, and exists in us by pleasure alone. (752)

Pleasure may be admitted as the unabashed source and unrivaled end of poetry because it is likewise the foundation of science (“general principles drawn from the contemplation of particular facts”), morality (“sympathy with pain”), and human psychology or metaphysics (according to which man “knows, and feels, and lives, and moves”). Insofar as it arises from the same affective foundation—“the grand elementary principle of pleasure”—the particular “sort” or “quantity of pleasure” imparted by poetry (741) will cohere with, and even “ameliorate” or improve, the various kinds and quantities of pleasure that animate our knowing and doing in other conceptual and social domains. As such, poetic pleasure requires no other condition or justification than a “healthful state” of human nature to produce and receive it, thereby creatively acknowledging and augmenting the created “beauty of the universe.”

As Abrams cogently demonstrated and Romanticists have long since reiterated, Wordsworth in his “Preface” thus consolidates in its own exclusive terms the “psychological approach to aesthetic response [that] gained prominence towards the end of the eighteenth century, persisted well into the nineteenth, and remains to some degree with us still; it survives, most obviously, in efforts to define the somatic, emotional, and cognitive effects of the work of art,”<sup>9</sup> including those being advanced under the banner of the latest “affective turn” in literary criticism, which dates only from the first decade of this century.<sup>10</sup> This important line of descent leading directly from Wordsworth’s affective turn to ours is explicitly drawn in a recent textbook on the psychology of emotion, which treats the general topic of “the communication of emotion in art” under the rubric of “the Romantic hypothesis,” as illustrated by the same key sentence from the “Preface” that Abrams valorized as marking a revolutionary redirection toward affect in English poetic theory: “Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility: the emotion is contemplated till by a species of reaction the tranquility disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced and does itself exist in the mind.”<sup>11</sup> As Keith Oatley, Dacher Keltner, and Jennifer Jenkins suggest, Wordsworth’s ideas, here and throughout the “Preface,” may be understood precisely as psychological “hypotheses” that are grounded in the poet’s expert experience or “know-how,” and that therefore merit (re)consideration by researchers who are once again critically interested in understanding the interplay of affect and art.

This chapter initiates such reconsideration by unpacking the theoretical principles and nuances of Wordsworth's affective poetics in the "Preface" and correlating them both with his poetic practice in *Lyrical Ballads* and with recent affect-focused research from the fields of psychology, literary criticism, and empirical aesthetics. The discussion falls into four sections corresponding to the four subsidiary "statements" or hypotheses about "the communication of emotion in art" that, for Oatley et al., follow from the Romantic hypothesis, which in their words states that, "in expressing our emotions in art, we come to understand their deeper and more specific facets" (108). The four subsidiary hypotheses that follow from this are (1) "emotions often are unclear"; (2) "emotions inspire creative expression"; (3) "artistic expression should often take on the form of emotion [or] have the dynamic and thematic properties of an emotion"; and (4) "readers or spectators of art should readily perceive the emotion communicated" (108–110). Elaborating these four subsidiary hypotheses in Wordsworth's terms will help to reveal what each must entail with respect to affective processes in relation to literary form; the same effort should reciprocally deepen our understanding of Wordsworth's affective poetics.

#### HYPOTHESIS I: EMOTIONS ARE OFTEN UNCLEAR

For Oatley et al., the fact that "sometimes we experience emotions that we do not fully understand" suggests a prime motivation for artistic expression, which may serve to uncover "deeper meaning, themes or motifs, and personal insights that are not immediately accessible to the conscious mind" (108). A note Wordsworth appended to the "The Thorn" in the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads* (1800) similarly stresses the too-common experience of emotional opacity and the consequent difficulty in translating even strong and tonally distinct feelings such as fury or despair into adequate concepts or words: "now every man must know that an attempt is rarely made to communicate impassioned feelings without something of an accompanying consciousness of the inadequateness of our own powers, or the deficiencies of language."<sup>12</sup> It is for this "inadequateness" in everyday expression and these "deficiencies" of our affective lexicon that the poet will presumably make up, yet Wordsworth the prose writer exhibits symptoms of the very incapacity he means as a poet to correct. This same linguistic incapacity has been recently re-diagnosed by one of the best contemporary theorists of affect, Teresa Brennan, who bemoans an "increasing loss of precision in affective language" that, in her view, has bedeviled modern philosophical thought and social development since the seventeenth century, with increasingly dire consequences for the psyche of the individual. Brennan therefore advocates the recovery of semantic distinctions advanced in pre-modern thought going back to Aristotle, most crucially the distinction between the roughly synonymous

“emotion,” “passion,” or “affect,” on the one hand, and “feeling” as allied to “sensation” and “discernment,” on the other.<sup>13</sup> This crucial distinction in affective terminology is apparently lost upon the writer of the “Preface,” who in defining the “principal object ... in these Poems” freely substitutes the noun phrases “the primary *laws* of our nature,” “the essential *passions* of the heart,” and “our elementary *feelings*” as semantic and grammatical equivalents; a subsequent paragraph reformulates the same idea for the fourth time as “the great and simple *affections* of our nature” (743, 745; italics added). “Laws,” “passions,” “feelings,” and “affections” are, respectively, “primary,” “essential,” “elementary,” and “great and simple,” but these concepts are, in Wordsworth’s theoretical practice at least, otherwise entirely indistinct.

