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BY PHILIP CONNELL

In the course of 1791 William Wordsworth spent two extended periods living in London, prior to his departure for revolutionary France at the end of the year. His experiences in the capital during these months are usually understood to have been crucial to the young poet's developing political consciousness. The fierce controversy sparked by the situation in France was of course inescapable, dominating both Parliament and the press. But Wordsworth also established a more personal connection with the London reform movement through his friendship with Samuel Nicholson, a Unitarian dissenter and member of the Society for Constitutional Information (SCI).[1] It has plausibly been suggested that Wordsworth's growing interest in radical politics was influenced by Nicholson and his circle.[2] By 1791, however, that circle would have extended to the Society for the Commemoration of the Glorious Revolution, which shared both membership and formal collaborative links with the SCI.[3] Indeed, the minute book of the Revolution Society, as it was popularly known, reveals that Nicholson himself was nominated for membership on 15 July 1789 (one day after the fall of the Bastille).[4] As a result, Wordsworth might be expected to have followed with some interest—if not attended in person—the meeting of "near 300 Friends to Freedom" at the London Tavern on 4 November 1791 for the Society's annual commemoration of the 1688 revolution.[5] The London press reported that the diners, including Parisian dignitaries and politicians, toasted the "Glorious Revolution" in both Britain and France, the "Sovereignty of the People acting by a just and equal representation," and the memories of an illustrious rollcall of seventeenth-century English patriots, including John Hampden, John Pym, William Russell, Algernon Sidney, John Milton, and Andrew Marvell.[6]

The proceedings at the London Tavern undoubtedly revived memories of the notorious anniversary sermon delivered to the Revolution Society two years earlier, in 1789. Its author, the dissenting minister Richard Price, addressed his audience in the wake of the storming of Versailles, the abolition of French feudalism, and the seizure of church

property by the *Assemblée nationale*. Alluding to these "glorious" events, Price's sermon identified the American and French revolutions as expressions of the same "ardor for liberty" evinced by the British people's "bloodless victory" over Stuart despotism in 1688.[7] His claims in this respect drew explicitly on earlier radical and dissenting interpretations of the Williamite revolution, which stressed not only the sovereignty of the people, but the right to resist and, *in extremis*, even to depose an oppressive governor. On such readings, the revolution of 1688 seemed justified by the "same principle" which had informed earlier opposition to "that mistaken and ill-fated monarch," King Charles I.[8] This was a clear challenge to more conservative interpretations of Stuart history. It also gave the nation's revolutionary past a central role in subsequent responses to the dramatic events unfolding across the channel, not least in Edmund Burke's extended response to Price's sermon in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, the single most influential counter-revolutionary publication of the 1790s.

The Revolution Society's toasts in November 1791 to the heroes of both the 1640s and the 1680s evidently constituted a highly symbolic intervention in an ongoing public debate on British political and constitutional history, which went to the heart of contemporary arguments concerning the nature and consequences of the French Revolution. In the years that followed, a succession of Whigs, reformers, and radical patriots would continue to invoke the seventeenth-century struggle for English liberties, in defiance of the alternative, loyalist defense of the ancient constitution advanced by their political opponents. The latter proved far more willing to associate so-called English Jacobins with the influence of French *philosophes* and Paineite attacks on "antiquated precedent."[9] But while cosmopolitan *fraternité* and the universalist language of natural rights played important roles within radical discourse of this period, they were supplemented—and indeed often supplanted—by an older and enduring historical *mythos* of native freedom.[10]

Our sense of Wordsworth's political identity in this period might seem congruent with such claims. His early (and unpublished) republican polemic, *A Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff* (1793) is marked most obviously by the influence of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Thomas Paine, and was followed by a brief but significant attachment to the reformist circle around the philosopher William Godwin. Yet a number of commentators have also stressed the extent to which Wordsworth's early radicalism was shaped by older forms of English political argument and allegiance, with their roots in the constitutional and dynastic crises

of the seventeenth century. His commitment to the virtues of agrarian independence, in both prose and verse, certainly suggests broad affinities with those so-called "old whig" and "country" values which took recognizable shape during the later Stuart period.[11] But it is also possible to detect a more radical strain in Wordsworth's historical sensibilities, reaching back to the regicidal regime of the 1650s.[12] His time in France, it has been argued, awakened Wordsworth's sympathies with an English republican tradition which had acquired renewed influence and importance within the revolutionary milieu of the early 1790s.[13] Such commitments find their most explicit and extended articulation in the remarkable sequence of sonnets composed by Wordsworth over a decade later, in 1802–3, in which, in defense of "British freedom," he invokes "The later Sydney, Marvel, Harrington, / Young Vane, and others who call'd Milton Friend."[14] The sonnets, collectively described by their author in 1807 as "Dedicated to Liberty," draw repeatedly on the literary and political associations of the so-called commonwealth tradition of the seventeenth century, recalling the nation's republican past as a lesson in "how rightfully a nation shone / In splendor" (*P*, 166–67) and urging the poet's countrymen to revive the "faith and morals" (*P*, 167) of old.

By this point, however, Wordsworth had significantly revised his early optimism concerning the course of the French Revolution. Indeed, the sonnets of 1802–3 set their representations of domestic liberty in opposition to what he plainly regarded as a despotic, morally impoverished, and militarily threatening Napoleonic regime. Wordsworth's relationship to Britain's revolutionary history thus assumes peculiar significance for his changing sense of both political and poetic vocation. The sonnets of this period have been taken to express Wordsworth's abiding aspiration to "a true Commonwealth," a reassertion of republican values which judged nineteenth-century England, as well as Napoleonic France, against the standards of "Plain living and high thinking" (*P*, 165) exemplified by the puritan revolution.[15] But they may equally be understood as a redirection of political and imaginative energies, under the pressure of the Napoleonic threat, toward the conservative defense of nation and tradition. And in this case, the sonnets can also be seen to participate in that longer process of ideological retrenchment which would eventually culminate in the poet's belated recognition of the "Genius of Burke."[16] The availability of such divergent readings might be explained as a product of what Alan Liu terms Wordsworth's "self-reversing mind"—the characteristic attitude of a poet struggling to accommodate his radical sympathies to

the vicissitudes of war and the imperatives of patriotic loyalism.[17] But the interpretative challenge of the sonnets, it will be argued here, also reflects Wordsworth's more purposive and sophisticated engagement with a contemporary political context in which the meanings of Britain's revolutionary past were themselves in a state of flux and uncertainty.

Wordsworth's attitudes to that past were, of course, profoundly shaped by his relationship with his great seventeenth-century forebear, Milton, who provided the immediate literary stimulus for his turn to political lyric. Dorothy Wordsworth's journal records that she read Milton's sonnets to her brother in May 1802. As William later recalled, he "took fire," and immediately produced two or three sonnets of his own, including "I griev'd for Buonaparte," the earliest of a sequence that would eventually become the "Sonnets Dedicated to Liberty."[18] Their patriotic appeals to seventeenth-century history have tended, in consequence, to be understood largely in terms of Wordsworth's imaginative response to Milton's poetry and politics. Yet the sonnets also offer an interpretative challenge to the most influential account of that response, which maintains that Wordsworth's progressive retreat from radical commitment was facilitated by a secularizing "internalization" of Miltonic prophecy, or (in a more recent formulation) an idealizing evasion of the older poet's "revolutionary sublimity."[19] As Nicola Trott has pointed out, Wordsworth's turn from the consolatory philosophy of *The Recluse* project to the engaged, activist tones of the 1802–3 sonnets tells against his identification with "a single trajectory of dedication and withdrawal," in which Miltonic example is progressively accommodated to a post-revolutionary disengagement from political commitment.[20]

It is also the case, however, that Milton's singular significance for Wordsworth—as both poet and republican apologist—must be weighed against the larger patterns of public controversy in the 1790s and early 1800s. The meanings of Britain's seventeenth-century history, it has already been suggested, were highly unstable during this period. They could be invoked, accordingly, for ends that were prescriptive or populist, republican or reactionary. The relationship between 1642 and 1688—"great rebellion" and "glorious revolution"—remained in consequence both fluid and contestable.[21] And while the discourses of Whig constitutionalism and patriot liberty could be used to entrench, or subvert, the political order of later Hanoverian England, the availability of those discourses for radical or loyalist purposes tended to shift over time, in response to historical circumstances. If the Paineite moment of the early 1790s favored the language of universal natural rights,

the mid-1790s witnessed a resurgence of historical and constitutionalist argument among reformists and opposition Whigs, in the wake of the treason trials of 1794 and William Pitt's repressive "Two Acts" of the following year. As the Napoleonic threat intensified, from 1798, the rhetoric of libertarian patriotism could, in turn, be employed both by Whiggish friends of peace and more militantly loyalist voices. By 1802, when Wordsworth invoked Miltonic "manners, virtue, freedom, power," he was clearly seeking to identify his poetic voice with the literary and political legacy of his predecessor (*P*, 165). But he was also alert to the changing public meanings of seventeenth-century history, in ways that must inflect our reading both of his own poetry and the ideological commitments to which his work might give expression.

