

INTRODUCTION: ROMANTIC-ERA PSYCHOLOGIST-POETS AND THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF EARLY BRITISH PSYCHOLOGY

I. The Enlightenment Ideal of Disseminating Knowledge

In this study I will illustrate that many Romantic-era psychologists wrote poems to disseminate information about their profession to a broad audience. So much is evident in Thomas Bakewell's 'Lines, On Being Told that the Volitions of the Mind Would Overcome the Sense of Bodily Pain'. In this poem, Bakewell (1761–1835) – an asylum owner and author of *The Domestic Guide, In Cases of Insanity*, a self-help guide on madness¹ – explores current medical debates about psychosomatic symptoms and the power of the mind in a way that is humorous, appealing and illustrative of Bakewell's contention that poetry is essential to his vocation. He uses verse to popularize and debate psychological issues and, as the poem reveals, he even uses poetry to carry out psychological experiments on himself:

Avaunt, thou stoic sophistry,
So falsely call'd philosophy,
That would pretend the mind may gain,
Such power o'er corporeal pain,
That when we mentally are pleas'd,
The body may from pain be eas'd.
Of late, in a most painful hour,
Thinks I, I'll try this mental pow'r;
First, poetry to aid me came,
A fav'rite laughter[-]loving dame;
But soon I fouud [sic] her influ'nce gone;
That inspirations she had none:
'Tis true, I rhym'd to a deep groan,
By utt'ring a most piteous moan.
.....
In other cases shall we find,
That an impression on the mind,

Shall overcome corporeal pain,
 And sense of feeling quite restrain.
 It is a morbid state, most sure,
 If we keen suff'rings can endure,
 Without our feeling what they are;
 As sometimes maniacs will declare.
 But while our intellects are clear,
 This anguish must be cause of fear;
 And as a truth, we may maintain
 A diff'rence betwixt ease and pain.²

Quite aside from Bakewell's final reference to madness as the scale by which he judges the soundness of the theory in question, he makes reference to his profession as an asylum owner and psychologist in the most powerful way at the poem's commencement. The first method that Bakewell (who I assume is identifiable with the speaker here, given their mutual interest in psychology) uses to carry out his psychological research is poetic: he tries to distract himself from his bodily pain through verse. Although the test fails and leaves him only 'groan[ing]' rhythmically, it is notable that he turns to poetry first to carry out his psychological experiment. In this poem, Bakewell expresses succinctly what almost all of the other psychologist-poets show in various ways: poetry is a valuable tool for psychology. At a point in history when psychology was only beginning to be defined as a discipline, Bakewell and many other psychologists (I will examine eleven in total here) chose verse as a means of disseminating knowledge about their field, delivering psychological therapy, or guiding the reader in accordance with psychological principles.

The birth of psychology as a field in England has been traced to the period 1790-1850. Once scorned as the lowly practice of physicians who could attract no better class of patients, the treatment of the mad garnered the respectful attention of eminent doctors during this period, partly in response to the madness of King George III, who had four attacks of mental derangement beginning in 1788 and ending in 1810, after which the Regency was declared. Other famous cases of madness had a measurable effect on changing attitudes towards the treatment of the insane, such as James Hadfield's attempt on the life of King George III in 1800, after which English legal policy was altered with the passing of the *Act for the Safe Keeping of Insane Persons Charged with Offences* (1800).³ Shortly thereafter, government officials showed their interest in the treatment of the mad by passing the Act that first enabled the establishment of public lunatic asylums in 1808, and by appointing the first major parliamentary inquiries into madhouses in 1807 and 1815. The furious press and pamphlet war that attended these parliamentary inquiries brought the issues involved in psychological treatment to the wider public, while the *First Report Minutes of Evidence Taken Before*

the Select Committee of the House of Commons reveals the shocking evidence of mistreatment in asylums that the governmental committees collected, and which would change the face of psychological treatment in England forever by inspiring widespread concern for the better treatment of the insane.⁴ Additionally, the fear that madness was on the rise was prevalent in Georgian-era England. Some of the most famous psychologists of the day, such as Thomas Arnold and John Haslam, highlighted this subject in their texts about madness. The page heading of the second section of Arnold's *Observations on the Nature, Kinds, Causes and Prevention of Insanity* reads, 'Insanity why common in England,' while Haslam begins his preface to *Observations on Madness and Melancholy: Including Practical Remarks on those Diseases* with the following comment: 'The alarming increase in Insanity, as might naturally be expected, has incited many persons to an investigation of this disease.'⁵ Thus, it becomes clear why knowledge about the human mind was deemed to be essential for any representative of culture, not the least of whom were the Romantic-era poets.

In recent years, the body of criticism outlining the Romantic poets' knowledge about psychological subjects has grown. This field of criticism is an offshoot of an earlier critical field, which focuses more specifically on madness in Romantic literature, and both interrogate the wider cultural influences of the theme of subjectivity that characterizes Romantic literature. Some of the most notable critical works in these fields are Philip W. Martin's *Mad Women in Romantic Writing* and Frederick Burwick's *Poetic Madness and the Romantic Imagination*.⁶ More recently, Alan Richardson's important work, *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind*, amongst other works of a similar nature, has shown that Romantic poetry concerned itself not only with madness, but with the exploration of how the human mind works and fails on physical and metaphysical levels.⁷ Aside from Beverly Taylor's *The Cast of Consciousness: Concepts of the Mind in British and American Romanticism*, most other recent critical works that describe Romantic writers' knowledge of psychology are dedicated to individual writers; amongst these are Jeremy Tambling's *Blake's Night Thoughts*, William Brewer's *The Mental Anatomies of William Godwin and Mary Shelley* and Neil Vickers's *Coleridge and the Doctors*.⁸ In *Romantic Psychoanalysis: The Burden of the Mystery*, Joel Faflak reveals that Romantic writers were proto-psychoanalysts.⁹ Critics writing on this subject recognize that the inclusion of scientific subjects in Romantic poetry was itself new and suggest that many of the most famous poets of the time originated the concept of developing psychological subjects in verse after having read the medical prose of eminent doctors. However, I suggest that these poets may have been responding to a broader cultural phenomenon that understood literature and medicine as fields connected in scope and ideology, rather than as opposed, as we see them today. Many facets of this fascinating Enlightenment and early Romantic-era phenomenon are

highlighted in the poetry of Romantic-era psychologists. From the poetry of asylum-keeper Nathaniel Cotton, whose hugely popular *Visions in Verse* reached eleven editions by the year of his death in 1788, to that of Thomas Forster, a well-known phrenologist whose last collection of verse appeared in 1850, this previously unexplored field reveals valuable and original insights about the intersection of psychology and poetry in the Romantic era.¹⁰

Politically democratic and ideologically egalitarian, for the most part, these representatives of the emerging profession of psychology regarded their roles as public in a way that necessitated the use of an appealing form of writing, specifically poetry, in order to communicate psychological ideas, as well as cultural and moral concepts that reflect the religious and political milieu of their psychological training – and which would be echoed by so many canonical Romantic poets that centuries of criticism would identify them as distinct features of Romantic literature. Many of the psychologist-poets include references to their vocations as psychologists in their verse and use the inherent characteristics of poetry – such as the lyric’s potential to represent the speaker’s mind and the mnemonic qualities of rhyme – to teach their readers about psychology. In fact, these poets sometimes even provide psychological therapy to their readers through their poetry, which suggests that the field of psychology required, to some extent, the poetic medium for communicating ideas, just as statisticians need graphs, gangs need graffiti or academics need essays. In other words, for the psychologist-poets, medicine is not framed by poetry, as is commonly implied in literary criticism that presents verse as the distillation and peak of scientific expression. Rather, poetry is framed by medicine. By presenting their professional identities in this context and emphasizing certain poetic themes, the psychologist-poets helped to develop early psychology as a field. In so doing, they also contributed to the formation of disciplinary power, the discourse of subjectivity and its relationship to literary writing in heretofore unrecognized ways.