Precisely because of the conceptual indistinctness of our surprisingly shallow affective lexicon, Wordsworth carefully specifies that the ensuing poems will represent not particular emotions or “state[s] of excitement” per se, but rather the cognitive effects that are stimulated by such excitement, for which we have more highly differentiated verbal resources. Wordsworth proposes “to illustrate *the manner in which our ideas and feelings are associated* in a state of excitement,” or, “speaking in less general language, ... to follow *the fluxes and refluxes of mind* when agitated by the great and simple affections of our nature” (745; italics added). He will thus “follow” and “illustrate” representable movements of mind and expression that index the underlying “agitation” or “excitement” of particular pre-conceptual affections. “[T]he poems of the IDIOT BOY and the MAD MOTHER” accordingly “trac[e] the maternal passion” not directly but rather indexically “through many of its more subtle windings” in the impassioned mother’s thought and speech. Likewise “in the Poem of the FORSAKEN INDIAN,” we “accompany” or immediately behold “the last struggles” of socially directed thought and speech in an individual abandoned to death but “cleaving in solitude to life and society.” Again, instinctive and irrepressible social feeling can be represented only mediately through its affect-specific impacts upon thought processes (“manner of association,” “fluxes and refluxes of mind”) and outward behavior (especially verbal behavior or speech). For exactly the same reason, “We are Seven” represents the life-drive not directly but rather indirectly through one of its peculiar but nonetheless universal cognitive consequences, that is, “the perplexity and obscurity which in childhood attend our notion of death”; “The Brothers” similarly illustrates the otherwise covert affection of “fraternal” or “moral attachment” by representing its communicable “associat[ions] with the great and beautiful objects of nature” (745). To express and clarify these and other powerful but nonetheless indistinct emotions, the poet must work indirectly by imitating the cognitive and behavioral consequences of emotional stimulation rather than emotional stimulation itself.

## HYPOTHESIS 2: CREATIVE EXPRESSION ARISES OUT OF EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE

Because everyday emotions are comparatively opaque phenomena for which we lack an adequate lexicon, we seek to translate and thereby clarify them in artistic media such as dance, music, and poetry. Wordsworth's foregoing arguments imply as much but they further suggest that, in verbal art, this second hypothesis holds in two distinct senses, one which is genuinely psychological and pertains to the *author's* creative expression and another which is specifically literary or representational and pertains to his *speakers' and characters' creative expression*. Wordsworth's affective theory of poetic production may thus be distinguished from his poetic practice of affective representation, yet the two share a structural logic that turns on the capacity for temporal distancing or reflection. Thus, on the productive side of the creative equation, Wordsworth designates a three-stage process involving, first, a "spontaneous" experience of "powerful feeling" or "emotion" that is, second and subsequently, "recollected in tranquillity" until, third and finally, "by a species of reaction the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion, similar to that which was before the subject of [tranquil] contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind" (756). It is in this third stage of contemplatively regenerated emotion that "successful composition generally begins, and in a mood similar to this it is carried on" (756). In brief, the sequence of production involves an experience of strong immediate emotion that is later tranquilly contemplated, presumably in thoughtful or conceptual terms, before being reconstituted as the now creative form of emotion that gives rise to the successful composition. This analogical form of emotion, "similar" but not identical "to that which was before the subject of contemplation," may be differentiated from its prototype to the degree that it is stimulated and informed, not by the stimulus that provoked the original emotion or even by the original emotion itself, but instead by the contemplative perspective achieved during the second, recollective phase of the productive process. As a consequence, the analogical and creative form of emotion bears within it something of the form and pleasure of its own understanding; this differentiates it from its indistinct prototype and marks it as a more complex and specifically *aesthetic* type of emotion.<sup>14</sup>

Turning to the representational side of the creative equation, Wordsworth typically depicts speakers and characters in the first and second phases of this psychological process, that is, in the throes of immediate emotional stimulation (e.g., "The Last of the Flock") and/or in a subsequent state of tranquil reflection upon such passion (e.g., "The Two April Mornings"). Though Wordsworth does not distinguish systematically between the general terms "emotion," "feeling," "passion," and "affection," he does nevertheless consistently discriminate between immediate or pre-conceptual and reflected or thoughtful forms of feelings. Accordingly, in the long paragraph in which he specifies his particular representational purposes in a number of different

poems, Wordsworth divides the discussion into two parts, one devoted to poems that represent the speaker's or character's mind in an immediate "state of excitement" as "agitated by the great and simple affections of our nature," the other devoted to poems that "sketch characters under the influence of less impassioned feelings" and who may therefore "be *distinctly* and profitably contemplated" (745–746; italics added). Though I do not believe that Wordsworth's theoretical writings support the *terminological* distinction that Louise Joy has recently advanced with respect to his poetics, still, the philosophical contrast she is intent to draw is absolutely central to Wordsworth's representational practice: "Eighteenth-century discussions of what we would today call emotions often referred to the 'passions and affections of the mind,' grouping together violent, unruly passions with their calmer, less spontaneous cousins, the affections—a more muted form of emotion refracted through the lens of reflection and consequently less capable of wreaking havoc."<sup>15</sup>

Joy's contrast between comparatively "unruly passions" and more reflective "forms of emotion" that are "consistent, rather than in tension, with moral rectitude"<sup>16</sup> is reminiscent of Brennan's critical distinction between "affect" and "feeling" insofar as the latter "discerns" the former (94). In other words, feeling is affect that has been reflectively discerned and thereby transformed into what Brennan denominates, exactly as Wordsworth does, "feeling intelligence" (94; cf. *The Prelude* 1805 13. 205). Though Brennan appears not to have been aware of the correspondence, her analysis of the post hoc reflective process through which pre-conceptual affect becomes intelligent feeling is strikingly similar to Wordsworth's, right down to the very language she employs (131).<sup>17</sup> Brennan poses the case of a man who, after the fact, "realizes that there is grief behind his anger, and that what he felt when he heard this or that is not the passionate affect that possessed him at the time [i.e., anger], but something finer [i.e., grief]." Brennan asks,

