

## The Romantic Idea-Elegy: The Nature of Politics and the Politics of Nature

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For some cursory strictures on historicist criticisms of poetry and politics, and of nature itself, I start with a quotation from one of the most publicly celebrated yet critically neglected Romantic writers of the twentieth century, Anne Frank. Her *Diary of a Young Girl* is, I think, one of the great epistolary novels of European literature, and a very Romantic one, in being addressed to what Wordsworth would call her "second self," or what she calls "the good Anne," "the 'deeper' Anne," her "finer and better side." I quote from her entry for February 23, 1944, on the relation between nature and human suffering:

From my favorite spot on the floor I look up at the blue sky and the bare chestnut tree, on whose branches little raindrops shine, appearing like silver, and at the seagulls and the other birds as they glide on the wind.

. . . I looked out of the open window . . . over a large area of Amsterdam, over all the roofs and on to the horizon, which was such a pale blue that it was hard to see the dividing line. "As long as this exists," I thought, "and I may live to see it, this sunshine, the cloudless skies, while this lasts, I cannot be unhappy."

The best remedy for those who are afraid, lonely, or unhappy is to go outside, somewhere where they can be quite alone with the heavens, nature, and God. Because only then does one feel that all is as it should be . . . amidst the simple beauties of nature. As long as this exists, and it certainly always will, I know that then there will always be comfort for every sorrow, whatever the circumstances may be. And I firmly believe that nature brings solace in all troubles.<sup>1</sup>

Statements like these are readily duplicable in all Romantic literature, and remind us that nature has its political uses too, as that realm of "otherness" which we can at least imagine as being untouched by politics, no matter how bad. The reminder is apt in our present context of increasingly politicized historicist criticism that all too readily interprets Romantic invocations of Nature as merely sentimental, transcendentalized escapes from, or

displacements of, a world of politics which the writer—unlike his tough-minded critic—cannot face. In the dynamics of historicist readings an appeal is frequently made from nature to politics, as if from false to critical consciousness, and I want to suggest that this appeal is not always warranted.

Few who have read her book would accuse Anne Frank of being unaware of history and politics, or of wishing to escape them in any simple sense. I certainly would not claim that the losses and disappointments of the English Romantic writers were of anything like the same personal consequence as hers. But rather, since the political stakes *were* of generally the same order, when we compare Napoleon and Hitler, I want to use her words as a situating device, from outside the usual frameworks of Romanticism, to try to say a good word for what I have punningly called "The Romantic Idea-Elegy." Obviously, I am engaging Jerome McGann's salutary polemic, *The Romantic Ideology*, and in particular his concise definition of its mode of operation:

The poetry of Romanticism is everywhere marked by extreme forms of displacement and poetic conceptualization whereby the actual human issues with which the poetry is concerned are resituated in a variety of idealized localities.<sup>2</sup>

This seems to me an accurate working description, and one much needed in the critical situation into which it was inserted. Among the "variety of idealized localities" we find in Romantic poetry, Nature in its infinite aspects is perhaps the largest or most frequently resorted to, and the tone with which the resituating displacement is effected is, as often as not, an elegiac one. Although elegies *per se* may not be the dominant genre we think of in connection with British Romanticism, the degree to which an elegiac *tone* of regret and disappointment pervades all its genres is remarkable. Even Byron cannot keep his sighs of "Nevermore" from interrupting the most keenly satirical or farcical passages of *Don Juan*.

McGann goes on immediately to caution that "A socio-historical method pursued within the Critical tradition [i.e., the Marxist tradition, *via* Heine] helps to expose these dramas of displacement and idealization without, at the same time, debunking or deconstructing the actual works themselves."<sup>3</sup> I take this as a sincere statement of intention which, like many sincere statements, is honored sometimes more, sometimes less, in practice. Other Romantic New Historicists have not been so circumspect, and have neither avoided such debunking nor wished to. There is a strong tendency, when one is "exposing" "dramas of displacement," to evaluate these idealized resituatings as though they shouldn't have occurred, or as though they are pejoratively romanticized escapes from "actual human issues"—the kind of issues which, I suppose, we all like to conceive ourselves as being actually concerned with, in our teaching, research, and writing about literature.

But the external pressures behind the Romantics' elegiac turns to nature are less important, interpretatively, than what the texts, so turned, themselves accomplish. In recovering or recuperating what has been displaced in Romantic elegies, we should not simply substitute those "historical origins" and "circumstantial causes" for the work of the poem. The decision to write an elegy may be construed as, in itself, already ideological, and we may criticize that choice—there is no free genre. But once it has been taken, we cannot fault the conventions, moves, and gestures of the genre as being, in themselves, displacements or evasions: they are, properly speaking, formal choices. Some historicist criticism has a tendency to ignore this fact, being too much under the sway of its own master-genre, history-writing. The grief-work of elegy has its human function, too, for which we might use Robert Frost's distinction between grief and grievance: the former, personal; the latter, social or political. Turning to something beyond politics, even in moments of political grievance, has a political significance that is not merely an escapist or idealized displacement, because Nature in such moments represents that which the political, no matter how repressive, cannot touch. So pervasive is this turning in the Romantic period, and so various, that we might speculate that the category, Romantic Elegy, constitutes not merely a genre, nor even a mode, but a frame of mind, a spirit—as it were—of the age: the Romantic Elegy as a *period* designation. McGann has broached this possibility in his chapter on "Romantic Illusions and Their Contradictions," where he says that Romanticism's "greatest moments of artistic success are almost always those associated with loss, failure, and defeat—in particular the losses which strike most closely to the Ideals (and Ideologies) cherished by the poets in their work."<sup>4</sup> As a generic investigation, the Romantic elegy might then be pursued as the contrary of the "developmental tale" and the transcendently psychologized subject (*The Prelude* combines both) which Clifford Siskin, in *The Historicity of Romantic Discourse*, proposes as the discourses which have disciplined our critical minds in ways (derived from Foucault) even more pervasive than McGann's Marx-derived Romantic Ideology. But the ways in which I propose carrying out this project would, from both McGann's and Siskin's perspective, still be fundamentally contaminated by the assumptions of the objects I seek to investigate.