These psychologist-poets’ common intellectual interests, poetic themes and ideas about their own cultural roles show the influence of the Scottish Enlightenment and its signature subject, moral philosophy, out of which modern psychology grew. Almost all of the psychologist-poets studied medicine in Scotland, which was as widely renowned in the eighteenth century for its medical schools as the schools were for their Whiggish character. The psychologist-poets’ literary interests may be traced to the liberal character of the Scottish medical schools of the eighteenth century because Scottish Whigs encouraged a diversity of interests and areas of expertise as insurance against intellectual tyranny and conservatism. Their liberality also demanded that education be available to students from a wide range of social classes, and the psychologist-poets responded in kind: they attempted to erase class boundaries through the accessible medium of verse and the celebration of low-class, rustic life in order to appeal to a wide

range of readers about psychology and liberal politics. Besides the desire to disseminate knowledge, this poetic effort was also motivated by the concern for self-promotion, for this poetry helped to define the professional identity of the psychologist as a cultural sage with broad interests and a particular facility to communicate in various ways and with a wide variety of social groups. These new doctors of the mind, who were just beginning to recognize their fellowship in an emerging profession, defined their professional identities in recognizable and consistent ways through poetry. They sought to present the image of the psychologist as more than a scientist. The psychologist was also a man of letters, an arbiter of morals, a shaper of culture, and, above all, an expert in communicating with all classes and types of people.

The specific themes and literary techniques that these writers use tell us much about how psychology related to literature during the Romantic period and how the delineation of the modern subject is bound up with all types of writing. While it becomes clear that some of the major characteristics of this poetry reflect the writers' specific cultural milieu – for example, the egalitarian impulse of the Scottish Enlightenment shines through the common thematic emphases on sympathy, social concern and the celebration of simple, rural living, while the literary techniques of using humour and the epistolary form may be said to illustrate the psychologist-poet's democratic desire to present an accessible and friendly professional identity – any student of Romanticism will also recognize these themes and techniques as common to the more popular works of the period. I argue that these common themes and techniques reflect the development of modern disciplinary power on a broad scale that encompasses both the literary and psychological fields and, in effect, treats them as identifiable during this period. The discipline of psychology and the attendant discourse of subjectivity were deployed in a literary context, forming the readers of this literature into the subjects of modern power.

As much as this exploration of early psychology and its poetry contributes to the now-familiar Foucauldian contention that the discipline is authoritarian, thereby subjectifying the modern subject, it also complicates this narrative by arguing – just as strenuously, I hope – that early psychologists' poetry and the culture out of which it grew points to the originally egalitarian and democratic roots of psychology. In *Madness and Civilization*, Foucault identifies the psychologist in the Romantic era as the 'apotheosi[z]ed ... *medical personage* ... peculiar to the world of the asylum as it was constituted at the end of the eighteenth century', a figure who gained his power through the relative ignorance of his patient: 'it was in the esotericism of his knowledge, in some almost daemonic secret of knowledge, that the doctor had found the power to unravel insanity; and increasingly the patient would accept this self-surrender to a doctor both divine and satanic, beyond human measure.'¹¹ I will argue, though, that

this 'demonic' identity was, from the beginning, only one aspect of a deeply complex character and developed as an inevitable consequence of the growth of psychology as a field. This authoritarian identity is intimately and inevitably united with the changing discourse of subjectivity that is psychology itself. That is to say, the mere fact that psychologists systematize subjectivity, define the private experience of self-reflection or the mind, and improvise a language not created by the subject that is, yet, intended to speak his identity into being, makes them masters of subjectivity and contributes to their authoritarian identity. Nor does this aspect of psychology entail a negation of its stated principles, as though tyranny were the sole goal of discipline. Indeed, as Foucault notes in a lecture he presented on 14 January 1976, 'We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth.'¹² Simply by searching for the truth of the human mind, early psychology established a network of power and subjectivity – and subjectedness. In the following pages, I will introduce eleven psychologist-poets of the Romantic period, outline in greater detail the features of the tradition to which they contributed, provide a brief history of the role of psychology and literature in eighteenth-century Scotland and suggest specific areas of overlap between their work and that of better-known Romantic poets. Through these means, I will not only frame the evolution of early psychology in a literary context but, more to the point, I will work towards defining the cultural role of the psychologist-poet in Romantic-era Britain with specific reference to the formation of the modern subject.

We have not probed adequately the deeper cultural significance of the common assertion that interest in subjectivity in literature arose in relation – and perhaps in response – to the increased attention to subjectivity in psychology during the Romantic period. If these movements are parallel, they must, at some level, deploy similar cultural effects. Romantic criticism has, for the most part, accepted the narrative that attention to subjectivity in Romanticism was part of its rebellion against the more socially oriented Augustan movement in literature, as well as that it represented the Romantics' insistence upon laying claim to a private, ungovernable space that the government could not control during this time of heavy censorship and fear of revolution. Romantic literature, in short, has almost uniformly been counted on the side of protest and anti-establishment sentiment. Yet if it is true, as many well-regarded critics have claimed, that Romantic literature was heavily influenced by psychological writings, then these assertions about the defiant nature of Romantic literature must, at least, be called into question since psychology is basically the systematization of subjectivity, as I will argue in Chapter 1. When literature uses a psychological approach to subjectivity, it is complicit in making subjectivity socially mediated and a product of the state; it replaces private identity with the authorized version of the self

as defined in the increasingly reified and influential discipline of psychology. Although almost all of the psychologist-poets I study here claim a democratic political stance, as did so many of the best-known Romantic writers, they all contributed to the systematization of the last bastion of privacy, namely subjectivity, regardless of whether they were aware of doing so. Despite the personal politics of early psychologists and literary writers (who are often one and the same), the programme of psychology governs the private and makes it social. This concept underpins all of my arguments in the following chapters. In attempting to establish this contention with reference to the verse of Romantic-era psychologists, I am encouraging a reconsideration of the wider cultural meaning of literature that is influenced by psychology.

The unique subject matter of this project also offers the means of reconsidering other familiar histories. In the process of narrating the development of the psychologist-poets' tradition, I also offer the means of reframing the history of psychology through its literary expression. This focus leads to some new conclusions about the formation of the modern subject out of a discipline that originated in a Whiggish environment and, in many ways, was born of egalitarian impulses, but that morphed into its opposite and contributed to disciplinary power by dint of its very essence. My focus on the literature of early doctors of the mind also leads to some original conclusions regarding the confluence of literature and psychology in the Romantic period. For example, I trouble the accepted critical narrative about the literary expression of nerve theory in the culture of sensibility by suggesting that moral managers borrowed some of the tropes and genres most intimately associated with nerve theory. I also argue that the Romantic period heralded a new kind of nerve theorist, one that established his difference from nerve doctors of the Cheynian stamp by championing the lower classes and associating nervous illness with insanity, both of which assertions threatened the aristocratic basis of the culture of sensibility. While the field of Romantic-era psychologists' poetry is new to the critical scene, it provides insight into some of the most familiar areas of inquiry.

II. The Tradition of Psychologist-Poets' Verse

In approximate birth order and with brief reference to their claims to psychological fame, the poets whom I study are Nathaniel Cotton (b. c. 1705 d. 1788), owner of a private madhouse called the *Collegium Insanorum*; James Beattie (1735–1803), Professor of Moral Philosophy and author of the *Elements of Moral Science*, which includes a lengthy section on 'psychology'; William Perfect (1737–1809), owner of a private madhouse and author of *Select Cases in the Different Species of Insanity, Lunacy, or Madness*; Andrew Duncan Sr (1744–1828), author of *Observations on the Structure of Hospitals for the Treatment of Lunatics*;

Thomas Beddoes (1760–1808), author of *Hygëia; or, Essays Moral and Medical on the Causes Affecting the Personal State of Our Middling and Affluent Classes* (and father of the famous Romantic poet and playwright, Thomas Lovell Beddoes); Thomas Trotter (1760–1832), author of *An Essay, Medical, Philosophical, and Chemical, on Drunkenness, and Its Effects on the Human Body*, which was the first text to present alcoholism as a psychological ailment; John Ferriar (1761–1815), physician at Manchester Infirmary Lunatic Hospital and author of *An Essay Towards a Theory of Apparitions*, which was the first text to propose a psychological explanation for ghosts; Thomas Bakewell (1761–1835), asylum owner and author of *The Domestic Guide, In Cases of Insanity*; Thomas Brown (1778–1820), Professor of Moral Philosophy and author of *Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind*; and, finally, Thomas Forster (1789–1860), author of *Observations on the Casual and Periodical Influence of Particular States of the Atmosphere on Human Health and Diseases, Particularly Insanity*.¹³ I also touch on the more familiar verse of Erasmus Darwin (1731–1802) in the first chapter to introduce the tradition of which he is the most famous member. Many Romantic-era doctors wrote poetry,¹⁴ but these doctors of the mind are particularly important for the study of Romanticism because its distinctly psychological character suggests that the poetry and the figure of the psychologist-poet may have affected its formation.