How does he do so? He remembers. Then he outwits the affects by comparing the state in which he was possessed by the othering affects [i.e., the immediate anger] with the state in which he discerned and felt [the underlying grief].... He reviews the history of his own feelings and affects in the matter. He follows an essentially historical procedure *in order to recover a truth*, and he does so with loving intelligence rather than by wallowing in judgments of himself (guilt and shame) or others (fear and paranoia). (121; italics added)

Anatomizing the process and results of poetic creation, Wordsworth anticipates Brennan, nearly word for italicized word, by over two hundred years: "Poetry is passion. It is *the history and science of feeling*" (Wordsworth and Coleridge, 288; italics added). Wordsworth the poet implies in few words what Brennan the psychoanalyst lays plain in many: that the temporally displaced and therefore "essentially historical procedure" of reflective "compari[son]" transforms raw "passion" into a "feeling" or "loving

intelligence" that understands itself "truth[fully]" and thus lays claim to "scientific" status, in the widest sense of the term. Brennan proceeds to spell out the psycho-logic that likewise inspires Wordsworth's poetic intervention into the problem of our everyday shortcomings in affective language and understanding:

The limits to this [reflective] process are not only set by insight (the process whereby [affective] sensation and feeling connect) but by language and concept (the means whereby sensation and feeling connect)... Our man has to have a language for any matter involving historical review, and language is always cultural and traditional, but that does not mean that the development of language is over. In naming a sensation of which he may be aware (energy departing and returning) he may be limited by his current vocabulary, but he is pushed to expand it in accounting for sensations in sequence: the knowledge gleaned by comparison. (121)<sup>18</sup>

Affective "sensations in sequence" and "the knowledge gleaned by [the] comparison" thereby enabled: these phrases neatly capture the representational method and pleasurable final purpose of Wordsworth's affective poetics.<sup>19</sup>

To see how this distinction between primary affect and reflective feeling translates into "creative expression" or poetic form, we may turn to a representative "lyrical ballad," one which Wordsworth himself singles out as illustrative of his poetic method throughout the volume, whereby "the feeling therein *developed* gives importance to the action and situation, and not the action and situation to the feeling" (746; italics added). The *development* of feeling is indeed the whole story of "The Childless Father," which, because it is brief, infrequently anthologized, and under discussion for the balance of the chapter, I present in full.

#### The Childless Father

Up, Timothy, up with your Staff and away!  
Not a soul in the village this morning will stay;  
The Hare has just started from Hamilton's grounds,  
And Skiddaw is glad with the cry of the hounds.

—Of coats and of jackets grey, scarlet, and green,  
On the slopes of the pastures all colours were seen,  
With their comely blue aprons and caps white as snow,  
The girls on the hills made a holiday show.

The bason of box-wood, just six months before,  
Had stood on the table at Timothy's door,  
A Coffin through Timothy's threshold had pass'd,  
One Child did it bear and that Child was his last.

Now fast up the dell came the noise and the fray,  
 The horse and the horn, and the hark! hark away!  
 Old Timothy took up his staff, and he shut  
 With a leisurely motion the door of his hut.

Perhaps to himself at that moment he said,  
 "The key I must take, for my Ellen is dead,"  
 But of this in my ears not a word did he speak,  
 And he went to the chase with a tear on his cheek.

(Wordsworth and Coleridge 2008, 361)

We are tracking the transmutation of "spontaneous" strong emotion into a more complex and self-aware form of feeling, a "flux and reflux" of the mind that involves the temporal displacement and reflective reconstitution of an originally pre-conceptual affect. In "The Childless Father," this psychological movement from immediate emotion to reflective feeling initially registers in the abrupt temporal shift that transpires between the first and second stanzas. No matter whether we infer in bridging this present- to past-tense gap that the free direct speech of the first stanza was uttered by the poem's speaker or merely overheard by him,<sup>20</sup> in either event that utterance is represented as both impassioned and unreflective, as a number of conspiring formal features make clear. Pitched from the spondaic first foot on an emphatic "up"-beat, Wordsworth's anapestic tetrameter<sup>21</sup> enacts the galloping rhythms and communal excitement felt by the speaker, who along with most of "the village" has come out for a day of hare coursing. Wordsworth heightens the enthusiastic effect by overlaying his anapestic line with a two-term alliterative pattern, the first instance of which—the rhythmically promoted "up" that abruptly opens the poem and that alliterates with the regularly accented "up" that follows in the next foot—both in its metrical deviation and its sheer redundancy, represents the urgency but also the inadequacy of a mind moved to speech from immediate passion and therefore tautologically "cling[ing]" to the same words, or words of the same character" (as in the subsequent alliterations) as it struggles to "communicate impassioned feelings" (Wordsworth and Coleridge, 288). Finding his words and settling into his measure, the speaker of the first stanza urges Timothy apace, calling his attention to the contagious social energy at hand and the collective fun still to be had ("Not a soul in the village this morning will stay"; "The Hare has *just started* from Hamilton's grounds"). Though Wordsworth as a matter of practice has sworn off "personifications ... in these volumes" on the principle that they do not "make any regular or natural part of ... language," the final line of this first stanza presents one of the "very few instances" in which Wordsworth indulges the figure, but only because it *is* in this case "a natural part of language" (Wordsworth, 747). As Wordsworth puts the point in the 1802 version of the "Preface," even "where the Poet speaks through the mouths of his characters," his choice of subject "will naturally, and upon fit occasion,

lead him to passions the language of which ... must necessarily be dignified and variegated, and alive with metaphors and figures" (750). In this case, in which Wordsworth's speaker is moved by the immediate pressure of a shared gladness that he would happily communicate to Timothy, his speech is "naturally" enlivened by a personification in which his own emotion spontaneously overflows upon the surrounding scene: even the looming "*Skiddaw is glad* with the cry of the hounds." Thus, through a conjunction of formal means—metrical, phonetic, figurative, and more—the first stanza of "The Childless Father" provides an apt illustration of "the manner in which our feelings are associated in a state of [immediate affective] excitement" and, particularly in its final personification, already verifies Oatley et al.'s second subsidiary hypothesis that creative expression arises from emotional experience.