My motivation in questioning this tendency is both old formalist and new historicist, trying to save something for art and imagination as we cast out aesthetic false consciousness, or an "aesthetic ideology" which is construed as by definition false or interested. But why should one want to do this on a topic as apparently uncongenial to the task as the Romantic elegy? In fact, I think its apparent uncongeniality to the topic makes it peculiarly suitable to the task. In the elegiac mode or genre, private human suffering and loss (death and bereavement) are addressed in public, conventional terms that work to reattach the mourner to the body of society, despite his or her strong initial temptation to reject it or escape it altogether—possibly by

suicide seeking to rejoin the lost loved one. Suffering often has both personal and political dimensions (AIDS is our current best/worst example, though abortion is not far behind), to which the imputation of Nature, or "naturalness," can be attributed either as a soothing explanation or as a shallow sop. ("Don't feel so bad. Everybody dies sooner or later.") Elegies conventionally work with natural tropes to sooth personal pain. At an opposite extreme on the spectrum of human suffering, ideologies work—often with hymns or odes—to explain, or explain away, personal pain by public, political solutions. At some mid-point between the two, elegy overlaps with ideology to produce a half-genre that I call—for the space of this one essay only—the "idea-elegy." The British Romantic period is rife with these, to a surprising extent, in light of its standardized textbook reputation as a time of revolutionary enthusiasm, beatific nature worship, and/or profound faith in the creative imagination. There were no odes to Joy in England, but many to Dejection. Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" and Keats's ode "To Autumn" are elegiac in this larger sense. So is Hazlitt's mournful *post-mortem* on his era, *The Spirit of the Age* (1825), where through all his delineations of the marvelous personalities of his time runs an unmistakable chord of anguish, not only for lost youth, but for his withering sense of enormous imaginative possibilities lost. Hazlitt is much favored by historicist critics for his political consistency, the commonest denominator of political integrity, but if this can be said of *The Spirit of the Age*, then how many Romantic texts may not be said to participate in this elegiac tone or quality?

I hold no strong brief for the Romantic elegy insofar as it seeks transcendental consolations for earthly loss. I would not go as far as Marjorie Levinson, who calls Romantic transcendentalism "a white elephant,"<sup>5</sup> but I am willing to entertain the critical possibilities of the Romantic elegy for experimental purposes, as a corrective to certain extremes of the historicist method, especially its strong desire to *do* something, and to seek reality and significance in terms of things and actions *accomplished*—the work that a text produces in the world—in ways that occasionally warp our sense of what poetry, or elegy, or nature for that matter, can properly be expected to do. Of what use are they? Or, what degree of legitimacy can we accord to their data of consciousness, that cannot be accommodated on the materialist grid of actions and objects? Elegies can make some historicists especially impatient because of their inevitably defeatist nature (in both senses), which the poet must struggle to overcome, often with abundant evidence of only partial success. In short, I entertain the Romantic elegy as a sort of worst-case scenario for those "dramas of displacement" that McGann identifies, and I seek to extract from it a certain kind of idea-elegy that might stand up against the negative connotations of the Romantic ideology.

The Romantic idea-elegies' strategy of displacement should not be taken as an explanation of the text, but rather recognized as their authors' means to other ends. The Romantic idea-elegy, at its best, may be understood as

the strategic form of its ideology, the purpose of its displacement, if not its content. Its subject is often the poet's assessment of his own imaginative strength—or weakness—in response to the enormously depressing challenges of the age. At times, the recognition is that being "romantic" is not enough, as in Wordsworth's "Elegiac Stanzas Suggested by a Picture of Peele Castle," with its very unromantic line, "A deep distress hath humanized my soul." This is a poem that insists on the speaker's rejoining human community—not escaping to Nature—by virtue of his experience of loss. Nature is not taken as a given, but is recognized as a construct itself, an interpretation, in the two views of Peele Castle which are the focus of its meditation. I have not seen Romantic displacement recontextualized more strenuously than in Marjorie Levinson's reading of these "Elegiac Stanzas," unless it be in McGann's effort to place Keats's "To Autumn" in the context of the Peterloo Massacre.<sup>6</sup> I quite agree with Levinson's statements about the similarities and differences between Wordsworth's political anxieties in 1805 (when he wrote the poem) and 1794 (when he vacationed near Peele Castle), but I cannot accept the strategy by which she adduces their relevance to the text, which is essentially to read Wordsworth's elegy out of existence, refusing to accept Wordsworth's renewed search for human community in the terms that he proposes. Recovering the presence, displaced or otherwise, of issues related to the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars does not, in itself, take us very far in interpretation, for there is no single right view or interpretation of the Revolution or Napoleon to which we can refer them. This kind of historicist criticism reifies the history of the period around certain key events that are assumed to have (often with ideological hindsight) immediate clarity: an appeal to the French Revolution as context may seem to move us from linguistic ambiguity to historical clarity (as in the continuing debate on the politics of "Tintern Abbey"<sup>7</sup>), but of course it only moves us from one ideological discourse, that of the poem, to another, that on the Revolution—which might better be called, in this English context, "The Revolution Controversy."<sup>8</sup> In her zeal to recover this context from Wordsworth's text, Levinson may be said to recapitulate the Romantic Ideology from the perspective of its mirror image, the Critical Ideology, in McGann's definition. The "actual human issue with which the poetry is concerned"—Wordsworth's brother's death—is subjected to "extreme forms of displacement" and "resituated in a variety of idealized localities"—or rather, one consistently idealized locality called "The French Revolution." Some historicist work on Romantic poetry, while searching industriously (and valuably) for displaced socio-political events and themes, misreads Romantic nature poetry, especially in its elegiac modes, as a constructed, ideological escape from the realm of the political. But the political is also a constructed, ideological realm which has no prior claim to privilege.