Before I move any further into a description of this project, I must clarify my terminology. The issue of the proper terminology for early doctors of the mind is highly contentious. Roy Porter explains that the word ‘psychiatry’ was used by the late eighteenth century and Allen Thiher confirms that the German Dr J. C. Reil (1759–1813) gave us the word ‘psychiatry’ – although it seems rather unlikely that the German document in which this information appeared would so immediately become known to, and its contents and terminology so quickly adopted by, Romantic-era British medical professionals.¹⁵ Edward Shorter confirms that the term only originated in 1808 with Reil’s work and adds that ‘The use of the new term spread rather slowly’, even in Germany.¹⁶ We can safely assume, then, that Romantic-era doctors of the mind were not called ‘psychiatrists’ in England. Yet, in their seminal work, *Three Hundred Years of Psychiatry 1535–1860*, Hunter and Macalpine use ‘psychiatry’ and its variants to refer to all doctors of the mind, including those who practised before the nineteenth century. They embrace in this vast compendium of major figures throughout ‘three-hundred years of psychiatry’ such figures as Thomas Beddoes the elder, a doctor who never consulted with the insane; Thomas Bakewell, an asylum owner who was not a doctor and, in fact, had no formal education; and Thomas Brown, a doctor, professor and moral philosopher who neither met with patients nor wrote about mental illness. In short, Hunter and Macalpine see as relevant to the history of psychiatry even those figures who were not doctors, did not meet with

mental patients and did not write specifically about mental ailments. Because the field and its attendant terminology was not yet closely regulated, such inclusiveness makes sense, as does Hunter's and Macalpine's use of an umbrella term ('psychiatry') to refer, simply, to the study of the mind.

I have been similarly inclusive in my identification of early doctors of the mind and have followed Hunter's and Macalpine's authoritative lead by choosing an inexact term to refer to these figures' subject of study. However, I use the term 'psychology' and its variants to refer to matters of the mind because it was current in the period I study. Gladys Bryson claims that Dugald Stewart was one of the first to use the term in the late eighteenth century.¹⁷ In fact, David Hartley had used the term in the 1750s, as did others before him according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (hereafter *OED*) entry for 'psychology', but it is arguable that the word was only employed to signify the concepts with which we now associate it near the end of the eighteenth century in the work of Dugald Stewart and James Beattie.¹⁸ Indeed, Part 1 of Beattie's *Elements of Moral Science* is entitled 'Psychology' and contains section titles that refer to such now-familiar psychological concepts as 'Perception, or External Sensation', 'Consciousness, or Reflection', 'Dreaming' and 'Sympathy'. In the Romantic period, 'psychiatry' and 'psychology' were not yet distinguished from one another as referring, in the former case, to the practice of doctors who treat mental ailments with physical interventions and, in the latter case, to the practice of doctors who treat such matters in non-surgical and non-chemical ways, such as through talk-therapy. However, 'psychiatry' did entail the sense of ailment and need for treatment, while 'psychology' referred more generally to matters of the mind. Since several of the figures I study contributed to our knowledge of the workings of the human mind in general, if not so much the sick mind, and since several influential figures used the term in the Romantic period, I have chosen 'psychology' and its variants to refer to the psychologist-poets' area of expertise.

No concrete evidence exists to suggest that these psychologist-poets worked within a recognized tradition, but a few key pieces of evidence from the Romantic period indicate that the psychologist-poets knew of one another, even if they did not regard themselves as part of a definable 'school' of psychologist-poets. For example, these psychologists often make reference to one another's prose work. Reference to Darwin's work appears in Trotter's and Beddoes's prose and probably elsewhere. Perhaps the most famous of such allusions is Brown's *Observations on the Zoönomia of Erasmus Darwin, MD*, in which Brown, at age nineteen, attacks the comparatively Goliath-like Darwin in a thoroughgoing critique of the established doctor's most comprehensive work. Moreover, Beddoes (not to mention Coleridge) knew Ferriar's prose, as Vickers reveals in 'Coleridge, Thomas Beddoes and Brunonian Medicine', while, in *Facts and Enquiries Respecting the Source of Epidemia, with an Historical Catalogue of the Numerous Visitations*

of *Plague, Pestilence, and Famine*, Forster quotes from Ferriar's *An Essay Towards a Theory of Apparitions*.¹⁹ Arguably, if these psychologists were familiar with each other's prose, they were also familiar with each other's poetry.

Perhaps the most compelling evidence of these doctors' connections is poetic, though. Bakewell compares himself to another psychologist-poet in his verse. In the theatrical final poem of *The Moorland Bard*, called 'The Author's Dream', Bakewell subtly claims his right to a literary identity by hinting that the field of psychologist-poets is already established, even as he humorously excuses himself from the contest:

At the shop door, in steps a bold stranger,
And stalks up to me like any free ranger.
"If you are the poet", says he, "you must go
"Before the Reviewers:" – I answer'd, "O no!"
My hands they did shake, and my legs they did totter,
I trembled as much as that poor honest Trotter.²⁰

In these lines, Bakewell certainly refers to Thomas Trotter, another psychologist-poet whom I study; according to my research, no other writer by the name of Trotter published poetry at this time. Moreover, a connection exists between Trotter and another poet with whom Bakewell seems preoccupied in these volumes. In 'The Weaver's Request' and 'Epistle to a Neighbouring Gentleman', the first and third poems of *The Moorland Bard*, Bakewell makes pointed references to the so-called 'cobbler-poet', Robert Bloomfield (1766–1823), references that indicate his familiarity with and interest in Bloomfield's poetry. Bloomfield's volume, *The Farmer's Boy: A Rural Poem*, probably attracted Bakewell's notice because of its stupendous success: it went into nine editions by 1806, a year before Trotter's *The Moorland Bard* was published.²¹ This surprisingly popular book of poems further establishes the probability that Bakewell refers to our own Thomas Trotter in 'The Author's Dream' because, if Bakewell was familiar with *The Farmer's Boy*, he may well have been familiar with 'The Snowstorm', a poem by Trotter that appeared in the Bloomfield volume. In his reference to another psychologist-poet, Bakewell may indicate that he wrote within, or in response to, a tradition of poetry in the Romantic period hitherto unrecognized by critics today.

At least one other psychologist-poet gestures to the possible existence of this genre of poetry. Beddoes indicates that he writes in conscious awareness of and perhaps in response to other psychologist-poets in his preface to his long poem, *Alexander's Expedition*.²² Beddoes compares his verse to that of Erasmus Darwin by insisting repeatedly that he did not copy the former poet's work and praising the asylum-owner and 'author of the Botanic Garden' for having a 'store of images and a command of language, sufficient to constitute a poet'.²³ I will dis-

cuss Beddoes's relationship with Darwin in greater detail in Chapter 3, but for now it suffices to say that his repeated references to the poetry of Darwin function in a manner similar to Bakewell's comparison of himself to 'that poor honest Trotter': these writers indicate that they respond to verse similar to their own, thereby suggesting the possibility that they contributed to a tradition of poetry by early psychologists.

III. The Scottish Enlightenment: Democracy, Moral Philosophy and the Medical Sage

We can speak of a tradition of verse by psychologist-poets because common themes and statements of political positions echo throughout the work. These features were likely the result of cultural and educational influences on these doctors: most of them were Scottish or had been schooled in Scotland and their distinct brand of liberalism bears the stamp of the Scottish Enlightenment. The psychologist-poets bring into focus the residual effects of the Scottish Enlightenment on Romantic-era British culture. We are accustomed to viewing the Enlightenment, as represented by such figures as the English empiricist John Locke, as oppositional to Romantic ideology, which we have tended to see as spiritual, emotional and subjective, all of which qualities are opposed to the empiricist focus on material reality, experiment and hard fact. However, I argue that many of the ideals that we now identify as distinctly Romantic reflect the influence of the Scottish Enlightenment,²⁴ and nowhere are these ideals expressed more poignantly than in the poetry of psychologist-poets trained in the Scottish medical tradition of the eighteenth century.