Excitedly inept at first but enthusiastically creative at last, this first stanza nevertheless represents unreflective affect throughout, as is confirmed by the unintentional ironies of situation and speech that emerge, for the speaker and for us, only in the subsequent event. Reflection, as we've seen, requires the temporal displacement of an immediate emotion so that it can be contemplated in its true dimensions; again, a necessarily *historical* process of comparison (of affective states or moments) leads to an accurate *science* of feeling. Temporal displacement transpires in two phases in "The Childless Father," the first of which projects the present-tense free direct discourse of stanza one into an indefinitely distant past, and the second of which discloses a past for that now distanced present, in which, "just six months before" the glad day of hare coursing, the same village community gathered in quite a different character and mood to mourn the death of Timothy's last child, Ellen. These temporal frames reveal to us what they must no less to Wordsworth's speaker, particularly if the words of the first stanza belong to him *in propria persona*: though well-intentioned, that speech indexed a mind so fully absorbed in its own present passion that it was unthinkingly oblivious to the probable feelings of the recently bereaved neighbor and friend to whom it addressed these imperatively glad tidings. Reframed by the historical and, thus, comparative retrospects of stanzas two and three, it cannot be lost upon the speaker or upon us that he was tactlessly calling Timothy to what could effectively turn out to be another communal ritual of death (albeit for a hare). Neither did the speaker consider, in the heat of socially shared enthusiasm, that Timothy, after losing every one of his children, knows only too well but in quite another sense that "Not a soul in the village this morning will stay," nor did he reflect how an invitation to participate in a "*glad ... cry*" might strike Timothy's ear. These sobering empathetic considerations become available to the speaker and to us only in the space of reflection opened by temporal displacement, in which present affect, become the past, becomes by the same memorial virtue an object of contemplation, which may then be compared to other past affects and accordingly understood in its true dimensions. In just this way, the reflective *history* of emotion produces the pleasurable *science* of feeling.

### HYPOTHESIS 3: ARTISTIC FORM IMITATES EMOTIONAL FORM

In “that sane state of feeling which arises out of thought,” Wordsworth contends, “successful composition generally begins” and “is carried on” (758, 756); so it must have been with “The Childless Father,” which imitates emotional form not merely insofar as it represents the temporal dynamic through which pre-conceptual affect becomes intelligent feeling. Considered more generally as an emotionally motivated representational sequence, the poem also closely conforms to, and thus provides compelling further evidence of, the affective structure of narrative form as recently anatomized by Patrick Colm Hogan. In *Affective Narratology*, Hogan, proceeding on the assumption that “an emotionally successful work may present us with the closest thing we have to a full, ecologically valid depictive representation of emotional experience,”<sup>22</sup> shows that such works both historically and cross-culturally share a common narrative procedure involving two interpenetrating sets of selectional and segmentational criteria.<sup>23</sup> The first set of criteria we’ve already met in the form of the distinction between pre-conceptual affect and intelligent feeling, which corresponds to Hogan’s dual focus on “two importantly distinct components [in] emotion processing,” one of which “is largely subcortical and responds to perceptual information and emotional memories with the activation of emotion systems,” while “[t]he other is neocortical and involves the appraisal-like elaboration of the full perceptual situation, likely outcomes, causes, and so forth” (87). This neurobiological distinction between the perceptual and appraisal-like components of emotion appears to motivate a basic structure of narrative selection and sequencing according to which units of “emotional history” correlating with the perceptual component and called “incidents” are embedded within units of “emotional explanation” correlating with the appraisal component and called “events” (42, 65). In Hogan’s full elaboration of the theory, which scales up from this sub-episodic level to characterize the narrative organization of multi-layered novels, events are chained into episodes, episodes into stories, and stories into works (e.g., *Anna Karenina*). For the brief, unelaborated narratives of *Lyrical Ballads*, however, Hogan’s first and fundamental cut between the affective or perceptual incident and the reflective or appraisal-laden event is the critical one.

Indeed, though Hogan himself does not make the case, his model quite accurately describes the bare-bones (or “bare-emotions”) structure of Wordsworth’s miniature narratives. Recall that Wordsworth distinguishes these poems by the fact that “the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation,” not the reverse; he directs readers puzzled by this admittedly abstract formulation “particularly to the last Stanza” of “The Childless Father,” where “my meaning will be rendered perfectly intelligible” (746). If we first consider the poem as a whole, we might initially characterize it in Hogan’s terms as the representation of an affective incident (stanza 1) that gives way to a complicated event structure (stanzas 2–5)

ending in episodic irresolution. An incident, in Hogan's complete definition, "comprise[s] the eliciting conditions for an emotion along with the sensorimotor projections that are activated by those conditions and, finally, the immediate physiological outcomes, phenomenological tone, attentional orientation, expressive outcomes, and emotional memory activations that result *without working memory mediation*" (61; italics added). This provides a strikingly apt description of Wordsworth's opening stanza, which represents "the eliciting conditions" for the speaker's immediate emotion (the communal excitement of the hunt), the "phenomenological tone" of that emotion (contagious gladness), its "attentional orientation" (divided between the hunt as the referent of his utterance and Timothy as its addressee), its "expressive outcomes" (the imperative utterance with its rhythms, repetitions, and final personification), and related "memory activations" that do not require the mediation of working memory (e.g., friendly feelings toward Timothy and the other villagers, sublime feelings associated with the towering Skiddaw).