Terence Des Pres, in his book on poetry and politics in the twentieth century, approvingly cites Heidegger's essay on "The Origin of the Work

of Art," which distinguishes politics with "the world" and poetry with "the earth." With the latter we can readily identify such Romantic phrases as Coleridge's "the poetry of nature" and Keats's "the poetry of earth."<sup>9</sup> Indeed, Heidegger's distinction is itself Romantic, going back to his German Romantic roots. In British cultural politics, it appears in such distinctions as Wordsworth's between the (worldly) "Public" and the (earthly) "People," or Coleridge's between Progress (worldly commercial interests) and Permanence (earthly landed interests). Des Pres follows George Steiner in dating the rise of the pressure of the world (or politics) on poetry from the era of the French Revolution, when the "historical consciousness began to crystallize," and tracing it down to our own day: "after 1789 the individual knows no armistice with history."<sup>10</sup> But the point of positing the two terms, world and earth, Culture and Nature, is to chart their productive tensions with each other, not simply to assert the dominance of one over the other, or to consider one in isolation from the other, a move which almost always results in a gain of logical clarity at the cost of common sense. As Heidegger says, "The world grounds itself on the earth, and the earth juts through the world. . . . The world, in resting upon the earth, strives to surmount it. As self-opening it cannot endure anything closed. The earth, however, as sheltering and concealing, tends to draw the world into itself and keep it there."<sup>11</sup> In major Romantic writers like Wordsworth and Byron we see equal and alternating instances of the poetry of earth and the poetry of the world. Important Romantic poems use a similar earth / world dialectic, as a somewhat more nuanced version of a Nature / Society, or conservative / liberal dialectic. Wordsworth ends *The Prelude* with a vision of "the mind of man" as being "a thousand times more beautiful / Than the earth on which he dwells," elevated above "the fabric of this frame of things" as it is "in substance more divine." Shelley's elegiac *Adonais* similarly ends with life "like a dome of many-colored glass," staining "the white radiance of eternity."

Of course I am well aware how little authoritative weight would be accorded to a thinker like Heidegger in certain circles of criticism today. Especially in an essay beginning with the words of Anne Frank, words from Martin Heidegger may sound bizarre and macabre. But as with my unlikely choice of Romantic elegies as political proof-texts, that incongruity is partly the point. The unstable, not to say contradictory, relations between Heidegger's political and philosophical practices, like those in the life and writings of Paul de Man, serve to remind us of the permanent difficulty, the constant undecidability, of any effort to keep art and philosophy consistently aligned with something as changeable as politics. The same holds true for Wordsworth, for Byron, for Keats, and even for Anne Frank, whose longing for long red dresses and Parisian evenings, and for the manly rhetoric of Churchill's radio speeches, might be said by some to betray a bourgeois individualism less politically attractive than the communitarian idealism of her dutiful sister Margot, who looked forward only to post-war existence

33  
1805  
1794

as a midwife in a *kibbutz*.

Apropos the difficulty of striking an "armistice with history," in the case of Anne Frank and all oppressed imaginations in all times and places, we should remember that there was more than enough external pressure on Romantic writers to make a turn from Society to Nature a strongly attractive option. For clear examples of the attractions of a politics of nature, we should recall the effects of Pitt's Gagging Acts of 1795 on the reputation of William Godwin, the life of Gilbert Wakefield, and, closer to our present subjects, on the career of John Thelwall, the leading radical orator of the early 1790s, who came in 1797 to the Wye Valley to visit Coleridge, meet Wordsworth, and broach the idea of establishing a sort of writers' retreat with them. To be visited by John Thelwall in the summer of 1798 would have been roughly equivalent to being visited by Stokeley Carmichael or H. Rap Brown in the summer of 1968.

Thelwall, like Wordsworth and Coleridge and many other liberal intellectuals of the time, was seeking sanctuary for retrenchment, as evidenced by his *Poems chiefly written in Retirement* (published 1801). These poems have many similarities to those written by Wordsworth and Coleridge at the same time, and remind us that Coleridge had urged *The Recluse* on Wordsworth as the necessary poem to keep the best minds of their generation from recoiling *too far* into domestic concerns, in their reaction against the failures and excesses of the French Revolution. A certain set of "R-words" come very strongly into poetical vocabularies about this time. Following in the wake of revolution, we have retirement, retreat, and seclusion—spatial designations frequently accompanied by their temporal or emotional concomitants, remembrance, regret, and remorse. As used by radicals like Thelwall, these words do not signify a cowardly escape from political engagement, but are employed to indicate the need for a place of retirement, in a time of retrenchment, for a period of reflection on the present course of political developments both at home and abroad. The need afflicted politicians as well as poets: in 1797, Charles James Fox and many of his followers—the only viable public force for political reform—renounced regular attendance in Parliament.<sup>12</sup> Thelwall's poem of July 1797 bears comparison with Wordsworth's similar poem of July 1798. Its title is, "Lines, written at Bridgwater [the next town up the road from Nether Stowey] in Somersetshire, on the 27th of July; during a long excursion, in quest of a peaceful retreat." It expresses "the pangs of disappointed hope, and keen regrets" for a world "that kindness pays with hatred." Compare Wordsworth's "greetings where no kindness is," and other similar sentiments, in "Tintern Abbey." Thelwall seeks a "hermit-like seclusion . . . with some few minds congenial . . . My Samuel! . . . and, perchance, / Alfoxden's musing tenant, and the maid / Of ardent eye, who, with fraternal love, / Sweetens his solitude."

English Romanticism is born in these moments, when culture recoils from politics, and small groups of like-minded people think about gathering

together in isolated places (in Wales or Pennsylvania or the Lake District) to form temporary experimental communities—pantisocracies—as substitutes for public political acts that have become polarized beyond effectiveness, or beyond safety. Perhaps, as the dull shape of nearly thirty years of largely conservative and occasionally reactionary rule begins to emerge on the horizon of our own collective memories, we might recognize our affinities with this cultural situation, and appreciate more keenly the kind of literature it produces. We can see the opposite process occurring in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe today, as crowds surge out into public places and public print from the private apartments and *samizdat* publications where they have been hiding for decades. The new Romanian Minister of Culture, Andre Pleșu, has said that "Under totalitarianism, culture was a way of breathing normally. Now reality has become so absorbing that the streets, the television and the journals have confiscated the public interest, and people are no longer so thirsty for culture on a high level." And a Romanian literary editor complains, "before, no one read the newspapers and everybody read books. Now it is the reverse."<sup>13</sup> This was in 1990. In 1798-1799, in England, the movement was in the other direction—as it was also in France, where Napoleon, after his *coup d'état* in November, 1799, quickly reduced the number of newspapers from seventy to fourteen, and then to three.<sup>14</sup> At times like these, politics move faster than most people are able to think. On September 13, 1991, the *New York Times* published the following notice, oddly, as a "Correction":

An article yesterday by Shlomo Avineri raised questions about the silence of Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn over recent events in the Soviet Union. Late yesterday, an Associated Press dispatch quoted Mr. Solzhenitsyn as saying events were moving too fast for him to comment. (A15)

Two days later, it was announced that Solzhenitsyn was returning to Russia—as soon as he finished his current works in progress.