Throughout Europe in the eighteenth century, Scotland was reputed to have the most prestigious medical schools. As young scientists with great aspirations, many of the psychologist-poets took their medical degrees at Edinburgh University, including Brown, Ferriar, Duncan, Beddoes and Trotter, the last three of whom were students of the famous nosologist of nervous disorders, William Cullen, while Brown studied under Stewart, the renowned 'Common Sense Philosopher' and author of *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind*.²⁵ The most famous psychologist-poet of all, Erasmus Darwin, studied medicine in Edinburgh from 1753 to 1756.²⁶ Brown eventually taught at Edinburgh University, as did Duncan after a stint at St Andrew's University, which was the *alma mater* of Perfect.²⁷ Meanwhile, Beattie was a Professor of Moral Philosophy and Logic at Marischal College in Aberdeen and 'held the chair until his death despite tempting and lucrative offers in the 1770s of a chair at Edinburgh University'.²⁸ Forster made himself an essential part of the psychological scene in Scotland when, on 15 April 1816, he 'delivered a paper to the Wernerian Society of Edinburgh. A note in the minute book observes that this was the first paper

on phrenology read before a learned society in Scotland' and he seems to have been eager to claim his Scottish connections, for he wrote several poems in the Scottish dialect.²⁹ The only two figures in this study that have no solid connections with Scotland are Cotton and Bakewell, but it is notable that, near the end of the eighteenth-century, Cotton's poetry was published several times with that of Scotland's most popular poet in the Romantic period, Robert Burns, which may show that the editors recognized an affinity between their work or that they wanted to present this early psychologist-poet's verse in a Scottish context because audience expectations demanded a Scottish flavour to the poetry of psychologists by that time. As for Bakewell, it is arguable that the poetic identity that he formed for himself – that of 'the moorland bard' – was a direct descendant of Beattie's distinctly Scottish 'minstrel', Edwin, as I will maintain in Chapter 1. These psychologist-poets created a tradition of verse that was nurtured in a single geographical area and bound by a common view of what it meant to be a doctor and specifically a doctor of the mind. This view was a quintessential expression of the Scottish Enlightenment.

The term 'Scottish Enlightenment' recognizes that Scotland saw a resurgence in knowledge, especially scientific, in the eighteenth century that was distinct from the Enlightenment in the rest of Europe. Historian Gordon Graham asserts that the Scottish Enlightenment was based in the 'Scottish philosophical community and a distinctive tradition of inquiry. The Scottish philosophers formed a community because, unlike their counterparts in England or France, they were almost all university based, and were frequently related as teachers and students.'³⁰ Moreover, he adds, they shared 'a methodology (the so-called "science of the mind")';³¹ an aspect of the Scottish Enlightenment that I will discuss at greater length hereafter in my discussion of moral philosophy. Significantly, historians such as David Hamilton describe the chronological boundaries of the movement with reference to Edinburgh University and literary events: 'the cultural Enlightenment' in Scotland, paralleled 'the period of growth of the medical school in Edinburgh', and he goes on to note that the Enlightenment only really ended with death of Sir Walter Scott in 1832.³² The tradition of poetry by doctors of the mind derived from a movement that was bound by literary events and the life of the medical school in Scotland. Finally, Lisa Rosner's account of the Scottish Enlightenment is most suggestive; she writes that 'the first lesson taught by the medical societies was that medicine was a literary activity' and adds that societies like the Royal Medical Society in Edinburgh also 'had special resonance as focal points for Edinburgh literati'.³³ In other words, the intersection of the fields was recognized and valued by medical practitioners, students and literati alike.

So integral was the connection between literature and medicine in Enlightenment Scotland that there seems to have been no sharp distinction between

the fields then or in Romantic-era England. Richardson draws attention to this circumstance when he maintains that the Romantic era was characterized by fluid boundaries between fields, such as between ‘sciences and the humanities.’³⁴ With respect to this fluid boundary, it is important to note that it was a relatively recent development in Britain, not a static holdover from a kind of unified pre-Lapsarian academic paradise. According to John Christie and Sally Shuttleworth, the division between science and the humanities occurred when the English scientific movement became institutionalized with ‘the foundation of the Royal Society of London’ in 1660; this break happened at the same time as in France, where ‘the demarcation of literary, aesthetic and scientific culture was produced through the official and bureaucratized cultural politics of the monarchy’s cultural ambitions.’³⁵ Just as the divisions between the fields reflected the power of the monarchy in both France and Britain, so, too, I argue, did the dissolution of these boundaries echo radical, even revolutionary, sympathies in the Enlightenment era.

To be sure, the Scottish Enlightenment was almost synonymous with radical politics. Bryson lists ‘Intellectual equalitarianism – a democratic temper in matters of religion, morals and taste’ – as principle characteristics of the Scottish Enlightenment.³⁶ Certainly, this description suggests how the movement included many supporters of the French Republic. In *Philosophic Whigs: Medicine, Science, and Citizenship in Edinburgh, 1789–1848*, L. S. Jacyna confirms that Thomas Paine – perhaps the most famous of the English sympathizers with the French Revolutionary cause – was a kind of hero in Scotland.³⁷ Jacyna also suggests that a republican spirit was inculcated into the Scots from their school-days, calling the educational system in eighteenth-century Scotland a ‘genuinely democratic one’ that allowed students to move between classes³⁸ partly because people of all classes could afford an education, given the low cost of tuition.³⁹ Additionally, some of the most influential figures of the Scottish Enlightenment were well-known Whigs. So important was the nerve theorist William Cullen that many historians of medicine say that ‘the eighteenth-century “Golden Age” of Edinburgh medicine ... ended around 1789 with the retirement of William Cullen.’⁴⁰ Cullen’s republican principles are evident in the major changes he effected on the Edinburgh University campus: he was the first to use English instead of Latin for his medical lectures, which showed his desire to communicate with more students than simply those who had a grammar school background (and may show his sympathy with the psychologist-poets on the topic of using accessible language to disseminate medical knowledge); he also ‘started the tradition that university students should be given free medical treatment.’⁴¹ These liberal sympathies gesture to Cullen’s schooling at Glasgow University, where he earned his medical doctorate and which Jacyna calls a ‘seminary of Whiggism’ in the decades following his term there.⁴² Additionally, Stewart was a high-profile

Whig; adherence to his psychological theories was, therefore, a claim to radicalism, Jacyna contends.⁴³ His protégé, Brown, is also likely to have passed on such radical principles in his university lectures. While the above assertions indicate an elision between Whiggism and radicalism that is not familiar to students of English politics, the elision was real in late eighteenth-century Scotland, where the French Revolution set into sharper focus the divide between the reformist Whigs and the conservative Tories. In an integral way, political and social reform was married to the spirit of innovation that characterized science and especially medicine during the Scottish Enlightenment, and all kinds of ‘reactionaries saw the overthrow of the *ancien régime* as confirmation of all innovation.’⁴⁴ The Enlightenment in Scotland was characterized by a radical Whiggism that it disseminated in its schools, especially its medical schools.

The radical and democratic leanings of most of the psychologist-poets I study come into clearer focus through this delineation of their exposure to the Scottish Enlightenment at medical schools in Scotland. Their literary interests were evidently a part of the cultural milieu of young doctors and medical students as well. But how were these factors tied together? Again, Jacyna provides a clear explanation of how the fields of literature and medicine were integrated:

Scottish Whiggery was of a different character to its aristocratic English counterpart. It was more the property of professional men who gave a keen intellectual edge and a greater coherence to the eclectic Whig programme ... Their ethos eschewed ... any form of narrow specialization.⁴⁵

These cultural leaders felt it incumbent on them to develop a wide range of literary and scientific interests. Not only did the Whigs of the Scottish Enlightenment admire creativity and fancy in its scientists, thinking that such qualities revealed individuality and a freethinking character that defied subjection to tyranny, but they even thought it a basic civic duty to cultivate both scientific and philosophical knowledge: the pursuit of all kinds knowledge was a strategy against corruption and a means of levelling the field of education.⁴⁶ I suggest that the psychologist-poets promoted reform – social, political, spiritual, but especially psychological – by writing poetry, for they could more easily teach a wide audience of readers about various political and medical issues through the attractive and popular medium of poetry than they could through academic essays. Just as Cullen lectured in English to communicate better with his students and the great Stewart taught his medical students to work towards political renewal and avoid the dangers of narrow specialization by teaching them to balance, for example, abstract metaphysics with sociology, so, too, did the psychologist-poets teach their readers directly and by example.⁴⁷ As I will show, the Romantic-era psychologist-poets’ dedication to teaching was a major component of their function as cultural leaders.