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The short-lived Peace of Amiens was signed in March 1802; Wordsworth and his sister took advantage of the altered diplomatic situation by visiting France at the end of July. Their stay was for no more than a month, and they do not appear to have left Calais, yet it proved sufficient for William to settle his affairs with Annette Vallon (whom he had left in Orléans ten years before) and to meet their daughter, Caroline, for the first time. It also stimulated him to compose a number of patriotic sonnets, continuous in form and theme with "I griev'd for Buonaparte," the lament for Napoleon Bonaparte's betrayal of "True Power" which he had composed in May (*P*, 158). If the latter poem was directly inspired by the "dignified simplicity and majestic harmony" of Milton's sonnets, Wordsworth's answering compositions of the following months combined formal emulation with a keen sense of the older poet as a political and moral exemplar in the face of both renewed French aggression and the internal threats to liberty and virtue posed by the more pusillanimous tendencies of the English national character.[22] On returning from France, the Wordsworths spent three weeks in London, where William produced at least three further sonnets. He also arranged for the publication of "I griev'd for Buonaparte" in Daniel Stuart's *Morning Post* on 16 September, and six more political sonnets appeared in the paper over the following months.[23] Each such work, Stuart informed his readers in January 1803, "forms a little Political Essay, on some recent proceeding."[24] Wordsworth's experiments with the sonnet form during this period were clearly sustained, intensive, and closely engaged with affairs of state. Their increasingly militaristic tone can be directly related to mounting

fears of French invasion in early 1803 (which led to Wordsworth himself enrolling in the Grasmere volunteer militia) together with the contemporary outpouring of patriotic anti-gallican propaganda from the English press.[25] Yet the sonnets' allusions to seventeenth-century history are equally responsive to the shifting dynamics of reformist and anti-war sentiment over the course of the previous decade, which continued to inform the broader public debate on the Peace of 1802.

Eight years earlier, in June 1794, Wordsworth had proposed to his Cambridge friend William Matthews a monthly political miscellany, entitled *The Philanthropist*, which was to be directed against "the partizans of this war, and of the suspension of the *habeas corpus* act."[26] The list of suggested "biographical papers" to be printed in the periodical included the Englishmen Milton and Sidney—alongside Niccolò Machiavelli, Anne Robert Jacques Turgot, and Cesare Beccaria—among those "distinguished for their exertions in the cause of liberty."[27] As Nicholas Roe has pointed out, Wordsworth's literary allusions to *Paradise Lost* during this period suggest a considered familiarity with the older poet's republican identity. Milton's sufferings for his principles in the "evil dayes" of the 1660s seem to have offered Wordsworth—along with a number of other reformers—an inspiring example of political fortitude during Pitt's counter-revolutionary reign of alarm.[28] But his association of Milton with Sidney also indicates an awareness of the broader role played by seventeenth-century history within reformist and oppositional argument. References to "the infamous Race of the Stuarts" were a commonplace of radical polemic in this period, while patriot heroes such as Hampden, Sidney, and Russell provided models of "heroic firmness" in the face of government persecution.[29] Such recourse to English historical precedent effectively reasserted the constitutional legitimacy of the popular reform movement at a particularly embattled juncture. Just as significantly, it also forged an important point of connection between extra-parliamentary agitation and the Whig opposition led by Charles James Fox. The latter was notorious among government supporters not just for an implacable opposition to the war, but also for his stridently libertarian interpretation of the nation's seventeenth-century history. Throughout his political career, Fox had condemned the abuse of the royal prerogative with frequent and colorful reference to radical Whig patriots such as Sidney and Russell, and the same rhetoric was readily applicable to the ministry's repressive "Gagging Acts" of 1795. Comparing the government's actions to the ill-fated policies of Charles I and King James II, the Foxites repeatedly condemned the proposed

legislation as subversive of the seventeenth-century Bill of Rights before their leader—to Pitt's outrage—invoked the principles of the Glorious Revolution and the right of resistance last exercised against the Stuarts in 1688, in language that was swiftly echoed by petitions and resolutions out of doors.[30]

In 1797 Fox seceded from Parliament, despairing of the opposition's capacity to influence government policy. But with the fall of Pitt and the Peace of Amiens he returned to both prominence and controversy. To his supporters, the Peace provided an unequivocal vindication of the opposition's principled consistency.[31] Fox himself appeared to glory in Napoleon's gains, and repeatedly compared the French struggle with Bourbon tyranny to English attempts to assert "the liberties of the people" against both Charles I and James II.[32] A misguided "sentiment of patriotism" had led the "free Commonwealth" of England into a system of despotism; peace between Britain and France, he predicted, would revive the national temper of 1688, that "glorious æra" in which the people asserted their right "*of cashiering one Monarch*—and electing another, *who had no hereditary right to the throne*."[33] More provocatively still, Fox took advantage of the Peace to make a widely reported visit to Paris, along with many of his most prominent supporters.[34] Its ostensible purpose was to consult the archives of the exiled Stuarts in connection with historical research on the reign of James II. But the fact that Fox enjoyed a long interview—and dinner—with Napoleon was immediately seized on by his enemies. In the autumn and winter of 1802, William Cobbett's *Political Register* launched a concerted campaign against Fox, in which the Whig statesman was repeatedly attacked not just for his fawning Francophilia, but for his "loathsome calumnies on the House of Stuart" and "miserable attempt to defend the characters of Russel and Sidney," the Whig martyrs of the resistance to James II.[35] Many more sympathetic commentators were beginning to harbor misgivings about Fox's attitude to France, including the *Morning Post*, which reported on 8 September that "the patriot Fox," the "First Man of England" and "friend of peace" had been presented to Napoleon.[36] In the days that followed, the tone of the paper became increasingly defensive in its attempts to excuse Fox's seeming deference to the French leader.[37]

It was at this point that Wordsworth, newly returned to London from Calais, resolved to publish "I griev'd for Buonaparte," which appeared in the *Post* for 16 September, and which scorns the First Consul in a manner clearly at odds with the perceived complacency of the Whig elite in Paris. Wordsworth must have been well aware of

the *Post*'s politics, not least through conversation with both Samuel Taylor Coleridge, one of the paper's most important contributors during this period, and Stuart himself, with whom he dined while in London.[38] He can certainly be assumed to have followed Fox's career with considerable interest. Wordsworth had addressed an admiring letter to the Whig leader in 1801 and would go on to compose a powerful poetic tribute upon Fox's death in 1806 (see *P*, 265).[39] But he was also increasingly disillusioned with Napoleonic France and, it seems, the readiness with which the Foxite friends of peace accommodated themselves to the princely trappings of Bonaparte's court. This, at least, is the implication of *Calais, August, 1802*:

> Is it a Reed that's shaken by the wind,
> Or what is it that ye go forth to see?
> Lords, Lawyers, Statesmen, Squires of low degree,
> Men known, and men unknown, Sick, Lame, and Blind,
> Post forward all, like Creatures of one kind,
> With first-fruit offerings crowd to bend the knee
> In France, before the new-born Majesty.
> 'Tis ever thus. Ye Men of prostrate mind!
> A seemly reverence may be paid to power;
> But that's a loyal virtue, never sown
> In haste, nor springing with a transient shower:
> When truth, when sense, when liberty were flown
> What hardship had it been to wait an hour?
> Shame on you, feeble Heads, to slavery prone!
>
> (*P*, 156)

Fox had arrived in Calais shortly before the Wordsworths, on 20 July; he was in residence at Paris throughout August, before a diplomatic audience with Napoleon at the beginning of September.[40] "Is it a Reed" would thus undoubtedly have been read as a comment on Fox and his fellow Whig "Statesmen" when published (with its titular place and date of composition) in the *Morning Post* for 13 and 29 January 1803. By that point, Coleridge had published in the same newspaper his own incendiary two-part "Letter to Mr. Fox," an extended attack on the Whig leader's sanctimonious response to the peace, his "Gallican" sympathies, and the ignominious transformation of the opposition into "Bonaparte's COURTIERS."[41] But Coleridge also devoted considerable space to Fox's researches into the era of the Glorious Revolution, and the historical springs of British liberty which the Whig leader continued, mistakenly, to identify with revolutionary France. While acknowledging 1688 as a providential deliverance from tyranny, Coleridge vehemently

contradicted the Foxite veneration of Whig conspirators such as Sidney and Russell, "partisans of freedom stained so indelibly with treachery, perjury, corruption, and hypocrisy."[42] The extended constitutional crisis of seventeenth-century Britain merely anticipated the more inglorious course of recent French history, as "popular tyranny" descended into the "despotism" of first Oliver Cromwell and then the restored Stuarts.[43] Fox's historical understanding might have been improved by his time in France, Coleridge acidly suggested, only insofar as the meretricious spectacle of the Napoleonic court offered an unsettling insight into the general "licentiousness" and "venality" of Restoration England "after the subversion of our Commonwealth."[44]

The circumstances of the Peace were clearly placing the contested narratives of British political and constitutional history under renewed strain, in ways that lend considerable significance to Wordsworth's contemporaneous poetic turn to the nation's revolutionary past. Wordsworth composed *London, 1802* ("Milton! thou should'st be living at this hour") in September, during Fox's visit to Paris; *Written in London* ("O Friend! I know not which way I must look"), dated by Wordsworth to the same month, reflects nostalgically on the age of Puritanism and the godly virtue of the "good old cause" (*P*, 165). Both these poems, along with another important political sonnet of the same year, "Great Men have been among us," exploit the resources of seventeenth-century history in ways that are unprecedented in Wordsworth's earlier poetry, but which strikingly contrast with the historical prejudices of oppositional Whiggism. For while the Foxites had invoked the principles of 1688 in order to vindicate the Peace, Wordsworth turns, for rather different purposes, to the earlier revolutionary era of the 1640s and '50s:

> Great Men have been among us; hands that penn'd
> And tongues that utter'd wisdom, better none:
> The later Sydney, Marvel, Harrington,
> Young Vane, and others who call'd Milton Friend.
> These Moralists could act and comprehend:
> They knew how genuine glory was put on;
> Taught us how rightfully a nation shone
> In splendor: what strength was, that would not bend
> But in magnanimous meekness. France, 'tis strange,
> Hath brought forth no such souls as we had then.
> Perpetual emptiness! unceasing change!
> No single Volume paramount, no code,
> No master spirit, no determined road;
> But equally a want of Books and Men!
>
> (*P*, 166)

Although this poem is conventionally dated between late May and December 1802, a point of composition towards the end of this period seems most likely, particularly since the sonnet was probably among those mentioned by Dorothy Wordsworth on 25 December, when she informed her brother John that "William has written some more sonnets. Perhaps you may see them in the Morning post."[45] John had met his older siblings in London in September and could be expected to have read some of the earlier political sonnets at that point (his interest in the form is attested by William's writing him some notes on Milton's sonnets in November).[46] This implies a probable point of composition for "Great Men have been among us" between September and December 1802, a dating which might be further corroborated by the poem's content.

Its ostensible purpose, of course, is to point a contrast between the English commonwealth tradition and the unprincipled irresolution and "unceasing change" of revolutionary France. The list of Milton's contemporaries begins with Sidney and Marvell, two figures whose political careers were usually identified at this time with Whig resistance to arbitrary government during the later Restoration. Yet the remaining names—the republican theorist of the 1650s, James Harrington, together with the leading Commonwealth politician (and convicted traitor) Sir Henry Vane—resituate Sidney and Marvell, and indeed Milton, within an earlier, interregnal milieu, shifting the poem's implied historical frame of reference and thereby imparting a distinctly republican edge to the conventions of Whig hagiography. The contemporary significance of this fact lies partly in its implied disavowal of the competing French claim to republican virtue, a conclusion to which Wordsworth seems to have been irresistibly drawn after Bonaparte's reoccupation of Switzerland in October 1802.[47] This event prompted Coleridge to republish his "France. An Ode" and an extract from "Fears in Solitude" in the *Morning Post* (the former poem now revised to carry anti-Foxite implications), and Wordsworth appears to have concurred in regarding this moment as a pivotal one.[48] "Here it was," he would later claim, "that I parted, in feeling, from the Whigs, and to a certain degree united with their Adversaries, who were free from the delusion (such I must ever regard it) of Mr Fox and his Party, that a safe and honourable Peace was practicable."[49] Such an implication is further suggested, in the sonnet above, by the unusual prominence afforded to the word "bend" at the turn of the eighth line, which bridges octave and sestet with a characteristically Miltonic enjambment, and which thus recalls *Calais, August, 1802*,

and the pliability of those Englishmen who "crowd to bend the knee / In France" (*P*, 156). The sonnet is structured around the patriotic depiction of contrasting national characters; it embeds at its heart, however, a tacit judgment on the supine complacency of the English friends of peace. Despite their professed veneration of liberty, it is implied, neither Fox nor Napoleon have acted the part of a "master spirit" (*P*, 166).

It has been suggested that, on the issue of France, Wordsworth and Coleridge "stood shoulder to shoulder on the pages of the *Post*."[50] But "Great Men have been among us," although unpublished at this time, signals important divergences between Wordsworth's political sentiments and Coleridge's less qualified renunciation of the French revolutionary cause. While both men were keenly disappointed by Fox's sojourn in Paris, Coleridge's break with the Whig leader was considerably more vituperative. As I have already begun to suggest, it also prompted him to abandon his earlier veneration of seventeenth-century republican heroes, the "Sages and patriots" he had hymned in 1795, in favor of a more disillusioned treatment of English revolutionary history.[51] Given Coleridge's intense interest in the writings of James Harrington in the mid-1790s, Wordsworth's allusion to the republican thinker in 1802 offers a rather pointed reminder of his friend's earlier radical sympathies.[52] More significantly, however, the sonnet's larger argument might also seem to constitute a tacit critical engagement with Coleridge's hardening counter-revolutionary attitudes, as well as the historical parallelisms through which they were beginning to find expression. In an essay in the *Morning Post* of 12 October, Coleridge contemplated the hopeful prospects of a Bourbon restoration through an extended discussion of the failure of the English Commonwealth and Protectorate. The current situation in France, he argued, closely paralleled that prior to King Charles II's return to the throne. The latter event was effected in large part by the nature of the English "revolution itself, its rapid change of constitutions, and its quick successions of political contrivances," which "distempered the people with a craving for novelty."[53] Wordsworth's references in "Great Men have been among us" to "Perpetual emptiness! unceasing change! / No single Volume paramount, no code" closely echo the terms of Coleridge's analysis, while restricting its application exclusively to France, not least in the sonnet's allusion to Napoleon's thwarted attempts to promulgate a Civil Code (*P*, 166). The French leader's struggles with his parliament over the proposed Code in 1801–2 might indeed have recalled Cromwell's own vexed relationship with the Rump Parliament and its successors

in the 1650s.[54] But Wordsworth's sonnet pointedly resists such a conclusion. For Coleridge, the restoration of Charles II provided an exemplary model of how the Bourbons might return to power without a reawakening of "Republican enthusiasm."[55] For Wordsworth, on the contrary, a revival of the resolute martial energies of the English Commonwealth offered the best prospect of national salvation in the struggle against Napoleonic despotism.