As a *locus classicus* for a worst-case scenario of Romanticism's supposed elegiac evasions, we might well consider the "reconciling addendum" to Wordsworth's "The Ruined Cottage." These forty-six lines were added to the end of the poem in March of 1798, to finish off the blunt ending with which the Pedlar had completed his internal narrative of the Tale of Margaret in July of 1797:

. . . and here, my friend,  
In sickness she remained, and here she died,  
Last human tenant of these ruined walls. (B.526-28)<sup>15</sup>

McGann and James Chandler have been very severe on the lines that Wordsworth added at this point, as have Marjorie Levinson and Alan Liu. McGann says that "to read Wordsworth's re-telling of this pitiful story is to be led further and further from a clear sense of the historical origins and circumstantial causes of Margaret's tragedy. [That is, from earlier references

in the poem to war, bad harvests, and economic dislocation.] The place of such thoughts and such concerns is usurped, overgrown." McGann maintains that "the social and political discontents" which dominated Wordsworth's life in 1793-1794 are here dislocated and displaced "to the more homely and immediate discomforts of the walking tourist," and that "the story of Margaret produces in the narrator a sense of shame and humiliation before a greater suffering, and an overflow of sympathy and love for the sufferer rather than . . . a sense of outrage, and an overflow of angry judgment upon those . . . accountable for helping to maintain the social conditions which generated a surplus of social evil."<sup>16</sup> For Chandler, the Pedlar's "'meditation' proves to be a region where natural and human history are alike debarred from entry. It is a realm in which the fortunate misfortune is a paradigm of human fate, in which grief itself becomes the occasion of a feeling happier far than what might result from the effort to discover and eliminate the cause of grief."<sup>17</sup> Both McGann and Chandler are unhappy with the poem, or this ending, as a *Romantic* poem. McGann points out, rightly, that Diderot or Godwin or Crabbe would have studied the "poem's events in social and economic terms." Chandler seconds this by noting that "no human institutions" are held responsible for Margaret's suffering, and that there is "no need [in the poem] for those final stages in which sorrow issues in enlightenment and enlightenment issues in reform."<sup>18</sup> In short, they both refuse the elegiac gesture of these lines. For them, at this moment, the Romantic elegy is the Romantic ideology in action—or rather, in lamentable inaction.

We can defuse a good deal of the force of these criticisms, if we wish to, by entertaining the political perspective they employ as a question, rather than accepting it as a criticism. This is already to set aside the generic defense cited earlier, and historicist criticism's tendency to ignore the presuppositions of the genre of the texts it interprets. Since Wordsworth gives us the essential "historical origins and circumstantial causes" behind Margaret's tale, how much does knowing them affect our response to the kind of human suffering they produce? Is an "overflow of sympathy and love for the sufferer" necessarily a worse response to Margaret's suffering than "a sense of outrage and an overflow of angry judgment upon those . . . accountable"? Or is sympathy mutually inconsistent with judgment? And who is accountable? The government? OK; what then? In my opinion, Ronald Reagan and his policies are largely responsible for the immense increase in the numbers of homeless people we now see in the streets of America. Other people maintain that if Reaganomics had been given a better chance to work, these people would not have been displaced from the economy. I don't know which view is finally right, but, within the limits of my powers, I try to work and vote against the continuation of such policies. But in the meantime, the suffering goes on, and I give, or I don't give, the "spare change" that these people ask for, and I listen, or I don't listen, to "the tales [they] have to tell" (paraphrasing the last lines of

Wordsworth's "Female Vagrant" poem). This is not radical action, but it is not mindless quietism either. Dom DeLillo catches this dilemma well in *Mao II*, his cautionary novel about a Salinger-like writer's attempt to get involved in global politics. In mid-town Manhattan, he meets a panhandler whose standard request, "Spare change?," alternates antiphonally with his own response to constant rejection: "Still love you."

Chandler demands of "The Ruined Cottage" "*those final stages in which sorrow issues in enlightenment and enlightenment issues in reform,*" a conclusion I too would like to see. But what are those final stages, so confidently denominated by that demonstrative adjective? Chandler does not mention all the errors and mistakes that lie along any road, even well-intended ones, running from suffering through Enlightenment to Reform; which is to say, all the political pitfalls.<sup>19</sup> But asking the political question of these political critiques exposes the question-begging they entail: what are those stages? what is the degree of enlightenment, and what is the program of reform that is needed? An improved parish relief system, or full-scale agrarian reform? Or perhaps a policy of benign neglect? For we should not forget that social theorists like Malthus and Burke would count equally as the kind of "Enlightenment mind" McGann would prefer to have written the poem, with very different views than those of Godwin or Crabbe—and I would not be so very sanguine about Godwin's views, at that. Although these critiques invoke strong political judgment, they in fact elide the political questions their strong rhetorical gestures raise. What would follow from admitting them into critical discourse about the poem is a political *debate*, not necessarily a political *solution*. What historicist criticism should do is open us up to these debates, to the rival claims of different ideological fields, rather than plumping for the assumed resolutions provided by one or the other.<sup>20</sup> Not admitting socio-economic explanations to the poem (or at least not pursuing those that are admitted) is, to be sure, part of what makes Wordsworth's poem Romantic, and different from Crabbe's "The Village." That is, it presumes a dissatisfaction with available solutions, such as those invoked by DeQuincey in his hysterically *conservative* reaction to the poem: that Margaret is criminally guilty of neglecting her children by "gadding about" the countryside, and that Wordsworth is artistically guilty for omitting reference to many likely sources of information about her husband Robert's whereabouts, such as the parson, the magistrate, and the local army post.<sup>21</sup> Instead, Wordsworth admits the much more difficult and problematic feeling that such solutions are often too little and too late for the likes of Margaret—who is no better than she should be, either, since Wordsworth does not sentimentalize her character into that of an angelic martyr.

Raising these objections to well-intentioned social critiques naturally can appear retrograde, as being on the side of the problem rather than on the side of the solution, and I am uncomfortable in doing so for that reason, not to mention my intellectual respect and personal esteem for the work of

McGann and Chandler. But as political critiques I find them illiberal, inhabiting that "Tempting region" Wordsworth knew from his own experience, where "zeal [can] enter and refresh herself, / Where passions [have] the privilege to work, / And never hear the sound of their own names."<sup>22</sup> Can we read the reconciling addendum without falling into a quasi-panteistic nature worship that reduces humanity to Ecclesiastes' metaphor that all flesh is grass, or an even less palatable recoil into the arms of the status quo and acceptance of the premature death of poor people as part of a political *De Rerum Naturae*?