Some historians of the Scottish Enlightenment maintain that developments in psychological matters characterized the entire movement of the Scottish Enlightenment. Charles Waterston points out that psychological topics were ‘of interest to many Scots since, during the eighteenth century, Enlightenment philosophers had wrestled with the implications of man’s understanding of himself in body and mind.’⁴⁸ This claim is supported at least in part by the simple fact that one of the greatest Enlightenment philosophers of all, David Hume, was Scottish and his work *Treatise of Human Nature* was hugely influential for psychology (both directly and negatively, as I will show in my discussion of Beattie).⁴⁹ But Graham maintains that other notable philosophers must be viewed with reference to the history of psychology, as well, when he asserts that in the Scottish ‘school of Reid and [Sir William] Hamilton [there is] an almost unspoken assumption that the question of mind ... lies at the heart of philosophy.’⁵⁰ Finally, in his introduction to *Enlightened Scotland*, Philip Flynn explains that, in a sense, all science was subordinate to psychology in its manifestation of moral philosophy in eighteenth-century Scotland:

The Scottish understanding of the phrase ‘moral philosophy’ came to include more subjects than Newton had intended ... [as] parts of their ‘science of man’. In that large ambition, they recognized that a study of the sources, limits, and processes of human knowledge was basic to their philosophic program; and they believed that the subject known as ‘pneumatology’, ‘the philosophy of mind’, ‘mental science’, or ‘psychology’ might achieve a status similar to that achieved already in some branches of natural philosophy ... David Hume noted that natural philosophy itself, as well as mathematics and natural theology, is a product of human understanding.⁵¹

Indeed, psychology, or moral philosophy, was perceived as the most comprehensive of the sciences during the Scottish Enlightenment and, crucially for the present study, the cultural scene and intellectual products born of moral philosophy played a major role in forming the psychologist-poets’ tradition of verse.

Other critics have noted the influence of moral philosophy on Romantic culture. In *Romanticism and the Human Sciences: Poetry, Population, and the Discourse of the Species*, Maureen McLane asserts that ‘The spirit of the age, as gauged by Hazlitt’s essays, seems best embodied ... by poets and moral philosophers’, but she claims that the two were in contest with each other.⁵² Notably, McLane limits her discussion of moral philosophy to its sociological implications, but the field included many other subjects, including psychology. Allan Bewell points out in *Wordsworth and the Enlightenment: Nature, Man, and Society in the Experimental Poetry* that Wordsworth wrote at the precise time when ‘the immense field of moral philosophy ... was about to break up into the modern disciplines of anthropology, sociology, psychology, philosophical ethics, economics, history and political science’, but, notably, Bewell adds that the first concern of moral philosophers was to effect ‘synchronic analyses of the mind

and passions.’⁵³ Regarding the psychological nature of moral philosophy, Beattie provides an informative description of how psychology relates to his area of expertise, moral philosophy, and explains how the mysterious field of ‘Pneumatology’⁵⁴ relates to both in the following definition, taken from the introductory section of his *Elements of Moral Science*:

Moral Philosophy ... consists, like every other branch of science [,] of a speculative and a practical part ... The speculative part of the philosophy of mind has been called Pneumatology. It inquires into the nature of those spirits of minds, whereof we may have certain knowledge, and wherewith it concerns us to be acquainted; and those are the Deity and the human mind ... Pneumatology, therefore, consists of two parts, first, Natural Theology ... and, secondly, the Philosophy of the Human Mind, which some writers have termed Psychology.⁵⁵

Beattie identifies moral philosophy as a science and therefore an appropriate field of study for medical men. As important as Beattie’s statement is for an understanding of what constituted moral philosophy in the Romantic period (and its importance will become clearer in Chapter 1, where I will outline the extent of Beattie’s influence on the Romantics), he does not speak only for his time, but also for the eighteenth century as a whole. Indeed, as Roger Emerson writes in ‘Science and Moral Philosophy in the Scottish Enlightenment’, moral philosophy was a scientific phenomenon of the Baconian stamp as early as 1700 and, even then, its emphasis was on the human mind; he explains that analysis of ‘the passions, will, reason, and the other faculties of the mind ... was essential ... for moral philosophy.’⁵⁶ Bewell and McLane have argued convincingly that the Romantics were influenced by the sociological and anthropological work being accomplished in the field of moral philosophy. Meanwhile, Edward Reed claims in *From Soul to Mind: The Emergence of Psychology from Erasmus Darwin to William James* that the terms ‘moral philosophy’ and ‘psychology’ are synonymous, but chronologically divergent.⁵⁷ The precise nature of the relationship between moral philosophy and psychology is debatable, but one thing is clear: psychology was one of the most influential fields of study in Enlightenment and Romantic-era Britain.

One need only mention that most of the psychologist-poets were influenced by or contributed to the Scottish Enlightenment to suggest that they were apprized of the teachings of moral philosophy, but, as I have mentioned, several of them also wrote and lectured about the topic. Beattie’s *Elements of Moral Science*, quoted above, was an abstract of his lecture course on moral philosophy, which he taught for thirty-seven years at Marischal College, while Brown published his own series of lectures as Professor of Moral Philosophy, *Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind*. One may assert with some certainty that every student of a Scottish university in the eighteenth century took a course in moral

philosophy because, as Graham informs us, all five of the universities during the Scottish Enlightenment 'had persisted with the basic mediaeval curriculum in which moral philosophy ... played an important and compulsory part'.⁵⁸ If moral philosophy was an integral part of the education of a medical student in Scotland, so, too, was psychology, for the fields are at some level identifiable.

As for more recent academic attention to moral philosophy, Bryson's *Man and Society: The Scottish Inquiry of the Eighteenth Century*, published in 1945, remains the most extensive treatment of the subject. Clearly, the time is ripe for a more updated study of the topic, which I hope to accomplish, in part, with the present study, but Bryson's exploration remains valuable. She confirms that moral philosophy was a defining feature of the Scottish Enlightenment and, as Bryson notes in *Man and Society: The Scottish Inquiry of the Eighteenth Century*, this development can be attributed, in part, to Thomas Reid, who made the field essential to 'Common Sense Philosophy', of which he is regarded widely as the originator.⁵⁹ According to Bryson, Reid was responsible for both popularizing moral philosophy and giving it the psychological character that would come to define it in the eighteenth century.⁶⁰ Yet Reid was by no means the only influential Scottish philosopher who regarded psychology as an essential subject. Bryson writes, 'Ferguson was as certain as Hume that psychology, or the science of man, was the basic study for an understanding of society'; she then adds that amongst 'all of the Scottish writers ... [psychology] was regarded as the most fundamental portion of any knowledge they might have or might achieve regarding man'.⁶¹ The importance of the Scottish school of moral philosophers for the history of psychology in England cannot be ignored.

IV. The Psychological Milieu of Romanticism

The similar interests of many of the psychologist-poets can be traced to the strongly psychological character of the Scottish Enlightenment and its unique emphasis on the doctor as a man of politics and literature, as well as of medicine. Meanwhile, their connections to the English Romantics – in terms of their interest in psychology, their political ideas and their notion of the broad cultural role of the poet – may also be located in this influential movement. Many similarities exist between the political attitudes and opinions about the necessity of accessible writing and ideas of both moral philosophers and famous Romantic writers. Even if we trace the philosophical influences upon Romanticism through another national tradition, such as through the work of the German philosopher Immanuel Kant, the Scottish Enlightenment still asserts its relevance, according to Vickers, who claims, 'It is a fact too rarely adverted to that many of the earliest accounts in English of Kant's critical philosophy came from men who had all been associated at one time or another with Edinburgh University medical

school'.⁶² Meanwhile, in summarizing the attitudes behind the 'rationalistic anti-intellectualism', which in turn produced moral philosophy, Bryson writes, 'Since truths of nature are universal, they must have been as well known to the earliest, least sophisticated men as to any other members of the race; what is more, early men were really in a better position to apprehend such truths than men of later periods.'⁶³ This sentiment echoes strongly Wordsworth's statement in the 1800 preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* about why he chose as his poetic subject 'low and rustic life':

because in that situation the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity ... [and] because in that situation our elementary feelings exist in a state of greater simplicity and consequently may be more accurately contemplated ... and are more durable; and lastly, because in that situation the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature.⁶⁴

Bryson's explanation of the humble attitude underlying moral philosophy also recalls Jean-Jacques Rousseau's concept of the superiority of the uncivilized man over the man of the city and the related Romantic valorization of the 'rural genius', which manifested itself in the great popularity of Robert Burns, John Clare, Stephen Duck, Ann Yearsley and others. In several ways, moral philosophy and Romanticism express the same political ideals.