Such a position was not entirely without parallel in this period. The anti-gallican propaganda elicited by the invasion scare of 1803 involved occasional reference to "The Land protected by great SYDNEY's shade; / [. . .] the cause for which your HAMDEN bled," alongside a historical parade of stalwart English monarchs and military leaders.[56] The opposition Whig W. J. Denison was driven by the French threat to rally his fellow countrymen against the "Gallic squadrons" by "great NASSAU, by HAMPDEN's spotless shade [. . .] By SYDNEY's scaffold, and by RUSSELL's wreath."[57] And another erstwhile opponent of the war, William Frend, stoutly defended opposition to arbitrary power in both 1642 and 1688 in his *Patriotism; or, the Love of our Country* (1804), an attempt to bolster the nation's martial spirit which its author subsequently presented to Wordsworth himself.[58] Recourse to a heroic Whig reading of seventeenth-century history was clearly an available means of reconciling the friends of peace to the necessity and justice of a defensive war against Napoleon. "Great Men have been among us" has a broadly similar purpose; it is distinguished, however, by Wordsworth's decision to downplay the Foxite shibboleths of 1688 and the parliamentary opposition to Charles I in the early 1640s, while celebrating the virtues of leading republicans such as Vane and Harrington, who remained more strongly associated with the "good old cause" of the Commonwealth. From this perspective, the poem may be understood not simply as a rebuke to the Foxite position on the Peace, but as an attempt to reclaim a longstanding Whig narrative of the seventeenth-century struggle for English liberties, in order to redirect it toward a more radical vision of patriot virtue. This might appear to vindicate E. P. Thompson's claim that Wordsworth's sonnets "are often criticisms of the course of the French Revolution from the 'left,' for its own self-betrayal."[59] Such criticisms, it has been argued thus far, acquire their distinctive force from the poet's imaginative engagement with Britain's own revolutionary past and its complex role within contemporary political argument. This circumstance, however, also bears closely on the sonnets' broader historical sensibilities, and their more various—and potentially contradictory—ideological complexion.

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Among the "Adversaries" of "Mr Fox and his Party" in this period, few were more notorious than the Whig leader's erstwhile mentor and friend, the recently deceased Edmund Burke, who had publicly broken with Fox over France in 1791. It has indeed long been acknowledged that Wordsworth's political trajectory from radicalism to reaction was facilitated, in large part, by his growing receptivity to Burkean counter-revolutionary argument, although the precise nature and chronology of this debt remains a matter of some debate.[60] By the early 1800s he no doubt shared Coleridge's admiration for the "*prescience* of Mr. Burke" in predicting the course of the French Revolution.[61] There are more fundamental respects, however, in which the patriotic political agenda of the sonnets seems to anticipate the overtly Burkean cadences of Wordsworth's *Convention of Cintra* (1809), and the claims in that later work for "a spiritual community binding together the living and the dead."[62] A comparable emphasis is already evident in a number of Wordsworth's poems from 1802–3, such as the following sonnet published in the *Morning Post* on 16 April 1803:

> It is not to be thought of that the Flood
> Of British freedom, which to the open Sea
> Of the world's praise from dark antiquity
> Hath flowed, "with pomp of waters unwithstood,"
> Road by which all might come and go that would,
> And bear out freights of worth to foreign lands;
> That this most famous Stream in Bogs and Sands
> Should perish; and to evil and to good
> Be lost for ever. In our Halls is hung
> Armoury of the invincible Knights of old:
> We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
> That Shakespeare spake; the faith and morals hold
> Which Milton held. In every thing we are sprung
> Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold. (*P*, 166–67)

There is a general concern here, shared with Burke, to privilege the customary and the heritable as constitutive elements of English national identity. But the sestet, with its turn to the chivalric past and the sanguinary imagery of "Earth's first blood," comprises a more direct echo of the *Reflections*, and Burke's defense of those "antient opinions and rules of life" (*WS*, 8:129) by which the English people "have given to our frame of polity the image of a relation in blood" (*WS*, 8:84).[63] Here and elsewhere in the sonnets, Wordsworth's lamentation that "Old things have been unsettled" (*P*, 170), his defense of

venerable national feeling against the emasculating creed of "money'd Worldlings" (*P*, 169), draw rhetorical strength from Burke's critique of French revolutionary ideology, even as the poet broadens that critique to encompass the moral failings of his own countrymen. The virtues of custom and habit had, of course, been central to much of Wordsworth's writings of the 1790s; the sonnets extend such concerns, however, from the affective ties of community to those of national identity. In doing so, Wordsworth's invocations of "British freedom" begin to own an affinity not just with commonwealth political tradition, but with the Burkean association of a "truly patriotic, free, and independent spirit" with the historical continuity of the nation's established constitutional forms (*WS*, 8:292).

That Wordsworth should be drawn in such a direction in 1802–3, when his loyalties to Foxite Whiggism were under particular strain, does much to explain his early draft of the lines from *The Prelude* on the "Genius of Burke." For at the center of this passage lies a direct allusion to the latter's estrangement from the Fox, the "British Pericles" of the Commons,

> Who sits
> Listening beside thee— no longer near
> Yet still in heart thy friend. Illustrious Fox
> Thy grateful Pupil.[64]

These lines, which were probably composed in the years after Waterloo, confirm that, unlike Coleridge, Wordsworth did not wholly abandon his regard for Fox in the autumn of 1802; but they also suggest a retrospective vindication of Wordsworth's own ideological consistency, now implicitly understood in terms of his transition from a youthful Foxite radical to the mature recognition of Burke's tutelary wisdom—a recognition that Fox himself, of course, did not sustain. The fullest scholarly consideration of this issue concurs that Wordsworth would surely have understood Burke's deepest loyalties to lie with some version of "old whig" values; but, as Wordsworth's lines also suggest, these were values which Burke himself shared with Fox through their mutual allegiance to the Rockingham Whig parliamentary connection.[65] Considered in these terms, the Burkean sympathies of the "Sonnets dedicated to Liberty" cannot be described as politically reactionary in any straightforward sense; they reflect, instead, Wordsworth's attempts to discover, among the disparate elements of a divided Whig tradition, a means of reconciling his vestigial radicalism with a growing patriotic commitment to the struggle against France.

The immediate political context of the 1802–3 sonnets may have offered some limited encouragement to such efforts. The resignation of Pitt in 1801 and the resulting peace negotiations threw the existing balance of partisan allegiance into considerable flux; by the following year several of Burke's closest parliamentary associates had joined the Grenvillite "new opposition" in condemning Addington's Peace. In these changed circumstances Burke's sagacity could be tactically invoked both defensively, on the part of his old ministerial allies, as well as by more oppositional voices.[66] By September 1802, even the Foxite *Morning Chronicle* could refer to the *Reflections* with wry approval in the course of excoriating Pitt's want of principle in his conduct of the late war.[67] Nevertheless, the most consistent and emphatic claimants to Burke's legacy as "the true touchstone in politics" remained the anti-Jacobin parliamentary faction led by William Windham, together with its mouthpiece in the press, Cobbett's reactionary and viscerally anti-Foxite *Political Register*.[68] The Foxites, and their reformist allies, were in turn acutely conscious that it was the "the disciples of Burke," with their alarmist characterisation of "French principles," who had sustained the war effort since 1793, but who also continued to fuel a sinister contempt for Britain's historical liberties.[69] Thus, in a widely publicized speech of April 1802, the radical MP (and Foxite sympathizer) Francis Burdett denounced "Mr. Burke's . . . dilated eloquence upon the French revolution" for misrepresenting the French people's "struggle for rights and liberties" as a wholly unprecedented political phenomenon.[70] In fact, Burdett insisted, it was the same "struggle in which the people of this country have been so repeatedly engaged . . . the struggle in which one of the Stuarts lost his head, another his crown, and which finally banished that family [from] the land."[71]