To begin to answer these strictures in a way that defends the poem's practices, we should note that Wordsworth's elegiac addendum follows a dirge, as is common in psychic or ritual mourning. This is the immensely powerful chant of human loss and subjection to the forces of nature, history, and consciousness which begins, "Five tedious years / She lingered in unquiet widowhood," and ends, another forty-six lines later, "and here she died, / Last human tenant of these ruined walls" (MS B, 482-528). Wordsworth neither spares us nor palliates Margaret's suffering in these lines, least of all in his final close identification of her ruination and the ruin of her cottage:

Till this reft house by frost, and thaw, and rain  
Was sapped; and when she slept the nightly damps  
Did chill her breast, and in the stormy day  
Her tattered clothes were ruffled by the wind  
Even at the side of her own fire. (B.518-22)

"Reft house" is a transferred epithet of bereavement, transferred from the bereft woman to her house, as the damps and chills which weaken Margaret repeat the frost, thaw, and rain which sap her cottage: what happens to the one happens equally to the other. Marjorie Levinson's and Alan Liu's historicist critiques of the poem—or perhaps more accurately, of widely received readings of it—center on these "vegetable details" whereby Margaret's humanity is sentimentally subsumed under the sign of Wordsworthian Nature. For Liu, it is also the sign of the "image," which has been the unit-of-value stamped on poetic products from Romanticism through the New Criticism.<sup>23</sup> These are trenchant critiques, written with what seems to me the passion of disabused belief, but I want to suggest, from the perspective of the Romantic "idea-elegy," that they are harder on Wordsworth than need be (not that Wordsworth is "right"), particularly with reference to the "image of tranquillity" that the Pedlar sees/creates in the ruin of Margaret's garden—a predilection for seeing water drops "silvering" bare branches that he shares, coincidentally, with Anne Frank.

"The old man ceased: he saw that I was moved." Few readers can have come to this point in the poem without being similarly moved. But after the dirge is over, the stages of mourning begin, and the addendum is broken into three kinds, or stages, of reconciliation: first the narrator's, then the

Pedlar's. Finally a combination of the two—each introduced by some combination of the words "old man" and "ceased." It is easy to miss the fact that the narrator's elegiac response tends in a different direction than the Pedlar's, if we treat the lines of the addendum as more or less all of a piece, as all these critics tend to. We do not read the "moral" of "The Ancient Mariner" so literally—and "The Ruined Cottage" and "The Ancient Mariner" are to a certain extent twin births of a single creative impulse in the winter of 1797-1798.<sup>24</sup> But Wordsworthian "Nature" has had a much greater cultural success than the Coleridgean supernatural, and there is a tendency for even the finest minds to glaze over whenever Wordsworth starts "talking nature," and to assume that he is always speaking *in propria persona* and that he always means the same thing. Actually nothing could be further from the truth, which is not to say that Wordsworth always understood what he was saying, much less that we should always believe in or agree with him.

The narrator ("The Poet," as he became later) speaks first:

The old Man ceased: he saw that I was mov'd;  
From that low Bench, rising instinctively,  
I turned aside in weakness, nor had power  
To thank him for the tale which he had told.  
I stood, and leaning o'er the garden-gate  
Reviewed that Woman's suff'rings, and it seemed  
To comfort me while with a brother's love  
I blessed her in the impotence of grief.  
At length [towards] the [Cottage I return'd]  
Fondly, and traced with milder interest  
That secret spirit of humanity  
Which, 'mid the calm oblivious tendencies  
Of nature, 'mid her plants, her weeds, and flowers,  
And silent overgrowing, still survived. (MS D, 493-506)

The narrator's first reaction is inarticulate physical movement, but he soon starts to seek human relationships, and look for signs of human continuity. The Pedlar, by contrast, will read for signs of natural permanence. Whether the poem ends, as McGann claims, by transferring the narrator's "allegiance from the 'Party of Humanity' to its secret spiritual replacement" is, it seems to me, left open to interpretation.<sup>25</sup>

The Pedlar's account of his own previous elegizing of Margaret stresses not "that secret spirit of humanity / Which . . . still survives," but "all the grief / The passing shews of being leave *behind*."

The old man, seeing this, resumed and said,  
"My Friend, enough to sorrow have you given,  
The purposes of wisdom ask no more;  
Be wise and chearful, and no longer read

The forms of things with an unworthy eye.  
 She sleeps in the calm earth, and peace is here.  
 I well remember that those very plumes,  
 Those weeds, and the high spear-grass on that wall,  
 By mist and silent rain-drops silver'd o'er,  
 As once I passed did to my heart convey  
 So still an image of tranquillity  
 So calm and still, and looked so beautiful  
 Amid the uneasy thoughts which filled my mind,  
 That what we feel of sorrow and despair  
 From ruin and from change, and all the grief  
 The passing shews of being leave behind,  
 Appeared an idle dream that could not live  
 Where meditation was. I turned away  
 And walked along my road in happiness." (MS D, 507-25)

Much hangs on the referent of the word "this" in line 507: "The old man, seeing this, resumed. . . ." Does it refer to the narrator's immediately preceding reaction, identifying it as an "unworthy" reading of the forms of things? Or does it, by saying he should "no longer read" things so, refer to the narrator's shallow readings of nature which we have seen from the beginning of the poem? Is the Pedlar saying the narrator is specifically making a *mistake* in tracing "that secret spirit of humanity," or only that he has grieved *enough*? What endures of humanity can, at death, alternatively calm or distress us, as these two different reactions show. For the Pedlar, the silvered-over plumes and weeds and spear-grass become "an image of tranquillity," whereas for the narrator comfort had come from what "still *survived*" the action of those same weeds and flowers.

It seems to me that the most generous way to read these two closely paired elegiac passages is to see them as complementary, not contradictory, though not perfectly compatible either. If the Pedlar's is taken bluntly as a corrective to the narrator's, refuting him point for point, weed for weed, and flower for flower, on his reading of the spirit of humanity *versus* that of nature, then both he and his creator are too crude to be believed, and deserve our scorn. But nothing in his character would prepare us for such a brutal refutation of the narrator's grieving. Each reaction has its own integrity, the narrator's emphasizing human survivals ("the world"), while the Pedlar's emphasizes natural continuities ("the earth"). They stand, as they have throughout the poem, before evidences of both: the ruins of the cottage and its garden.