The establishment of the powerful connection between psychology and literature during the period before the humanities and sciences were understood as discrete and even opposed fields highlights why some famous Romantic-era passages of literary criticism use the language of psychology to judge the success of poetry. Some of the most scathing and memorable reviews of Romantic poets' work include psychological language as a kind of diagnosis of the poet's literary faults, which are figured as psychological ailments. In Francis Jeffrey's cruel review of Wordsworth's *Excursion* in *The Edinburgh Review* of November 1814, the critic treats what he considers to be Wordsworth's poetic foibles as psychological ailments, an identification that may also reflect Jeffrey's contact with Brown, a founder-member of *The Edinburgh Review* and fellow alumnus of the Edinburgh Academy of Physics (as were Francis Horner and Henry Brougham, the other two Whig founders of *The Edinburgh Review*).⁶⁵ Four years earlier, Jeffrey had shown his interest in psychology in other ways: he had published in the same journal his review of Stewart's *Philosophical Essays* – and Stewart is widely recognized for popularizing the 'science of the mind' at the start of the nineteenth century through his university lectures and the great success of his psychological treatise, *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind*.⁶⁶ While the following critical passage has long been viewed in light of Jeffrey's use of the topics of mental illness and psychology as vehicles in a metaphor for the relationship between the poet and critic, I maintain that the passage may also

be read quite literally. The critic treats psychology as the standard by which he judges poetry. He attributes Wordsworth's 'perversity of taste or understanding', which has produced the 'moral and devotional ravings' of the poetry itself, to an apparently mental disease:

The case of Mr Wordsworth, we perceive, is now manifestly hopeless; and we give him up as altogether incurable, and beyond the power of criticism. We cannot indeed altogether omit taking precautions now and then against the spreading of the malady; – but for himself, though we shall watch the progress of his symptoms as a matter of professional curiosity and instruction, we really think it right not to harass him any longer with nauseous remedies, – but rather to throw in cordials and lenitives, and wait in patience for the natural termination of the disorder.⁶⁷

Jeffrey establishes not only the poet as mad, but also the psychologist as a poetic authority. Literary criticism, he implies, can 'cure' the mental ailment that leads to bad poetry. Such is also the case in John Gibson Lockhart's infamous criticism of Keats's poetry in the August 1818 edition of *Blackwood's*. Here, 'The Scorpion' writes,

Of all the manias of this mad age, the most incurable, as well as the most common, seems to be no other than the Metromanie ... The phrenzy of the Poems was bad enough in its way; but it did not alarm us half so seriously as the calm, settled, imperturbable drivelling idiocy of Endymion ... [However,] if Mr Keats should happen, at some interval of reason, to cast his eye upon our pages, he may perhaps be convinced of the existence of his malady, which, in some cases, is often all that is necessary to put the patient in a fair way of being cured.⁶⁸

Lockhart also presents the critic as a psychologist with the power to cure 'Metromanie', the madness for poeticizing. These most notorious critical reviews of the Romantic period identify the figure of the psychologist as an authority on poetry. As much as they posit the writing of bad poetry as the symptom of a mental ailment, they present the ability to judge the value of poetry as psychological knowledge. Arguably, these formidable reviewers were contributing and responding to a literary atmosphere that prized psychological knowledge and indicated to poets that they must establish themselves as learned with respect to the mysteries of the human mind.⁶⁹ The inescapable nature of the discourse of psychology and the Foucauldian idea that there is no 'outside of power' when it comes to 'subjectivization', even in the literary realm, seems undeniable in light of these reviews.⁷⁰

Besides these famous instances of the critical enforcement of psychological knowledge in Romantic poets, pre-Romantic literature supported such interests, as well. The literary precedent for poetry that probes the workings of the human mind can be found in the 'graveyard poetry' of the eighteenth century, such as the verse of Mark Akenside, Robert Blair, James Thomson, Thomas Gray, Edward Young and Thomas Parnell. Significantly, Beattie is also sometimes classified as

a 'graveyard poet'. These poems helped to popularize literary self-scrutiny: their speakers wander disconsolately in graveyards and muse miserably at night, albeit with great relish. Romantic poets include as part of their focus on the mind a recognition of the pleasures of melancholy but, as Beverly Taylor and Robert Bain put it, their interest in psychology far surpasses that of their predecessors: 'This concern with consciousness suffuses Romantic writing to an extent not seen before in Western literature ... Romantic writers probed the capacities, limits, experiences, and mysteries of the mind.'⁷¹ The most famous texts of the Romantic period support these claims. The subtitle of Wordsworth's greatest work, *The Prelude*, is 'Growth of a Poet's Mind', while Coleridge's initial prefatory note to 'Kubla Khan' christens the poem 'a psychological curiosity', as opposed to a proper work of literature to be assessed on the basis of its 'poetic merits'.⁷² As I will show in the following chapters, other aspects of Romanticism, such as its valorization of humble living and democratic principles, may also be traced to the cultural phenomenon that produced the verse of the psychologist-poets, namely the Scottish Enlightenment.

Evidence that scientific poetry was not introduced to Romantic poetry through the pioneering efforts of the best-known Romantics, but that it was accepted because the cultural demand for it was inescapable, may be found in the critical statements of the most famous first-generation Romantic poets. Intriguingly, these texts also illustrate the writers' ambivalence towards the topic of science in literature. For example, on one hand, Wordsworth confirms his fascination with psychological topics in the preface of 1800 to the *Lyrical Ballads*, where he reveals that the 'purpose' of the volume is 'to illustrate the manner in which our feelings and ideas are associated in a state of excitement ... [and] to follow the fluxes and refluxes of the mind when agitated by the simple affections of our nature'.⁷³ However, in the revised and expanded version of the preface, published in 1850, Wordsworth compromises his dedication to scientific poetry in his very definition of what constitutes a poet. In his extended reply to his own question, 'What is a poet?', Wordsworth explains,

The Poet writes under one restriction only, namely, that of the necessity of giving immediate pleasure to a human Being possessed of that information which may be expected from him, not as a lawyer, a physician, a mariner, an astronomer or a natural philosopher, but as a Man.⁷⁴

Here, Wordsworth intimates that the reader should not expect the poet to 'give pleasure', to poeticize, about anything remotely scientific, for his expertise involves only what is most basic to human existence, such as the realm of emotions. However, he expands our notion of what kinds of knowledge and writing 'gives[,] ... pleasure' in the passage that immediately follows:

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. The Man of Science ... know[s] and feel[s] this ... [H]e feels that his knowledge is pleasure; and where he has no pleasure he has no knowledge.⁷⁵

Wordsworth confirms that the knowledge of the 'Man of Science' is appropriate subject-matter for 'pleasure'-giving poetry. Yet, he envisions the conflation of science and poetry as guided by the ready-made poet, not initiated by the man of science. He describes a brave new world in which the poet

will follow the steps of the Man of science ... [, will] be at his side, carrying sensation into the midst of the objects of the science itself. The remotest discoveries of the Chemist, the Botanist, or Mineralogist, will be as proper objects of the Poet's art ... If the time should ever come when what is now called Science, thus familiarized to men, shall be ready to put on, as it were, a form of flesh and blood, the Poet will lend his divine spirit to aid the transfiguration, and will welcome the Being thus produced, as a dear and genuine inmate of the household of man.⁷⁶

Even as Wordsworth expands the boundaries of poetry to include scientific topics, he limits the scientist's access to the realm of poetry. In "'Twin Labourers and Heirs of the Same Hopes': The Professional Rivalry of Humphrey Davy and William Wordsworth", Catherine Ross argues cogently that Wordsworth felt competitive with Davy, a scientist, because the latter's scientific interests and cultural role overlapped too closely with his own. We must also consider the possibility that Wordsworth's objections to scientific poetry reveal his opinions about the broader functions of science and poetry.