An event, by contrast,

involve[s] the temporal elaboration of incidents through working memory. Specifically, [it] include[s] working anticipations and causal attributions.... [Such] anticipations and causal attributions are primarily a matter of what is salient in the current (real or imagined) experience. In social emotions, causal attribution commonly involves the positing of an emotional/motivational state on the part of some other agent. This is often related to emotion expression by that agent, thus part of the initial incident. However, it may also result from more effortful (working memory-based) simulation of the other person's feelings and intentions. Finally events involve the initiation of actional outcomes, thus the activation of procedures and the modification of those procedures in relation to current conditions. (61)

In "The Childless Father," event structure is precisely marked as a "temporal elaboration of incidents through working memory." If we follow Wordsworth's lead and interpret the poem as representing a series of emotion-stimulated associations ("to illustrate the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement"), we might say that it begins in a state of immediate "glad" excitement, which is then in the second stanza conceptually distanced, both temporally by its retrojection from present to past tense, and spatially by its absorption into the wide-focus recollection of multitudes "Of coats and of jackets ... / On the slopes of the pastures" and many "girls on the hills ma[king] a holiday show." This last image seems by reflective association to recall Timothy's daughter, Ellen, who in previous years doubtlessly made a part of the "holiday show" but who died, as the third stanza only now dolefully recollects, "just six months before." As this painful idea re-emerges from the speaker's long-term memory into his working memory or conscious reflection, the boisterous chase approaches "fast up the dell" with "noise" and "fray" in stanza four, and the speaker focuses his now sobered

attention on “the door of [Timothy’s] hut,” the very “threshold” through which, in the previous stanza, Ellen’s “Coffin ... had pass’d,” and from which the old man himself at last emerges, “With a leisurely motion.” This leads the speaker, in the fifth and final stanza, to speculate on the cognitive and emotional significance of Timothy’s oddly *unexcited* form of motion, and he concludes the poem by noting the imagistic fact that Timothy “went to the chase with a tear on his cheek.” The process of thought thus depicted, from the glad flux of immediate affect to a more mindful reflux of “sadder and wiser” feeling, appears to leave Wordsworth’s speaker, somewhat like Coleridge’s wedding guest in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, “stunned” and of his original affective “sense” quite “forlorn.” Though Timothy at last responds to the speaker’s unreflective summons and slowly, tearfully makes his way “to the chase,” the speaker himself seems to remain behind, transfixed (in recollection at least) just outside of Timothy’s empty hut, uncertain whether or how to proceed.

The affective structure of “The Childless Father” can thus be exactly described in the language of Hogan’s affective narratology, and in fact, it already has been, quite independently, by critics who know their Wordsworth but are perfectly innocent of Hogan. For example, writing thirty years before Hogan, James Averill precisely characterized “the poem’s action [as] an ‘incident’ worthy of [Henry] James”:

a man closes his door slowly and goes hunting after shedding a tear. The interest for Wordsworth lies in attempting to read the man’s mind. This guesswork is presented only as the deductions of a person informed of the situation, one who knows of the death six months earlier and perhaps of the relationship between Timothy and Ellen. The poem, however, honors the man’s privacy and refuses to probe his sorrow. It brings us to feel with him, even while making us conscious that this sympathy may be based on fiction.<sup>24</sup>

Strikingly, Averill hits upon the exact term, “incident,” that Hogan himself would offer to denote the main perceptual–emotional stimulus upon which the drama of the poem turns. In Averill’s view, the affective event narrated by “The Childless Father” arises not so much in response to the glad emotional incident of stanza one but rather as a result of the highly ambiguous perceptual incidents of stanzas four and five, when “Old Timothy ... shut / With a leisurely motion the door of his hut” and “went to the chase with a tear on his cheek.” As Hogan suggests, “In social emotions, causal attribution commonly involves the positing of an emotional/motivational state on the part of some other agent. This is often related to emotion expression by that agent, thus part of the initial incident. However, it may also result from more effortful (working memory-based) simulation of the other person’s feelings and intentions.” Averill makes the same point less technically when he claims that the “interest for Wordsworth lies in attempting to read the

man's mind" through "guesswork" and "deductions" based on "informed" and "sympath[etic]" appraisal of Timothy's "situation." What is the meaning of Timothy's emotionally ambiguous behaviors, one of which, "leisurely motion," seems to carry a rather different affective valence from the other, the "tear on his cheek"? What would be an appropriate "actional outcome" (Hogan) in response to such behaviors?

These two questions circumscribe the emotional event structure of the poem, in which a triggering perceptual incident (Timothy's behaviors upon departure from his hut) provokes the speaker, and the reader with him, to search with feeling intelligence for underlying emotional cause(s) and a proportionately measured emotional response. Regina Hewitt, writing in 1989 about the final stanza of "The Childless Father," echoes and develops Averill's emphasis upon mind reading and thereby anticipates Hogan's claim that emotional events involve an appraisal-like search for explanatory causes in order to prepare an appropriate response:

The stanza clearly involves an interplay of private associations. It puts seemingly unrelated ideas—carrying a key and Ellen's death—into a causal sequence. The sentence furnishes the illusion of an explanation. Nothing beyond its syntax shows why the character should join these two thoughts. The connection becomes more puzzling when the stanza reveals that one character has ascribed the sequence to another. The statement fills the speaker's need to rationalize what he observes of the silent character's behavior. It inserts a link between the latter's activity and his apparently inappropriate emotion. While its form satisfies the speaker, its emptiness titillates the reader. Serving as an explanation, it creates a new question.<sup>25</sup>