For all their traditionary patriotism, then, Wordsworth's political sonnets could hardly have been endorsed without serious qualification by Burke's self-appointed heirs. For as we have seen, in 1802 Wordsworth's choice of inheritance was not confined to the "principle of conservation" exemplified for Burke in the ancient constitution and the bloodless revolution of 1688 (*WS*, 8:83). The sonnets urge the virtues of national solidarity and customary attachment to a shared cultural patrimony. Yet they simultaneously attempt to recall the nation to its deep historical identity by invoking what many of the poet's contemporaries regarded as the most notorious moment of political and constitutional rupture in Britain's modern history: the violent overthrow of Charles I, the dismantling of the Church of England, and the institution of republican government. This might seem grounds enough on which

to reject a description of the sonnets as "almost classically Burkean" in content.[72] But the complexities of the poems' political identity should also encourage us to give somewhat fuller consideration to Burke's own readings of Britain's seventeenth-century revolutions.

In his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Burke notoriously maintained that Price and his supporters, "in all their reasonings on the Revolution of 1688, have a revolution which happened in England about forty years before, and the late French revolution, so much before their eyes, and in their hearts, that they are constantly confounding all the three together" (*WS*, 8:66). Burke's counterargument identified the "glorious Revolution" (*WS*, 8:54), as he termed it, with the "powerful prepossession towards antiquity" (*WS*, 8:82), a reverence for "our *antient*, indisputable laws and liberties" (*WS*, 8:81) inimical to both "the rapture of 1648" (*WS*, 8:117) and the modern revolution in France. In this respect, the *Reflections* undoubtedly played a significant role in shaping counter-revolutionary attitudes to British constitutional history, particularly after January 1793 when the "horrid parallel" between the fates of Charles I and Louis XVI became inescapable.[73] Yet Burke's self-description as an adherent of "old whig" principles could also imply a more qualified reading of the Stuart past. It was commonplace to regard the Williamite revolution of 1688 as the true cynosure of Whig principles; but the Rockinghamites had always been willing to recognize, in the parliamentary resistance to both Charles I and James II, a precedent for their own principled antagonism to the constitutional abuses of the Hanoverian monarchy. The leading statement of opposition Whiggism in the early reign of George III, Burke's own *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents* (1770), had repeatedly compared the political circumstances of the 1760s with "our troubles in the time of Charles the First," in which popular unrest was provoked by an arbitrary and unyielding court (*WS*, 2:286).[74] While recourse to the lessons of seventeenth-century history is characteristic of Burke's thinking in this period—and that of his party—such arguments are noticeably less evident in his writings and speeches of the 1790s. Nevertheless, he does not appear to have entirely abandoned his party's commitment to the parliamentarian cause as a legitimate touchstone of Whig constitutionalism. In a speech of 1792, for example, Burke complained that the English popular reformers, like their levelling seventeenth-century predecessors, were waging "an exterminatory war against the whole constitution"; Paineite political iconoclasm, however, could be distinguished from the motives of the more "temperate" Hampden, who "took up arms against the abuses

of government" without anticipating the subsequent perversion of his cause.[75] There was clearly a pointed warning here against a Foxite alliance with extra-parliamentary radicals in the name of ancient constitutional freedoms.

More surprisingly, perhaps, it is also possible to discover in the *Reflections* itself a greater complexity of response to seventeenth-century history than the work's overt argument might suggest. It should be noted, in this connection, that Burke's anxiety to deny 1688 as a precedent for domestic reformers led him to insist that the events of this period constituted a "civil war" (*WS*, 8:80) rather than a constitutional process, in which Parliament's fundamental challenge to the right of succession had been obscured only by the "politic, well-wrought veil" (*WS*, 8:69) of Whig statecraft.[76] If this suggests a tacit rhetorical counter current to Burke's insistence on the essential differences between 1688 and 1642, the *Reflections* also confesses an explicit admiration for the "great civil and great military talents" of the puritan revolutionaries, and Cromwell above all (*WS*, 8:99). Indeed, Burke went so far as to contrast the ignoble motives of the French revolutionaries with lines from Edmund Waller's *Panegyrick to my Lord Protector* (1655):

> Still as *you* rise, the *state*, exalted too,
> Finds no distemper whilst 'tis chang'd by *you*;
> Chang'd like the world's great scene, when without noise
> The rising sun night's *vulgar* lights destroys.
>
> (Quoted in *WS*, 8:99)

Glossing Waller's lines, Burke explained that "[t]hese disturbers were not so much like men usurping power, as asserting their natural place in society. Their rise was to illuminate and beautify the world. Their conquest over their competitors was by outshining them. The hand that, like a destroying angel, smote the country, communicated to it the force and energy under which it suffered" (*WS*, 8:99).[77] Cromwell's sun was thus quite unlike the "new-sprung modern light" of the French *philosophes*; his ascent to power constituted not a subversion but an exaltation of the English nation itself (*WS*, 8:125). This passage is remarkable not merely because of Burke's acute sensitivity to the notorious role played by Cromwell in seventeenth-century Irish history.[78] Waller's language of republican *renovation* might also appear to sit rather uncomfortably alongside the *Reflections*' repeated references to the "distempers" of France (*WS*, 8:218–19, 240–41, 262, 264), and the corresponding insistence that "the course of succession is the healthy

habit of the British constitution" (*WS*, 8:75). Yet Burke's fascination with the sublime martial vigour of the Commonwealth's leaders quite accurately reflects his longstanding admiration for the "energy" of self-supporting talent, an energy that the English revolutionary spirit seemingly communicated to the nation at large in its struggle with corrupt executive power.[79]

These aspects of Burke's text were soon obscured, however, by the groundswell of reactionary sentiment among many of his professed admirers. In the course of the 1790s, a body of attitudes and argument began to take shape which could soon be identified as unapologetically Tory in its historical prejudices. The nation's civil wars were subject, in consequence, to increasingly crude representation as the product of a levelling puritan fanaticism designed to "destroy all ranks and stations in Church and State," while the "loose metaphysical idea of *Revolution principles*" espoused by modern reformists could now be dismissed as the invention of those subversive republicans and sectaries who had infiltrated the Whig party after 1688.[80] Nevertheless, as Wordsworth seems to have recognized, the faultlines within contemporary attitudes to Britain's revolutionary past had not always been so starkly defined. His appropriation of Burkean rhetoric in the sonnets of 1802–3 offered a provocative challenge to the historical sensibilities of anti-Jacobin alarmists, reaffirming the deep affiliations of Burke's thought with a more complex and equivocal reading of the nation's seventeenth-century history. The radical "commonwealth" sympathies of the sonnets might have contradicted Burke's insistent identification of Whig "principles of liberty" with the events of 1688, but they effectively exposed the submerged tensions within contemporary attitudes to the revolutionary past (*WS*, 4:401). Those tensions, I have suggested, are of considerable importance for understanding this crucial, transitional moment in Wordsworth's political identity. It is, however, through his creative engagement with the poetry of the Commonwealth period that Wordsworth's efforts to negotiate the divided legacies of the seventeenth century find their most sophisticated literary expression.