Coleridge delineates the boundaries of poetry even more rigidly, which is perhaps more surprising, given his freewheeling intellectual interests as a polymath. Coleridge's famous retort to Wordsworth's preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* in the *Biographia Literaria* presents a similarly ambivalent attitude towards the marriage of science and poetry. Because we recognize attention to the mind as a major feature of Romanticism, we are familiar and comfortable with Coleridge's assertion of his interests in psychological phenomena in chapter 14, where he asserts that his poetic task for the *Lyrical Ballads* project was to compose poems that would interest 'the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions, as would naturally accompany ... [supernatural] situations, supposing them real. And real in *this* sense they have been to every human being who, from whatever source of delusion, has at any time believed himself under supernatural agency'.⁷⁷ Here, Coleridge confirms his attempt to display the mind's response to powerful beliefs, a worthy psychological and scientific topic. Moreover, by commending chemist and friend Davy for bringing together science and poetry in his 'Essay on the Principles of Method' in *The Friend*, Coleridge demonstrates that, on principle, he did not oppose scientists writing poetry.⁷⁸ Yet Coleridge seems to refute the possibility of a new, scientific poetry altogether when he asserts that

A poem is that species of composition, which is opposed to works of science, by proposing for its *immediate* object pleasure, not truth; and from all other species (having *this* object in common with it) it is discriminated by proposing to itself such delight from the *whole*, as is compatible with a distinct gratification from each component *part*.⁷⁹

According to Coleridge, poetry and science can never blend perfectly. He even uses the above distinction to criticize Wordsworth's project in the *Lyrical Ballads*, arguing that it belongs not to poetry, but to moral philosophy (out of which psychology developed).⁸⁰ Clearly, Wordsworth and Coleridge were ambivalent about the appropriateness of mixing science and poetry (which, incidentally, suggests that the fluid boundaries between the fields to which Richardson gestures were beginning to solidify).⁸¹ Given this ambivalence, how do we explain the popular current critical assumption that Romantic literature valorizes the scientific study of the mind, or that, as Faflak has argued soundly in *Romantic Psychoanalysis*, Romantic literature is itself deeply psychological? One explanation for this impasse is that Romanticism encompasses both conflicting views. The ambivalence in these influential Romantic texts reveals the heterogeneous nature of Romantic ideology in a way that indicates the need to understand the period in terms of 'Romanticisms', as Arthur Lovejoy put it in 1924.⁸² Or, to put the matter back in a Foucauldian context, we may view Wordsworth's and Coleridge's objections as glimpses of the post-Romantic future, in which the disciplines would be discrete. Importantly, such moments of contention about the blurring of disciplinary boundaries confirms the accepted narrative about the reification of the disciplines in the nineteenth century – and the fact that poets are engaged with this process indicates that, indeed, the power dynamic that is established by disciplinary functions as a network through which power is dispersed everywhere, instead of being a top-down form of tyranny.

V. The Cultural Role of the Psychologist-Poet: A Clerisy for the People

In his earliest manifestations, the psychologist-poet was an ethical and spiritual teacher, who, partly through his accessible writings and partly through his very focus on faith, distinguished himself from the snobbish celebrity nerve-doctors and ivory-tower Humean sceptics (whom I will describe in greater detail in Chapter 1). Toward the turn of the century, he was frequently radical, sometimes even being accused of being a Jacobin. When he was not revolutionary, he was often still involved with political movements that indicated some degree of dissent with the establishment, such as the anti-slavery movement, and his identification with the powerless, such as downtrodden workers, the colonized or even animals. This leftist position is tied in some cases to the liberal nature of the Scottish education system of which almost all of the doctors I study

were products, as I have indicated, while the madhouse-owners who were not part of this system showed their broad social sympathy in their very choice of livelihood: as Michael Donnelly notes, for most of the eighteenth century, the apothecaries and ‘mad-doctors’ had little respect because of their ‘humble work in a lowly branch of medicine’, with which less liberal doctors refused to become involved.⁸³ As a student of the Scottish Enlightenment, the psychologist-poet consciously delineated the cultural role of the sage, the teacher, the wise leader who attempted to disperse through poetry his knowledge about the human mind in order to benefit a wide range of readers.

The idea of the poet as a cultural leader reveals another commonality between the goals of the psychologist-poets and the major Romantics. William Blake argues in his prophecies that the divisions between the spiritual and material worlds, subject and object, the sources of all conflict – social and otherwise – condemn us to the fallen state of Ulro, but these conflicts may be mended by the imagination, which is the particular office of the poet. Thus, the poet is a cultural leader. In what Harold Bloom calls the ‘Dedicatory Quatrains’ of Blake’s *Milton*, the Bard swears, ‘I will not cease from Mental Fight,/ Nor shall my Sword sleep in my hand:/ Till we have built Jerusalem,/ In Englands [sic] green & pleasant Land.’⁸⁴ Wordsworth, meanwhile, also sees himself as having a social function, as he illustrates in his address to Coleridge at the conclusion of *The Prelude*:

though, too weak to tread the ways of truth,
This Age fall back to old idolatry,
Though men return to servitude as fast
As the tide ebbs, to ignominy and shame
By Nations sink together, we shall still
Find solace in the knowledge which we have,
Bless’d with true happiness if we may be
United helpers forward of a day
Of firmer trust, joint-labourers in a work
.....
Of their redemption, surely yet to come.⁸⁵

Wordsworth’s use of the phrase ‘joint-labourers’ echoes the psychologist-poets’ attitudes towards poetic authority by establishing a sense of democratic, working-class effort. More to the point, the poet’s wish that his and Coleridge’s verse might redeem their community illustrates Wordsworth’s view that poetry is ‘social work’, and that the poet performs an important function as a cultural leader.

Shelley makes the function of the poet as a social leader a major part of his argument in *A Defence of Poetry* when he dramatically concludes the essay with the statement, ‘Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the World.’⁸⁶ Significantly for this study, Shelley bases his powerful declaration about the social function of poets on their integral relationship to what he calls ‘ethical science’,

or moral philosophy, which I have argued was the basis for the field of psychology as it grew out of the Scottish Enlightenment: 'Poetry', Shelley claims, 'acts to produce the moral improvement of man. Ethical science arranges the elements which poetry has created, and propounds schemes and proposes examples of civil and domestic life.'⁸⁷ According to Shelley, moral philosophy depends upon poetry for the creation of the materials that it studies. He is not arguing that human morals are somehow derived from poetry, but that poetry provides a kind of language that enables us to comprehend moral principles. We may approach this concept in terms of another claim that Shelley makes in *A Defence*, specifically that 'We want the creative faculty to imagine that which we know.'⁸⁸ Poetry, the product of the creative faculty, enables us to 'imagine', or comprehend, those moral principles of which we are already aware. We must remember that an ethical 'legislator' would not present the products of his craft in an objective and detached way, though. In order to legislate, he must somehow recommend an ethical imperative. Shelley explains that the poet teaches good morals in a 'three-step program', so to speak, that involves an appeal to the reader's imagination: 'The great secret of morals is Love ... The great instrument of moral good is the imagination ... Poetry enlarges the circumference of the imagination'; or, viewed from the opposite perspective, poetry improves the reader's imagination, which intensifies her power to love, which, in turn, improves her morals.⁸⁹ In so far as the poet performs a social function by means of his imagination, Shelley's notion of the poet as a cultural leader echoes Blake's, and both poets show their agreement with Wordsworth and Coleridge, writing in the preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* and *Biographia Literaria*, respectively. All of them indicate that the poet's purpose derives first and foremost from his heightened imaginative powers and only secondly from his more practical – scientific or social – knowledge. However, a letter that Shelley wrote to Thomas Love Peacock from Naples in 1819 suggests, to the contrary, that Shelley prizes above all the latter, more scientific kinds of knowledge, the domain of the psychologist: "I consider poetry very subordinate to moral ... science, and if I were well, certainly I would aspire to the latter."⁹⁰ In this statement, Shelley all but refutes Wordsworth's and Coleridge's implied claims about science and poetry. Rather than presenting the scientific domain as subordinate to poetry and dependent upon the born 'Poet' to make it relevant to the average person, Shelley seems to consider poetry as a pale imitation and servant of moral science. Between Shelley's interest in moral science and the poet as a social legislator, he seems more than any other major Romantic poet to be declaring his support for the project of the psychologist-poets.