As evidence for this complementary reading, Wordsworth gives us his third sense of an ending, the final paragraph:

He ceased. By this the sun declining shot  
 A slant and mellow radiance which began  
 To fall upon us where beneath the trees  
 We sate on that low bench, and now we felt,

Admonished thus, the sweet hour coming on.  
 A linnet warbled from those lofty elms,  
 A thrush sang loud, and other melodies,  
 At distance heard, peopled the milder air.  
 The old man rose and hoisted up his load.  
 Together casting then a farewell look  
 Upon those silent walls, we left the shade  
 And ere the stars were visible attained  
 A rustic inn, our evening resting-place. (MS D, 526-38)

It was the Pedlar, not the narrator, who "walked along [his] road in happiness," and that was at another time, not now. His final word, "happiness," is not the last word. Nature intervenes, and they are both "admonished." In keeping with the preceding suggestions that nature is humanized and humanity naturalized, birds' songs now "*peopled* the milder air." Finally, appropriately ending the elegy, the two men bid the deceased "farewell." Then they "left the shade"—and Wordsworth's end-stopped line makes it possible to read "shade" as referring both to the shade of the trees and the shade or spirit of the place, Margaret herself. Having composed Margaret's "Rest in Peace" epitaph—"She sleeps in the calm earth, and peace is here"—they leave her resting place and travel, *together* for the first time, to their own proper "resting-place," "a rustic inn."<sup>26</sup> Though dealing in some Gothic materials, the poem is not morbid but anti-Gothic (as the 1793-1795 Salisbury Plain poems and 1796 *The Borderers* are not, quite). "She sleeps in the calm earth," but they will not sleep with her—a suggestion that is not nearly so outrageous as it might seem, if we have attended to the various other postures of repose throughout the poem.<sup>27</sup>

Has an "actual human issue" been displaced here to an "idealized location"? No, though it is to Wordsworth's credit, I think, that he was never able to get these lines quite right to his own satisfaction; "The Ruined Cottage" was part of *The Recluse*, his never-completed Work-in-Progress "On Man, on Nature, and on Human Life." The actual human issue has been interpreted from two perspectives by two different people, one of the Party of Humanity, the other of the Party of Nature—the constitutive powers, we might say, of Wordsworth's unstable two-party system. Both have found signs of their party's strength in the scene, and each set of signs has been read dialectically against the other, foregrounded or backgrounded according to emphasis. We have the same flowers and weeds in each account, and the same dead woman and ruined cottage, interpreted once as the "secret spirit of humanity" set over against "nature's calm oblivious tendencies," and once as "the passing shews of being" set over against "an image of tranquillity."

Are these signs for interpreting the meaning of Margaret's story to be dismissed as "chiefly vegetable details" as McGann does? Are the particulars of this tragedy to be located in the particulars of its causes, as he insists, or in the signs of its effects, as Wordsworth seems to insist? It does indeed

appear that Wordsworth is interested, as McGann claims, "in preventing—in actively countering—such a focus of concentration" as Godwin or Crabbe would give to the poem. That is, a socio-economic focus. Indeed, it would seem that Wordsworth's purpose in introducing those socio-economic factors, which McGann and Chandler fault him for not developing, may have been precisely to set them aside as sufficient explanations, to insist that the socio-economic and political explanations are not the only ones, and are insufficient or barren without their personal, psychological, and emotional complements.<sup>28</sup>

The tension here may be recast in the terms of another passage from Anne Frank's *Diary of a Young Girl*, in which she contrasts her view of Nature with her mother's, as a response to thoughts of human misery.

I don't think . . . of all the misery, but of the beauty that still remains. This is one of the things that Mummy and I are so entirely different about. Her counsel when one feels melancholy is: "Think of all the misery in the world and be thankful you are not sharing in it!" My advice is: "Go outside, to the fields, enjoy nature and the sunshine, go out and try to recapture happiness in yourself and in God. Think of all the beauty that's still left in and around you and be happy!"

I don't see how Mummy's idea can be right, because then how are you supposed to behave if you go through the misery yourself? Then you are lost. On the contrary, I've always found that there is some beauty left—in nature, sunshine, freedom, in yourself; these can all help you. Look at these things, then you find yourself again, and God, and then you regain your balance.

And whoever is happy will make others happy too. He who has courage and faith will never perish in misery!<sup>29</sup>

Anne's mother is a historicist, a moralist; Anne is a naturalist, an artist. One says, think of the good that still exists; the other, of how much more misery there is. One is of the world; the other, of the earth. Neither is sufficient by itself, but each needs the other—although, as here, they may have little mutual understanding of that need. Anne, like Wordsworth's Pedlar, tends toward sentimentality; Mummy, like Wordsworth's chiding historicist critics, toward cynicism. In closing his study of poetry and politics in the twentieth century, Des Pres says:

Poetry won't change the nuclear order. But . . . poetry can make something happen. It allows me to know what I fear, to understand . . . the burden of my humanness. It also makes possible the essential decency of compassion, of suffering with—a symbolic action, to be sure, but one without which the spirit withers, the self shuts down.<sup>30</sup>