As Charles Lamb observed of another *Lyrical Ballad*, the final stanza of "The Childless Father" represents the way that the speaker's "mind [,] knowingly pass[ing] a fiction upon herself, first substituting her own feelings for [Timothy's, in this case], and, in the same breath detecting the fallacy, will not part with the wish" (qtd. in Wordsworth and Coleridge, 462). Is "Old Timothy" moving slowly and shedding a tear because he is still overburdened with thoughts of his dead daughter, as the speaker proposes? Or does his "leisurely motion" rather bear the same implication of routine performance that it does in a contemporaneous poem, "The Farmer of Tilsbury Vale," where Wordsworth describes "an old man, that leisurely goes / About work that he does in a track that he knows" (Wordsworth, 291, ll. 57–58)? Likewise, could not Timothy's tear be rather more like "The tears which came to Matthew's eyes" in another contemporaneous poem, which were not tears of loss but "tears of light, the oil of gladness" ("If Nature, for a favorite Child," ll. 23–24; Wordsworth and Coleridge, 350)? Or maybe Timothy's tear indexes his nostalgic joy in the return of former pleasures, a joy similar to that relished by the title character of "Simon Lee, the Old Huntsman":

And still there's something in the world  
 At which his heart rejoices;  
 For when the chiming hounds are out,  
 He dearly loves their voices! (ll. 45-48; p. 96)

The poem does not answer such questions but leaves us with them, "titillated," as Hewitt might say, with a pleasurable problem of feeling intelligence.

#### HYPOTHESIS 4: VIEWERS OF ART SHOULD PERCEIVE ITS EMOTIONAL FORM AND CONTENT

Averill's and Hewitt's responses to "The Childless Father" provide preliminary evidence for this hypothesis just as they do for the basic premises of Hogan's affective narratology. That narratology, like Wordsworth's poetics, reminds us that emotion itself has a perceptual component, which means that readers or auditors of poetry should perceive its emotional form and content *emotionally* as well as *conceptually* or in appraisal-like fashion. In other words, Wordsworth's audience should *feel* something as well as *think* something in responding to his affective narratives; the *feeling* intelligence or "rational sympathy" that Wordsworth explicitly sets about "to excite" requires as much (Wordsworth, 754; italics added).

However, just as there is an important difference between a spontaneous emotion and a creative emotion in the poet's process of production, so there is an important difference between a represented emotion and a stimulated emotion in the reader's process of reception. For one thing, a reader's responsive emotion will always be, on Wordsworth's theory, more complex than the represented emotion of a character or speaker, for it will additionally involve the specific pleasures of poetic form that, as a rule, only actual readers perceive. As Beattie had insisted, it is chiefly through the means of form that poetry most immediately attains its one true end: "pleasure is undoubtedly the immediate aim of all those artifices by which poetry is distinguished from other compositions,—of the harmony, the rhythm, the ornamented language, the compact and diversified fable" (9). Wordsworth aligns himself with Beattie in the "Preface," indicating at the outset that there is a peculiar "sort of pleasure and ... quantity of pleasure" that, as "a Poet," he has "rationally endeavoured to impart" and stressing throughout that "the end of Poetry is to produce excitement in coexistence with an overbalance of pleasure" (751, 755). What contributes most to this "overbalance of pleasure" are (in line with Beattie) "the music of harmonious metrical language, the sense of difficulty overcome, and the blind association of pleasure" which registers "in the feeling, whether cheerful or melancholy, which [the reader] has been accustomed to connect with [a] particular movement of metre" (756, 757). In "The Childless Father," Wordsworth's speaker is clearly represented in the immediate throes of cheerful affect and then in the lingering depths of melancholy, and Timothy is ambiguously represented as feeling one or the other or perhaps both together. But neither the speaker nor Timothy experiences

the "complex feeling of delight" that may be stimulated in the poem's reader by his or her perception of its anapestic rhythm, of its fluency under multiple constraints (e.g., meter + alliteration + rhyme), and of its generic but nonetheless emotional associations with other ballads "of the same or similar construction" (757), including for readers of Wordsworth's day a number of those collected in Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765), such as "The Beggar's Daughter of Bednall-Green," "Mary Ambree," and "Willow, Willow," which do indeed span the emotional gamut from the cheerful to the melancholy. These primarily<sup>26</sup> affective outcomes related to the specific "manner" in which poetic "language and the human mind act and react on each other" (742) serve to temper the reader's perception, but not (again, speaking generally) the speaker's or character's perception, of the represented "images and feelings," especially those that "have an undue proportion of pain connected with them" such as the death of a last child (755).<sup>27</sup>

The pleasure associated with poetic form coexists and cooperates with the pleasure of feeling intelligence that comes from reflectively comparing and understanding otherwise opaque emotional states. Combined, these two types of pleasure infuse whatever other emotion is stimulated in or simulated by the reader (e.g., energetic or "glad" feeling in conceptualizing the hunt; inhibited, melancholy feeling in conceptualizing Ellen's funeral), thereby transforming its "phenomenological tone" and rendering it a specifically *aesthetic* kind of emotion. As both Brennan (117) and Hogan (62) would further insist, this aesthetic kind of emotion is essentially non-egoistic or, to put it the other way, highly prosocial or empathetic. In poetic communication, neither the stimulated nor the simulated emotions are personal in origin or intention; they are, in the traditional jargon of philosophical aesthetics, fundamentally disinterested, in a way that they would not and could not be for the poem's speaker and character(s), supposing their "action and situation" to be real.

Though analogous in some ways to the represented emotion, which Wordsworth classifies in terms of "the *great* and *simple* affections of our nature," the reader's aesthetic emotion differs fundamentally insofar as it is both more *complex* and less *self-interested* (which may be what Wordsworth means by "great," i.e., "greatly affecting" or "powerful," as he puts it elsewhere in the "Preface"). Nevertheless, because it involves affects that develop in time and in relation to reflection, aesthetic emotion shares a common structure with represented emotion, arising from the interplay of perceptual and appraisal components and therefore unfolding according to the incident-event logic of affective (and hence narrative) experience. For this reason, Averill's and Hewitt's responses to "The Childless Father" focalize precisely the same triggering incident (the puzzling combination of "leisurely motion" and "tear on his cheek") and perform exactly the same effort of emotional explanation that the poem's speaker is represented as focalizing and performing. They do this, however, for substantially different reasons that have much to do with the additional formal stimuli in play for the reader.