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One of Wordsworth's notebooks, purchased in Calais in August or September 1802, contains both copies of his sonnets and, in its opening pages, a transcription in the poet's hand of Andrew Marvell's "Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland." Wordsworth's copy of the *Ode* was probably made from a text of the poem (either printed

or manuscript) in the possession of Charles Lamb, with whom the Wordsworths "past much time" during their stay in London—the same point at which Wordsworth was engaged in composing and publishing a number of his political sonnets.[81] Wordsworth's poetry of this period certainly contains some intriguing echoes of the "Horatian Ode," not least its opening reflections on the relationship between poetry and political engagement:

> The forward Youth that would appear
> Must now forsake his muses dear,
> Nor in the shadows sing
> His numbers languishing:
>
> Tis time to leave the books in dust,
> And oyl th'unused armour's rust;
> Removing from the wall
> The corslett of the hall.
>
> So restless Cromwell would not cease
> In the inglorious arts of peace,
> But through adventrous war
> Urged his active star[.][82]

These lines invite us to reconsider the allusive range of Wordsworth's "It is not to be thought of that the Flood" and, more specifically, the rousing patriotic assertion that

> In our Halls is hung
> Armoury of the invincible Knights of old:
> We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
> That Shakespeare spake; the faith and morals hold
> Which Milton held.

The sonnet's imagery clearly recalls not just a Burkean age of chivalry, but also the Marvellian youth's resolution to don "th'unused armour" and join the Cromwellian cause of "adventrous war." Wordsworth's lines thereby suggest his particular sensitivity to the *Ode*'s more ambivalent expressions of political allegiance. Many readers have noted the finely tempered loyalties of Marvell's poem, and while its opening lines certainly embrace an active republican *virtù* they also evince a palpable nostalgia for the royalist literary culture its author had only recently left behind.[83] Wordsworth's poem complicates this sense of divided identity yet further, overlaying Burke's gothic patriotism with the revolutionary commitment of the Marvellian youth. The resulting allusive play exemplifies the broader ideological ambivalences of the

political sonnets, while suggestively echoing Burke's own attempts to reconcile restless Cromwellian "energy" with his defense of the ancient constitution. Just as significantly, however, Wordsworth's ancestral "Armoury" is associated with both martial patriotism, and the legacy of Shakespeare and Milton, suggesting that the literary imagination might yet surmount Marvell's implicit distinction between the "muses dear" and "adventrous war," royalist literary retirement and republican engagement.

Cromwell himself, though, is strikingly absent from the political sonnets, for understandable reasons. Comparisons between the French First Consul and English Lord Protector were relatively widespread in this period. Charles Lamb suggested to Coleridge in October 1802 (possibly with Marvell in mind) that he might favorably compare Cromwell's commitment to religious freedom with Napoleon's seeming indifference to such concerns.[84] Hostile identifications, however, were much more common at this point.[85] Wordsworth himself, in *The Convention of Cintra*, would list Cromwell among the "conquerors and usurpers" of history, in an echo of the ubiquitous Napoleonic epithet, the "Corsican usurper."[86] The suppression of Cromwell in the political sonnets of 1802–3 clearly allowed Wordsworth to assert a commitment to republican forms—in both France and England—prior to their corrupt reversion to single rule. But it also reflects the complexities of the poet's attitude to Napoleon. He was at once an object of contempt for Wordsworth yet also, as Simon Bainbridge suggests, "a figure of his own ambition."[87] To engage with Cromwell's legacy would have compromised the sonnets' running contrast between English republican purity and Napoleonic despotism; it might also have created an additional focus for Wordsworth's uneasy sense of his sympathy with power.

This suggests a further explanation of why Wordsworth's "Great Men" are so insistently identified not with military command but rather with "hands that penn'd / And tongues that utter'd wisdom." The complexities of Wordsworth's attitude to the nation's revolutionary past are thus subsumed in literary art and, in "London, 1802", the figure of Milton above all:

> Milton! thou should'st be living at this hour:
> England hath need of thee: she is a fen
> Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
> Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
> Have forfeited their ancient English dower
> Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;

O! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a Star and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea;
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In chearful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on itself did lay.

(*P*, 165)

The apostrophic opening recalls Milton's own sonnets to Thomas Fairfax, Vane, and Cromwell of the 1640s and '50s. But it is notable that this poem, perhaps Wordsworth's most direct engagement with Milton's political legacy, is decidedly un-Miltonic in form, at least according to Wordsworth's later judgment that in the "better half" of the older poet's sonnets, "the sense does not close with the rhyme at the eighth line, but overflows into the second portion of the metre."[88] This, he would claim, not only introduces "variety and freedom of sound," but contributes to "that pervading sense of intense Unity in which the excellence of the Sonnet has always seemed to me mainly to consist."[89] The lack of such "intense Unity" in "London, 1802" might seem contrived simply to point the "thematic opposition between octet and sestet," between the corruptions of contemporary England and the redeeming spirit of Miltonic virtue.[90] The antinomies of the poem are, however, more complex than this, and invite us to question Wordsworth's divided sense of Miltonic "power" itself.

At the heart of the sonnet lies Wordsworth's remarkable characterization of Milton's moral and poetic eminence: "Thy soul was like a Star and dwelt apart." The line assumes particular force by virtue of its grammatical failure to sustain the "sense" of the preceding octave—Milton's apartness is reflected in lineation that itself departs from Milton's own literary practice. But the singularity of the older poet is further established here in subtle, revisionary opposition to Marvell's "restless Cromwell," whose "active star" is at once echoed and refigured in the sublime detachment of the Miltonic poet.[91] The "Horatian Ode" famously concludes with a tonally ambivalent reflection on its subject's restless ambition: "The same arts that did gain / A power, must it maintain."[92] In 1802, those lines could no doubt be read as a presentiment of political betrayal and military failure, with application to both Cromwell and Napoleon. By contrast, the isolated scene of Miltonic creation was one that Wordsworth had long associated with the defiant survival of republican values during the "dangerous

night" of the Restoration, in which "Milton worked alone / Cheared by a secret lustre all his own."[93]

At this still center of the poem, then, Milton's creative power is identified with the visionary isolation of the steadfast revolutionary author, a station from which the poet addresses his lapsed countrymen—in both the 1660s and 1800s—with a voice of singular purity and virtue. Yet this moment is framed by a rather different sense of collective historical loss, associated by Wordsworth with "altar, sword, and pen, / Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower." This latter phrase evokes once again the ancestral hall of Marvell's "Horatian Ode," now explicitly identified with a wider patriotic identity, the "ancient English dower / Of inward happiness," a national possession which also invites description, in Burkean terms, as "a sort of family settlement" (*WS*, 8:84). And it is to a similar register that the reader is returned at the conclusion of the poem, as Milton descends from elemental sublimity to "lowliest duties." His "chearful godliness" might evoke the sympathetic accounts of the poet's personal and political fortitude offered by eighteenth-century biographers, but it also strikingly contrasts with the solitary, self-sufficing eminence of the earlier lines.[94] No longer like a star that "dwelt apart," Milton becomes here a Wordsworthian traveller on "life's common way."

The figure of Milton thus images the deeper tensions within the political sonnets as a whole, which are similarly caught between the claims of shared historical identity and the self-authorizing power of the republican "master spirit." Milton's prophetic isolation constitutes a singular embodiment of revolutionary virtue, yet he also assumes a more representative function, just as, elsewhere in the sonnets, Wordsworth identifies the British nation with those

> who speak the tongue
> That Shakespeare spake; the faith and morals hold
> Which Milton held.

This duality reflects Milton's own ambivalent reputation, for much of the eighteenth century, as at once a canonical national poet and a partisan defender of "the purest principles of civil liberty."[95] But it also suggests the broader dialectic between republican liberty and Burkean tradition, which we have seen at work in and across the political sonnets. "Always acting as if in the presence of canonized forefathers," Burke had argued in the *Reflections*, "the spirit of freedom, leading in itself to misrule and excess, is tempered with an awful gravity" (*WS*, 8:85). Wordsworth's Milton offers a subtle revision of this claim insofar as he

represents *both* "the spirit of freedom" and a "canonized forefather," at once an embodiment of untrammeled revolutionary vision and a figure of representative historical authority. This composite image of the Miltonic poet is sustained in "London, 1802" through the force of layered allusion and the multiple, compressed argumentative turns peculiar to the sonnet form. Such formal constraints might, as Wordsworth would later claim, offer a kind of "solace" to those who "have felt the weight of too much liberty" (*P*, 133). But the sonnets of this period also work to preserve a commitment to republican freedom within, rather than in opposition to, the terms of Burkean argument, drawing a sense of historical community into richly paradoxical relation to the revolutionary spirit.