This opens up the possibility of yet another category, separate from

Poetry, Politics, and Nature: "the essential decency of compassion," or "the actual human issues with which the poetry is concerned," in McGann's words, and for which he finds the Pedlar's essential decency sadly lacking. That is, the realm of feeling and emotion, reaction and response. (We should note in passing that "The Ruined Cottage" is less about Margaret's sufferings than it is about the Pedlar's narration and the Poet's audition of them.) A real objection to some historicist criticism is that it seems to value the political (however defined) over other areas of human experience. But what about the category of experience itself? Is there any such thing as experience *per se*? Even while urging the claims of a "politics of nature" against certain assumptions about the nature of politics, I would not say that the politics of nature was anything more than a viable choice for some intellectuals and artists in the late 1790s: i.e., a temporary political expedient, backed up by some philosophical tenets. In "The Ruined Cottage" or "Tintern Abbey" the actual human issue is not who won the French Revolution, or what is currently the best view of it, nor is it whether "the passing shews of being" have a more commanding philosophical status than the "secret spirit of humanity." The issue is, rather, for Wordsworth *via* his Pedlar and Poet-narrator, how we may deal with death and defeat and despair arising from social injustice (the war and its economic dislocations), natural disaster (poor harvests), and personal failings in the face of both (Robert's moodiness and cowardice, Margaret's carelessness and infatuation). The sufferings of Margaret and of Anne Frank are not beyond politics or nature. They both died from a combination of the effects of both. *Diary of a Young Girl* is of course a terrifically affirmative book, despite the horrors of the world outside its "Secret Annex"; the sadness of Anne Frank's life lies outside her text. My students and I sometimes derive an obscure comfort from the extra-textual knowledge that she died of typhus, not in the gas chambers. Note also how Anne's first claim for the value of nature ("As long as this exists . . . and I may live to see it") is qualified by our historical knowledge, as readers, that she did not live to see it for more than another year. But we may also draw an obscure comfort from the extra-textual knowledge that Adolf Hitler did not live much longer, either. But her second claim, two sentences later, generalizes beyond her own particular experience: "As long as this exists, and it certainly always will, I know that then there will always be comfort for every sorrow, whatever the circumstances may be." Just as her whole book and the recently published evidence of her revisions give evidence of her growing self-consciousness and, inseparably, of her growing artistic skill, so does the movement between these two sentences show an upward development in thought. But in any case, in any circumstances, our comforts are not likely to be anything other than obscure.

Is there an existential realm of experience that is not reducible to ideologies, "natural" or "political"? Louis Althusser's conception of ideology aims to encompass especially those pre-reflective, affective, and unconscious attitudes and behaviors by which we are bound up in the social reality that

constitutes or "interpellates" us as subjects. But, as Terry Eagleton asserts against this view, our feelings *can* be wrong, just as our opinions, beliefs, and actions can be.<sup>31</sup> Either of Anne Frank's statements about her feelings can be falsified, as both of her conditionals admit: "and I may live to see it"; "and it certainly always will." One is based on an ideology (a hope) for human life, the other on an ideology (a conviction) about Nature. One is of the world, the other of the earth. So too can either the narrator's or the Pedlar's final words be faulted: "it *seemed* / To comfort me while with a brother's love / I blessed her in the impotence of grief"; "all the grief / The passing shews of being leave behind, / *Appeared* an idle dream." One is based on an ideology of human life ("that secret spirit of humanity"), the other on an ideology of nature ("the calm earth . . . peace is here"). But all are concerned about the feelings they derive from their ideologies: "it seemed to comfort me"; "did to my heart convey / So still an image of tranquillity"; "I firmly believe that nature brings solace in all troubles."<sup>32</sup> Mrs. Frank's hard-nosed ideology fares no better: "Think of all the misery in the world and be thankful you are not sharing in it!" So feelings or emotions have no better claim to independent truth-status than political positions or natural laws. But this is the kind of term that Wordsworth is attempting to establish, the realm he is trying to enter, in the tri-partite "addendum" at the end of "The Ruined Cottage," and that he simultaneously (March 1798) announced as the tri-partite slogan of the masterwork, *The Recluse*, that would structure the rest of his creative life: "On Man, on Nature, and on Human Life." Roughly speaking, we may say the narrator speaks for the first, the Pedlar for the second, and the two together (in the third paragraph) for the last. And we can also quickly admit that the third term (Society) is the weakest, the hardest for Wordsworth to deal with, the principal philosophical reason why he could never finish *The Recluse* (but also the noble determination which kept him at it), and the flank in his work that will always stand most exposed to historical, social, and political critiques.

The ideology of emotion is very familiar to us, after two hundred years of romanticisms and anti-romanticisms. Primacy of emotions is "mother's milk" to us, in the best ideological sense, so that we can make that assertion for ourselves, or point to it all around us in misguided others. But for the purposes of this essay, it has been more my purpose to draw attention to the real, not escapist or idealized, claims of a Politics of Nature. And here the "pastness of the past," which McGann rightly enjoins upon us, to understand Romanticism or any past era through its *differences* from us, might make us more respectful of the Romantic sense of nature. Perhaps in recent years we have been too contemptuous of Romantic nature, taking it too much for granted, forgetting the politics of nature in a too aggressive—or too idealized?—embrace of the nature of politics. Perhaps it is Nature rather than Revolution that we have lost, and should be longing for, elegiacally. This possibility is the thesis of a recent book by Bill McKibben, *The End of*

*Nature*, where it is clear that the "Nature" that has come to an end is what we would call Romantic Nature: that is, Nature as that sense of Otherness which seemed to be always there, over against us and any tyrannies which sought to subject us, and could therefore always be invoked as a source of possible liberation by romantic writers from Wordsworth to Anne Frank. "Thoreau once said he could walk for half an hour and come to 'some portion of the earth's surface where man does not stand from one year's end to another, and where, consequently, politics are not, for they are but the cigar-smoke of man.' Now you could walk half a year and not come to such a spot. Politics . . . now blows its smoke over every inch of the globe." "We have deprived nature of its independence, and that is fatal to its meaning. Nature's independence *is* its meaning; without it there is nothing but us."<sup>33</sup> Nature must now have its own political party, even its own terrorists. With the sense that this recourse is no longer available to us, and is less so with every passing day, we may feel in a new and strongly elegiac way the cultural specificity of the Romantics' ideological difference from us, the "pastness" of their past. If we can no longer take Nature for granted, as being "always there," perhaps we should not take their taking-it-for-granted, for granted, anymore. To feel that a form or locus of displacement is no longer available to us, to recognize that it was also, always already, a fragile cultural construct in itself, may lead us to recognize that such displacements are not necessarily so escapist or non-political after all. The Romantic idea-elegies generate ideas that are not "beyond ideology," since nothing can be, but ideas that may now be seen to stand outside of—beyond the reach of—our ideology of their ideology.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Anne Frank, *Diary of a Young Girl* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1952) 142-43.
- <sup>2</sup> Jerome McGann, *The Romantic Ideology* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1983) 1.
- <sup>3</sup> McGann 1.
- <sup>4</sup> McGann 132.
- <sup>5</sup> Marjorie Levinson, *Wordsworth's Great Period Poems: Four Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986) 57.
- <sup>6</sup> Levinson 101-34 and McGann, "Keats and the Historical Method in Literary Criticism," *Modern Language Notes* 94 (December 1979): 1021 ff.
- <sup>7</sup> K. R. Johnston, "The Politics of 'Tintern Abbey,'" *The Wordsworth Circle* 14 (1983), 6-14; McGann, *The Romantic Ideology*, 86-88; Levinson, *Wordsworth's Great Period Poems* 19-57; M. H. Abrams, "On Political Readings of *Lyrical Ballads*," in *Romantic Revolutions*, ed. Johnston et al. (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990) 320-49; Mark Edmondson, "The Case of Wordsworth," *Raritan* (Fall 1990): 120-41; David Bromwich, "The French Revolution and 'Tintern Abbey,'" *Raritan* (Summer 1991): 1-23.
- <sup>8</sup> Cf. Marilyn Butler, ed., *Burke, Paine, Godwin and the Revolution Controversy* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984).
- <sup>9</sup> Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, chapter 14 and John Keats, "The poetry of earth is never dead," 1.1.