Averill and Hewitt pick out and respond to the poem's affective incident-event structure not only because the speaker does but also, and all the more complexly, because the poem itself stimulates and focuses such emotional-conceptual effort through its deftly orchestrated verbal means. Wordsworth "entrains"<sup>28</sup> the reader in a number of poetic patterns—the anapestic rhythm, the two-term alliteration, the strongly end-stopped lines, the neutral to low register of the diction—that he then simultaneously violates at the key moment of perceptual or incidental crisis, the final two lines of the fourth stanza, which upset all four poetic balances at once:

Old Timothy took up his Staff, and he shut  
With a leisurely motion the door of his hut.

The opening spondee of this couplet corresponds to only one or possibly two others in the poem, the imperative "Up, Timothy" that opens the poem on the unreflective upbeat and, potentially, "One Child" in the final line of the third stanza, referring to the untimely corpse that seems to motivate the transformation of the affectively "Up" Timothy projected by the poem's opening words into the affectively "Old" Timothy who ultimately emerges here in stanza four. Just as he does so, Wordsworth introduces three further disturbances that fix his reader's attention on this crucial affective incident. The same line that he opens with a painfully transformed spondaic foot, "OLD TIMothy," Wordsworth concludes, following a late caesura (or grammatically compelled pause) that focuses attention upon this dramatic effect, with an enjambment that divides the transitive verb, "shut," from its required object. This unprecedented and unrepeated dis-correlation of linear and syntactic logics is surprising in itself, but Wordsworth compounds the offense against cultivated expectations by then further delaying the anticipated object, "the door of his hut," with the entirely unanticipated adverbial phrase "With a leisurely motion," which extends the grammatical suspense beyond the hemistich (or half line) and which is further foregrounded by diction that is contextually inappropriate in terms of both its Latinate-French origin and, given the initial excitement of the hunt, its semantic implication. Adding a last poetic insult to this already potent array of expectation-upsetting injuries, the final line of the couplet lacks even a trace of the alliterative pattern that has prevailed until this point—with one exception, the third line of stanza three, which introduces the unforeseen "Coffin" with a disconcerting error in alliteration (while the thetas in "through" and "thresh" should fulfill the contract, the first falls on a metrical offbeat). Thus, reading through the final couplet of stanza four, for a rich variety of formal reasons we cannot help but *feel* that, poetically speaking, something has gone seriously awry that calls for further reflection in terms of underlying causes and consequent responses. It is as though a kind of rollicking, inattentive fluency, entrained by the first two stanzas and proleptically troubled in the third, is by the end of the fourth

stanza pulled up in its hitherto thoughtless tracks and called to reflective attention.

No wonder, then, that Averill and Hewitt arrive at affective emphases and conclusions that parallel each other's and that provide converging evidence for Brennan's theory of the transmission of affect and for Hogan's model of affective narratology. As predicted by the fourth of Oatley et al.'s subsidiary hypotheses, Wordsworth's readers perceive the emotions that are both expressed and imitated in his poetry, and they do so (at least in part) emotionally, which means that their responses will tend not only to identify, but also to betray identifiable symptoms of, underlying emotional structures, just as Averill's and Hewitt's do. This is an important point because it suggests the possibility of empirical measurement, first the old way through expert literary-critical collection and analysis (illustrated in this chapter), and then the new way, which interprets the resulting data as a set of hypotheses and correlated verbal conditions that may be submitted to experimental verification. For example, even from the small and highly selective data set presented here, it seems reasonable to conclude that Wordsworth's affective poetics and the literary-critical responses it has stimulated should be of the first interest with respect to the new "Quartet Theory" of emotion, presented in 2015 by a group of German experimental psychologists and aestheticians. The Quartet Theory proposes to account for complex social-moral and aesthetic emotions in terms of the neuro-functional relations among four distinct "affect systems" (two subcortical and two cortical), all of which have been shown to interact with language as an "emotional effector" (or input-output) system. Though I do not have space to pursue the point here, the potential value of Wordsworthian and other literary scholarship to such a project can be suggested with the following "important note" from the architects of the Quartet Theory:

It is important to note that, because all affect systems (as well as the emotional effector systems) are under the modulatory influence of the neocortex ..., language-driven appraisal processes can be antecedents for change in all four affect systems. Therefore, the neocortical-centered language-system is one medium to modulate, regulate, and partly initiate, activity of the affect systems as well as the emotional effector systems. Thus, language is important for intentional emotion regulation, for cognitive behavioural psychotherapies, and for social practices involving mindfulness, such as prayers and meditation.<sup>29</sup>

For Wordsworth and his critical and creative forebears and followers, poetry is likewise a social practice of mindfulness achieved through the intentional, language-based modulation, regulation, and even initiation of affect systems. Importantly, poetry's distinctive formal arrangements lead to predictable—because tightly controlled—affective and cognitive results, some of which may alter for the better the very affect systems on which they depend, as Wordsworth holds along with cognitive behavioral psychotherapists and

meditators of all stripes, Jesuit to Tibetan.<sup>30</sup> Given the complex aesthetic emotions, both productive and receptive, it theorizes in the “Preface” and illustrates in poems such as “The Childless Father,” Wordsworth’s *Lyrical Ballads* recommends itself as a highly relevant, perhaps even indispensable resource for the Quartet Theory and related neurocognitive research into the still barely understood and hardly tested interface between affect systems and language systems, including the highly differentiated, well theorized, and carefully analyzed system of literature.