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NOTES

Earlier versions of this essay were presented to seminars at the universities of St. Andrews and Cambridge. I am grateful to the participants at those events, to Ruth Abbott and Heather Glen, and to the anonymous reviewer for *ELH*.

[1] See *The Fenwick Notes of William Wordsworth*, ed. Jared Curtis (Penrith: Humanities-Ebooks, 2007), 197.

[2] See Nicholas Roe, *Wordsworth and Coleridge: The Radical Years* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 27–33.

[3] See The National Archives TS 11/961 (Society for Constitutional Information minute book), 201–6, 213–16; and Albert Goodwin, *The Friends of Liberty: The English Democratic Movement in the Age of the French Revolution* (London: Hutchinson, 1979), 120–21.

[4] See British Library, Add. MS 64814, fol. 59^{v}. Our knowledge of Samuel Nicholson's connection with the reform societies has previously been limited to his activities in the SCI dating from earlier in the 1780s.

[5] British Library, Add. MS 64814, fol. 48^{r}.

[6] *Morning Chronicle* (5 Nov. 1791).

[7] Richard Price, *A Discourse on the Love of our Country* (London, 1789), 31, 50.

[8] Andrew Kippis, *A Sermon Preached at the Old Jewry, on the Fourth of November, 1788* (London, 1788), 22. Compare Kippis, *An Abstract of the History and Proceedings of the Revolution Society* ([London], 1789), 14. See also Kathleen Wilson, "Inventing Revolution: 1688 and Eighteenth-Century Popular Politics," *Journal of British Studies* 28.4 (1989): 349–86.

[9] Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man. Part the Second* (London, 1792), 57. Compare Richard Dinmore, *An Exposition of the Principles of the English Jacobins* (Norwich, 1796), 6.

[10] See James A. Epstein, *Radical Expression: Political Language, Ritual, and Symbol in England, 1790–1850* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1994), 3–28; and Mark Philp, *Reforming Ideas in Britain: Politics and Language in the Shadow of the French Revolution, 1789–1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2014), 11–39.

[11] See James Chandler, *Wordsworth's Second Nature: A Study of the Poetry and Politics* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1984), 58–61; and David Simpson, *Wordsworth's Historical Imagination: The Poetry of Displacement* (New York: Methuen, 1987), 56–78.

[12] See, among others, Leslie F. Chard, *Dissenting Republican: Wordsworth's Early Life and Thought in their Political Context* (The Hague: Mouton, 1972); John Williams, *Wordsworth: Romantic Poetry and Revolution Politics* (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1989); and Tim Fulford, *Landscape, Liberty and Authority: Poetry, Criticism and Politics from Thomson to Wordsworth* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996), 161–66.

[13] See Zera S. Fink, "Wordsworth and the English Republican Tradition," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 47.2 (1948): 107–26; Chard, 80–91; and Roe, *Wordsworth and Coleridge*, 42–45.

[14] William Wordsworth, *"Poems, in Two Volumes," and Other Poems, 1800–1807*, ed. Curtis (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1983), 166. Hereafter abbreviated *P* and cited parenthetically by page number.

[15] David V. Erdman, "Milton! Thou Shouldst be Living," *Wordsworth Circle* 19.1 (1988): 6. See Richard Gravil, *Wordsworth's Bardic Vocation, 1787–1842* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2003), 225–29.

[16] Wordsworth, *The Fourteen-Book "Prelude,"* ed. W. J. B. Owen (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1985), book 7, line 512. On the Burkean tendency of the sonnets, see, among others, Carl Woodring, *Politics in English Romantic Poetry* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1970), 115–28; and Stephen C. Behrendt, "Placing the Places in Wordsworth's 1802 Sonnets," *Studies in English Literature 1500–1900* 35.4 (1995): 641–67.

[17] Alan Liu, *Wordsworth: The Sense of History* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1989), 436.

[18] *Fenwick Notes*, 73. See also Dorothy Wordsworth, *Journals*, ed. Mary Moorman (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 127.

[19] Roe, "Wordsworth, Milton, and the Politics of Poetic Influence," *Yearbook of English Studies* 19 (1989): 117; Joseph Crawford, *Raising Milton's Ghost: John Milton and the Sublime of Terror in the Early Romantic Period* (London: Bloomsbury, 2011), 138. Such arguments possess a considerably longer genealogy; see, for example, M. H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (New York: Norton, 1971), 21–29.

[20] Nicola Zoe Trott, "Wordsworth, Milton, and the Inward Light," in *Milton, the Metaphysicals, and Romanticism*, ed. Lisa Low and Anthony John Harding (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994), 124.

[21] My argument diverges in this respect from that of Anthony Jarrells, *Britain's Bloodless Revolutions: 1688 and the Romantic Reform of Literature* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2005).

[22] *Fenwick Notes*, 73. See Wordsworth, "*Poems*," 165.

[23] See R. S. Woof, "Wordsworth's Poetry and Stuart's Newspapers: 1797–1803," *Studies in Bibliography* 15 (1962): 149–89.

[24] *Morning Post* (29 Jan. 1803).

[25] See Simon Bainbridge, *British Poetry and the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars: Visions of Conflict* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2003), 99–119; Stuart Semmel, *Napoleon and the British* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2004), 65; and Richard Matlak, "Wordsworth and the 'Great Terror' of 1803–05," *Wordsworth Circle* 46.1 (2015): 21–26.

[26] Wordsworth to William Matthews, 8 June 1794, in *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth*, 8 vol., ed. Ernest de Selincourt (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 4:125.

[27] Wordsworth to Matthews, 4:125–26. See Roe, *Wordsworth and Coleridge*, 158–59. It has been speculated that Wordsworth may have had some involvement with Daniel

Isaac Eaton's *Philanthropist*. A reader of the latter would have discovered multiple references to Stuart oppression and "that cause where Sydney bled! where Hampden fell!" (*The Philanthropist* [27 July 1795], 6). See also Kenneth Johnston, *The Hidden Wordsworth* (London: Pimlico, 2000), 312–40.

[28] John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Barbara K. Lewalski (Malden: Wiley, 2007), book 7, line 25. See also Kenneth R. Johnston, *Unusual Suspects: Pitt's Reign of Alarm and the Lost Generation of the 1790s* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2013), 196; and Roe, "Wordsworth, Milton," 120–24.

[29] John Baxter, *Resistance to Oppression* (London, [1795?]), 3; *Gerrald a Fragment* (London, [1795?]), 9. See also, for example, John Thelwall, *The Tribune*, 3 vol. (London, 1795–96), 3:163–200; and *The Cabinet*, 3 vol. (Norwich, 1795), 1:269–76, 2:15–23, 49–58, 84–92.

[30] See *The Parliamentary History of England*, 36 vol., ed. William Cobbett (London, 1806–20), 31:281, 253–54, 382–83, 454, 485, 549–50; Sampson Perry, *The Argus; or, General Observer* (London, 1796), 81, 134, 143, 181; and *The History of the Two Acts* (London, 1796), 39, 126–29, 319, 633, 644, 648.

[31] See Robert Adair, *The Letter of the Honourable Charles James Fox to the Electors of Westminster, dated January 26th, 1793. With an Application of its Principles to Subsequent Events* (London, 1802); and Richard E. Willis, "Fox, Grenville, and the Recovery of Opposition, 1801–1804," *Journal of British Studies* 11.2 (1972): 24–43.

[32] *Parliamentary History*, 31:76 (3 Nov. 1801).

[33] *The Speech of the Hon. Charles James Fox [. . .] on Saturday the 10th October, 1801* (London, 1801), 14, 15.

[34] See L. G. Mitchell, *Charles James Fox* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992), 172.

[35] *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register*, 2:719 (4 Dec. 1802); see also 2:280–81 (4 Sept. 1802); 2:312–13 (11 Sept. 1802); 2:343, 345 (18 Sept. 1802); and 2:378–81 (25 Sept. 1802).