<sup>10</sup> Terence Des Pres, *Praises and Dispraises: Poetry and Politics in the 20th Century* (New York: Penguin, 1988) 12.

<sup>11</sup> As quoted in Des Pres 15.

<sup>12</sup> Eric J. Evans, *Political Parties in Britain, 1783-1867* (London: Methuen, 1985) 17.

<sup>13</sup> The editor may have been refurbishing one of Eastern Europe's bitterest jokes: "Capitalism is the exploitation of man by man, but Communism is just the reverse." "East Europe's Cultural Life, Once a Refuge, Now Eclipsed," *The New York Times*, November 13, 1990: A1, A6.

<sup>14</sup> Alan Schom, *Trafalgar: Countdown to Battle, 1803-1805* (New York: Atheneum, 1990) 8.

<sup>15</sup> All references to "The Ruined Cottage" are from MS B or MS D (as indicated) in the Reading Texts established by James Butler, ed. *"The Ruined Cottage" and "The Pedlar"* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1979).

<sup>16</sup> McGann, *Romantic Ideology* 83-85.

<sup>17</sup> James Chandler, *Wordsworth's Second Nature: A Study of the Poetry and Politics* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1984) 138.

<sup>18</sup> McGann, *Romantic Ideology* 84 and Chandler 137.

<sup>19</sup> I grant Chandler's point in the context of his larger argument, which is to show that Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads* cannot be quite the "French Revolution" in poetry that Hazlitt rhetorically claimed them to be, because of the evidence of a pervasive Burkean conservatism in his verse already by 1798.

<sup>20</sup> A recent example of such open historicist criticism is Eugene L. Stelzig's "'The Shield of Human Nature': Wordsworth's Reflections on the Revolution in France," *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 45 (1990): 415-31. Stelzig shows "how Wordsworth's problematic sense of 'nature' . . . serves him effectively as a justification for the Revolution, but poses difficulties for him when confronted with the monstrous realities of the revolutionary terror" (416).

<sup>21</sup> "To have overlooked a point of policy so broadly apparent as this vitiates and nullifies the very basis of the story." Thomas DeQuincey, *The Collected Writings*, Vol. VI, ed. David Masson (Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1889-90) 306.

<sup>22</sup> Wordsworth, *The Prelude* (1805), X. 810-13.

<sup>23</sup> Levinson, *The Romantic Fragment Poem* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1986) 221-30; Alan Liu, *Wordsworth: The Sense of History* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1989) 311-53.

<sup>24</sup> "The Ancient Mariner" was hatched as a joint project on a walking tour from Alfoxden to Lynmouth in November, 1797, and Wordsworth contributed several important details, such as the shooting of the albatross. But the difference in "our respective manners" soon led him to drop out, and he turned again to "The Ruined Cottage." Early MSS of "The Ruined Cottage" have the narrator thanking the Pedlar: "And for the tale which you have told I think / I am a better and a wiser man." But, so close is the creative interchange of Wordsworth and Coleridge at this time that it is impossible to say whether Wordsworth took these lines from Coleridge's conclusion to "The Ancient Mariner" or vice versa. See Paul Magnuson, *Coleridge and Wordsworth: A Lyrical Dialogue* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1988) 112-13.

<sup>25</sup> McGann, *Romantic Ideology* 84.

<sup>26</sup> The five first-person plural pronouns in the last paragraph are the poem's first indication that Poet and Pedlar may now form a new social unit—except for MS D, 40-41: "Two days before / We had been fellow-travellers." But that was another time, before the Poet knew the woman's story, when he was only a fellow-traveller, and not a member of either party.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. 1) the narrator's initial strong desire to lie down somewhere, anywhere, even on "the brown earth," 2) his idealized "dreaming man" who "extends his careless limbs" in "a dewy shade / Where the wren warbles," and 3) the Pedlar himself, who is first discovered "Stretched on a bench whose edge with short bright moss / Was green and studded o'er with fungus flowers" (B. 37-38). Karen Swann develops the implications of Gothic language and figures in the poem, in "Suffering and Sensation in *The Ruined Cottage*," *PMLA* 106 (Jan. 1991): 83-95.

<sup>28</sup> I do not have space here to develop my response to Alan Liu's critique (*Wordsworth: The Sense of History* [Stanford: Stanford UP, 1989]), for, as all who have read him will know, he

commands a spacious response. But I would anticipate answering him by saying that he seems to be requiring more of poetry by way of social effect than most poetry can supply—and that in this noble fault he recapitulates the same double-bind in which Wordsworth placed himself in 1797-1798. However, I would agree with his conclusion that Wordsworth is here "capitalizing" on "humanity," and that "The Ruined Cottage" is therefore in some large perspective an inhumane poem. But much poetry and art can be made to fall under that rubric. I would also add that Wordsworth realized this and felt guilty about the career moves which occasioned it. Cf. Jonathan Barron and K. R. Johnston, "'A Power to Virtue Friendly': The Pedlar's Guilt in *The Ruined Cottage*," in *Romantic Revisions*, ed. R. Brinkley and K. Hanley (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

<sup>29</sup> Frank 154.

<sup>30</sup> Des Pres 231.

<sup>31</sup> Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (London: Verso, 1991) 18-20.

<sup>32</sup> Yet another of Anne Frank's statements forthrightly reveals the "opiate" aspect of her ideology: "It's not imagination on my part when I say that to look up at the sky, the clouds, the moon, and the stars makes me calm and patient. It's a better medicine than either Valerian or bromide; Mother Nature makes me humble and prepared to face every blow courageously" (*Diary of a Young Girl* 226).

<sup>33</sup> Bill McKibben, *The End of Nature* (New York: Random House, 1989) 58-60.