## NOTES

1. Modern Library. 2016. “100 Best Non-Fiction.” Accessed Nov. 9. <http://www.modernlibrary.com/top-100/100-best-nonfiction/>.
2. M.H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (New York: Norton, 1958 [1953]), 84.
3. William Wordsworth, “Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*” [1800/1802], in William Wordsworth, *Lyrical Ballads and Other Poems, 1797–1800*, ed. James Butler and Karen Green (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), 744, 752, henceforth cited in the text as Wordsworth. All further references are to this edition and will be cited parenthetically by page number in the text.
4. Abrams, 84, 103.
5. Quoted in Louise Joy, “From Passion to Affection: The Art of the Philosophical in Eighteenth-Century Poetics,” *Philosophy and Literature* 37 (2013): 74.
6. Robert Lowth, *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews*, 2016 [1787], n.p. Accessed Nov. 8. <http://fair-use.org/robert-lowth/lectures-on-the-sacred-poetry-of-the-hebrews/lecture-i>.
7. James Beattie, *Essays on Poetry and Music, as They Affect the Mind ...*, 3rd ed. (London: E. and C. Dilly, 1779 [1776]), 7. All further references are to this edition and will be cited parenthetically by page number in the text.
8. See Rowan Boyson, *Wordsworth and the Enlightenment Idea of Pleasure* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 109–110.
9. Noel Jackson, *Science and Sensation in Romantic Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 2.
10. Katharine Ann Jensen and Miriam Wallace, “Introduction: Facing Emotions,” *PMLA* 130, no. 5 (2015) (Special Topic: Emotions): 1249–1268, 1254 cited.
11. Keith Oatley, Dacher Keltner, and Jennifer M. Jenkins, *Understanding Emotions*, 2nd ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 108. All further references are to this edition and will be cited parenthetically by page number in the text.
12. William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads 1798 and 1800*, ed. Michael Gamer and Dahlia Porter (Peterborough: Broadview, 2008), 288, henceforth cited parenthetically as Wordsworth and Coleridge. All further references are to this edition and will be cited parenthetically in the text.
13. Teresa Brennan, *The Transmission of Affect* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), 105. All further references are to this edition and will be cited parenthetically by page number in the text.

14. Cf. Oatley et al.: "an aesthetic emotion ... also includes the pleasure of understanding and insight" (111).
15. Joy, 72. Though Wordsworth in his theoretical writings doesn't invoke this received distinction directly, other contemporary critics certainly did; for a particularly relevant example, see James Montgomery's 1808 review of Wordsworth's *Poems, in Two Volumes* (1807): "the language of violent passions should be simple, abrupt, impetuous, and sublime; that of the gentler affections, ardent, flowing, figurative, and beautifully redundant ..." (quoted in *The Romantics Reviewed: Contemporary Reviews of British Romantic Writers*, ed. Donald H. Reiman, Part A, Vol. I [New York: Garland, 1972], 334).
16. Joy, 73.
17. Other Wordsworthians have been struck by similarities between Brennan's thought and Wordsworth's (e.g., Boyson, 192n 55, and Heidi Thomson, "The Importance of Other People and the Transmission of Affect in Wordsworth's Lyrical Poetry," *The Modern Language Review* 110, no. 4 (2015): 969–991).
18. Brennan's argument here has recently been developed and refined as the "Quartet Theory" of emotion (more on this below): "An important aspect of emotion percepts is that they are preverbal (neither the somatosensory cortex, nor the insular cortex hosts conceptual-semantic language functions). That is, in order to communicate *about* subjective feelings, an individual has to transform (or *reconfigure*) emotion percepts into language (although such reconfiguration is not obligatory for subjective feeling) ..." (Stefan Koelsch et al., "The Quartet Theory of Human Emotions: An Integrative and Neurofunctional Model," *Physics of Life Reviews* 13 (2015): 1–27, 15 cited).
19. Jackson offers a closely related argument: "As an experience at least nominally distinguished from external sense perception, however, sensation is for Wordsworth as much as [*sic*] a category of cognition as of physical response; it is a term he generally uses to describe the activity of the mind under the influence of powerful feeling. Signifying a cooperative relationship between physical affection and reflective mental activity, sensation designates above all a provisional reconciliation of body and mind implicit in aesthetic experience" (10; see also 200).
20. Regina Hewitt, "Towards a Wordsworthian Phenomenology of Reading: 'The Childless Father' and 'Poor Susan' as Paradigms," *Essays in Literature* 16, no. 2 (1989): 188–202, esp. 191–192.
21. That is, the same meter in which "Twas the Night Before Christmas" is composed.
22. Patrick Colm Hogan, *What Literature Teaches Us about Emotion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 22.
23. Patrick Colm Hogan, *Affective Narratology: The Emotional Structure of Stories* (Lincoln: Nebraska University Press, 2011), 41. All further references are to this edition and will be cited parenthetically by page number in the text.
24. James Averill, *Wordsworth and the Poetry of Human Suffering* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), 211.
25. Hewitt, 190.
26. Cf. Koelsch et al. on "the primacy of affect" hypothesis, which holds "that, under certain circumstances, affective processes can be observed prior to, and independent from, 'higher' cognitive appraisal processes" (26).

27. See Boyson, 111–116; Brennan O'Donnell, *The Passion of Meter: A Study of Wordsworth's Metrical Art* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press 1995), 22–24 and *passim*.
28. The term is Brennan's: see her highly relevant arguments about rhythm and affective transmission (70).
29. Koelsch et al., 16.
30. See Mark J. Bruhn, "Romantic Reflections: Toward a Cultural History of Introspection in Mind Science," in *Cognition, Literature, and History*, ed. Mark J. Bruhn and Donald R. Wehrs (New York: Routledge, 2014), 209–228, for a cultural-historical development of this particular line of argument.

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