Yet, to further complicate Coleridge's already complex position on the matter as I have outlined it, his description of what he calls 'the clerisy' may be understood in much the same way. In chapter 5 of *On the Constitution of the Church and State*, Coleridge outlines the structure of a historical social order

that he clearly means to propose as a model for his own society. He describes the duties of a 'small number' of 'guide[s], guardian[s], and instructor[s]' as being part of 'permanent class or order', of which 'A certain smaller number were to remain at the fountain heads of the humanities, in cultivating and enlarging the knowledge already possessed, and in watching over the interests of physical and moral science'.⁹¹ Not only are these guides, guardians and instructors of society experts in physical science – just as doctors are – they maintain the interests of 'moral science', the specific study of psychologists. Moreover, these leaders are to 'remain at the fountain heads of the humanities', perhaps, we may surmise, as poets. These guardians sound very like and may be identifiable with 'the Clerisy', a class of leaders that Coleridge describes a few passages later:

The CLERISY of the nation, or national church, in its primary acceptance and original intention comprehended the learned of all denominations; – the sages and professors of the law and jurisprudence; of medicine and physiology; of music; of military and civil architecture; of the physical sciences; with the mathematical as the common organ of the preceding; in short, all the so called liberal arts and sciences, the possession and application of which constitute the civilization of a country.⁹²

These 'sages' of 'medicine', 'physical sciences' and 'liberal arts' had the most important cultural role of all, for they were responsible for maintaining the civilization of a country.⁹³ Coleridge discusses these fields as though they each have a separate representative, but his own legendary knowledge about almost all of them demonstrates that one person could represent several fields, such as medicine and literature. Elsewhere in the essay, Coleridge shows that, at this late point in the development of moral science, or moral philosophy, the field had finally become so separated from the religious realm from whence it grew that he was compelled to identify it as a type of 'science', and that religious-minded intellectuals like Coleridge in 1830 could only forecast hopefully the reunification of moral philosophy and religion.⁹⁴ In the following passage, Coleridge also indicates that he conflates moral science with psychology by noting that it focuses on what separates humankind from animals, which was a common means of describing the purview of psychology:⁹⁵

in all ages, individuals who have directed their meditations and their studies to the nobler characters of our nature, to the cultivation of those powers and instincts which constitute the man, at least separate him from the animal part of his own being, will be led by the supernatural in themselves to the contemplation of a power which is likewise superhuman; that science, and especially moral science, will lead to religion, and remain blended with it – this, I say, will, in all ages, be the course of things.⁹⁶

The spiritually and socially renovating field of which Coleridge writes here is none other than the moral philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment, which was, according to Emerson, a scientific movement that had 'gone a long way

towards breaking the ties between morals and religion.⁹⁷ Yet, the clearest connection between the overlapping interests of Coleridge and the psychologist-poets may be suggested by his plan for an unfinished project. Coleridge wrote of this project in a letter to Davy on 9 October 1800: “its title would be *An Essay on the Elements of Poetry* – it would be in reality a disguised system of morals and politics”; which McLane calls ‘moral philosophy’.⁹⁸ Whether it be through the medium of the imagination, morals, or psychology, many of the major Romantic poets saw their role as one of social leadership, as did the psychologist-poets.⁹⁹

In the foregoing discussion of features of the verse of psychologist-poets and their relation to the better-known verse of the Romantic period and the Scottish Enlightenment (including its focus on moral philosophy), I have been working towards a definition of who the psychologist-poet was as a cultural figure. He was a doctor of the social stamp, one who attempted to communicate psychological ideas to a wide readership in a familiar and entertaining way: through the attractive form of verse. His frequent references to the necessity of accessible language reveals his egalitarian impulse. The social nature of the psychologist-poet is also evident in his use of humour, which he uses to establish in his reader a sense of trust and even camaraderie, and in his celebration of the lifestyle of the lower-classes, in which he extols the benefits – mental and otherwise – of humble living. In many ways, the psychologist-poet established his cultural role as a psychologist of the masses by illustrating his social concern through the rhetorical and thematic features of his verse.

VI. The Development of the Psychologist-Poet

The psychologist-poet emphasizes his broadly social role by using the popular form of verse to communicate and create his identity in the relatively new field of psychology, which was only beginning to split off into various approaches, like the ones I explore in the following chapters: moral philosophy, moral management, nerve theory, associationism and phrenology. By popularizing psychology through accessible verse that appeals to a broad audience, he weaves the social focus of his profession into his very medium. In short, as Marshall McLuhan famously states in *Understanding Media*, ‘the medium is the message’.¹⁰⁰ This social focus is the very basis of psychology itself and constitutes the difference between pre-disciplinary self-reflection and the subjectivity defined by psychology. Foucault recognizes the secularization of the Christian injunction to be self-reflective as connected to the increasingly social function of the psychologist in *Power/Knowledge*, where he claims that ‘The doctor becomes the great advisor and expert, if not in the art of governing, at least in that of observing, correcting, and improving the social “body” and maintaining it in a permanent state of health’ after the Classical period and he later mentions ‘the frequent

role of doctors as programmers of a well-ordered society (the doctor as social or political reformer is a frequent figure in the second half of the eighteenth century).¹⁰¹ The workings of modern power/knowledge, which Foucault recognizes in a late interview as the underpinning concern of his *oeuvre* even in its earliest days, is always deployed in a social context.¹⁰² While Foucault's attention to sexual relations between people is related to his focus on the social context in which modern power situates the subject, I will examine the other distinct ways that psychology's discourse of subjectivity is social, such as through attention to Christian values of charity and humility, sympathy, the dynamics of personal relationships and the rejection of class distinctions, among other related topics; these topics also serve as shorthand for Romantic ideology, which shows the real influence of psychology upon literature and vice versa. Ultimately, Romantic-era psychologists present varying social contexts for expressing the real goal of all psychological searching: the subject. The once-private act of faith, self-reflection or subjectivity became contextualized by the social virtue of modest living or a matter of one's relationship to the moral manager; regulated by the nerve theorist, who acted as a kind of governor; or utterly orchestrated by the associationist. The verse of Romantic-era psychologists is, at once, the manifestation of their genuine adherence to their democratic, knowledge-sharing social programme, as it was their way of communicating with a wide audience and, oddly, the surest means of subjectifying English society on a wide scale by defining a language for the private and incommunicable.

In *Disrupted Dialogue: Medical Ethics and the Collapse of Physician-Humanist Communication (1770–1980)*, Robert Veatch outlines how eighteenth-century physicians were involved with wider British culture, especially the humanities, in a way that would become unknown by the mid-nineteenth century. Veatch's study, which focuses on medical ethics, traces virtually the same relationship that mine does, beginning with his focus on the relationship between philosophy and religion with medicine and especially in his attention to the medical schools of the Scottish Enlightenment as the locus of this link. The medical historian comments, 'We see here an Enlightenment pattern – an intelligentsia being broadly and classically educated without concern about the disciplinary boundaries separating the sciences and the humanities.'¹⁰³ Veatch's wording here is suggestive, for, indeed, the reification of the disciplines throughout the Romantic period was integral to the power–subject dynamic that is so familiar to us today. In answer to his questions, 'Why the isolation after the beginning of the nineteenth century? ... What happened at the end of the eighteenth century that stopped the dialogue between the medical community and the humanists?', Veatch surmises that one of the 'unintended effects of the Enlightenment' was to create 'narrow, specialized experts' who, because of the sheer volume of information that had been amassed during the age of discovery, were simply unable to

become masters of all trades, as it were.¹⁰⁴ Perhaps also for this reason psychology broke up into distinct approaches, from nerve theory to moral management, as so on. A doctor did not necessarily practice only one approach to patient care in the Romantic period – and figures like Beddoes, Bakewell and Perfect illustrate that he often did not do so, as I will explain – but the fact that these discrete approaches existed, and could be adopted as a doctor’s sole approach to understanding madness, reveals different ideological approaches to the mind and the need to compartmentalize psychological information. This process is the reification of the disciplines, which was attended by an increasingly difficult and therefore esoteric vocabulary that became the domain of medical practitioners and the source of division between the psychologists and wider culture. This knowledge became their power, but not before the psychologist had established himself to a broad reading public as an authority on the mind, not before psychology was established, in all its various forms, as the language of subjectivity and not before the average citizen became a subject of psychological discourse – thanks, in part, to the poetry of Romantic-era psychologists.

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