[36] *Morning Post* (8 Sept. 1802).

[37] *Morning Post* (9, 10 Sept. 1802).

[38] See Mark L. Reed, *Wordsworth: The Chronology of the Middle Years 1800–1815* (Harvard: Harvard Univ. Press, 1975), 194.

[39] See also Wordsworth to Charles James Fox, 14 Jan. 1801, in *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth*, 1:312.

[40] See *Moniteur Universel*, 346 (16 Fructidor an. X; 2 Sept. 1802); Margaret Sandford, *Thomas Poole and his Friends*, 2 vol. (London, 1888), 1:88; and British Library, Add. MS 51475A, fol. 25^{r}.

[41] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Essays on His Times in "The Morning Post" and "The Courier,"* 3 vol., ed. Erdman (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1978), 1:379, 399. Wordsworth was apparently privy to Fox's wounded reaction to Coleridge's "Letter"; see Coleridge, *Collected Letters*, 6 vol., ed. Earl Leslie Griggs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956–71), 2:954. See also J. R. Watson, *Romanticism and War: A Study of British Romantic Period Writers and the Napoleonic Wars* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2003), 89–90.

[42] Coleridge, *Essays on His Times*, 1:389.

[43] Coleridge, *Essays on His Times*, 1:392.

[44] Coleridge, *Essays on His Times*, 1:392.

[45] Dorothy Wordsworth to John Wordsworth, 25 Dec. 1802, in *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth*, 1:381. See Reed, 204n, 208n.

[46] See Wordsworth to unknown, Nov. 1802, in *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth*, 1:379.

[47] See J. C. Maxwell, "Wordsworth and the Subjugation of Switzerland," *Modern Language Review* 65.1 (1970): 16–18.

[48] See Coleridge, *Essays on His Times*, 2:295–96.

[49] Wordsworth to James Losh, 4 Dec. 1821, in *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth*, 4:97.

[50] Liu, 428.

[51] Coleridge, *Lectures 1795 on Politics and Religion*, ed. Lewis Patton and Peter Mann (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1971), 290. See Peter J. Kitson, "'Sages and patriots that being dead do yet speak to us': Readings of the English Revolution in the Late Eighteenth Century," in *Pamphlet Wars: Prose in the English Revolution*, ed. James Holstun (London: Routledge, 1992), 205–30.

[52] For Wordsworth's knowledge of James Harrington, see Duncan Wu, *Wordsworth's Reading 1770–1779* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993), 72.

[53] Coleridge, *Essays on His Times*, 1:360–61.

[54] See Irene Collins, *Napoleon and his Parliaments* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1979), 56–67.

[55] Coleridge, *Essays on his Times*, 1:361.

[56] *Britons Strike Home! A New Song* (London, [1803]). For a discussion of patriot iconography in this period, see Semmel, 65; and Peter Karsten, *Patriot-Heroes in England and America: Political Symbolism and Changing Values over Three Centuries* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1978), 115.

[57] W. J. Denison, *Address to the People of Great Britain* (London, [1803]).

[58] See Wu, *Wordsworth's Reading 1770–1779*, 90.

[59] E. P. Thompson, *The Romantics: England in a Revolutionary Age* (Woodbridge: Merlin Press, 1997), 94.

[60] See Alfred Cobban, *Edmund Burke and the Revolt against the Eighteenth Century* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1929), 133–53; F. M. Todd, *Politics and the Poet: A Study of Wordsworth* (London: Methuen, 1957), 169–70; Michael H. Friedman, *The Making of a Tory Humanist: William Wordsworth and the Idea of Community* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1979), 92, 256, 291; David Bromwich, *A Choice of Inheritance: Self and Community from Edmund Burke to Robert Frost* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1989), 63; and Chandler.

[61] Coleridge, *Essays on His Times*, 1:223.

[62] Wordsworth, *Prose Works*, 2 vol., ed. W. J. B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), 1:339. See also Chandler, 42–44; and Edmund Burke, *Writings and Speeches*, 9 vol., ed. Paul Langford (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981–2015), 8:147; hereafter abbreviated *WS* and cited parenthetically by volume and page number.

[63] See Tom Duggett, *Gothic Romanticism: Architecture, Politics, and Literary Form* (New York: Palgrave, 2010), 31.

[64] Dove Cottage MS 52, fol. 163(2)^{v}. See also Wordsworth, *The Thirteen-Book Prelude*, 2 vol., ed. Reed (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1991), 2:719–20; and Stephen Gill, *Wordsworth's Revisitings* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2011), 136.

[65] See Chandler, 58–61; see also L. G. Mitchell, *Charles James Fox and the Disintegration of the Whig Party, 1782–1794* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971).

[66] See *Parliamentary History* 36:800 (Sir William Grant, 13 May 1802); and 36:278 (Thomas Erskine, 13 Nov. 1801).

[67] See "Foreign Politics of England," *Morning Chronicle* (21 Sept. 1802).

[68] *Political Register* 2:185 (14 Aug. 1802). See E. A. Smith, *Whig Principles and Party Politics: Earl Fitzwilliam and the Whig Party, 1748–1833* (Manchester: Manchester

Univ. Press, 1975), 267–68; and James Grande, *William Cobbett, the Press and Rural England: Radicalism and the Fourth Estate, 1792–1835* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2014), 39–46.

[69] *Parliamentary History* 35:453 (18 July 1800); 36:598 (7 May 1802).

[70] *Parliamentary History* 36:501.

[71] *Parliamentary History* 36:501; see also 36:496, 509. The speech was subsequently published.

[72] Jonathan M. Hess, "Wordsworth's Aesthetic State: The Poetics of Liberty," *Studies in Romanticism* 33.1 (1994): 10.

[73] [John Ireland], *Vindiciæ Regiæ; or, A Defence of the Kingly Office* (1797), 78.

[74] See also *WS*, 2:257; 2:225; and 2:417.

[75] *The Gazetteer, and New Daily Advertiser* (1 May 1792). See also Richard Bourke, *Empire and Revolution: The Political Life of Edmund Burke* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2015), 811. Compare Cobbett's version of this speech in *WS*, 4:482.

[76] See J. G. A. Pocock, "The Fourth English Civil War: Dissolution, Desertion, and Alternative Histories in the Glorious Revolution," in *The Revolution of 1688–1689: Changing Perspectives*, ed. Lois G. Schwoerer (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1992), 52–64. See also David Armitage, *Civil Wars: A History in Ideas* (Knopf: New York, 2017), 151–53; and Ben James Taylor, "Reflections on the Revolution in England: Edmund Burke's Uses of 1688," *History of Political Thought* 35.1 (2014): 91–120.

[77] For Burke's longstanding appreciation of Waller, see Burke, *Correspondence*, 9 vol., ed. Thomas W. Copeland (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1958–70), 1:74–76.

[78] See Luke Gibbons, *Edmund Burke and Ireland: Aesthetics, Politics, and the Colonial Sublime* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2003), 157–62.

[79] See Bourke, 700–71; and the more polemically reductive argument of Isaac Kramnick, *The Rage of Edmund Burke: Portrait of an Ambivalent Conservative* (New York: Basic Books, 1977).

[80] John Reeves, *Thoughts on English Government [. . .] Letter the First* (1795), 37, 45. See also John Bowles, *French Aggression, proved from Mr. Erskine's "View of the Causes of the War"* (1797), 123–24; and James J. Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative: Reaction and Orthodoxy in Britain, c. 1760–1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993), 86–88.

[81] Charles Lamb to Thomas Manning, 24 Sept. 1802, in *The Letters of Charles and Mary Lamb*, 2 vol., ed. Edwin W. Marrs, Jr. (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1975–78), 2:69. See Wu, *Wordsworth's Reading 1800–1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2007), 142–43; and Reed, 192.

[82] Transcription from Dove Cottage MS 38, 1.

[83] This aspect of the "Ode" remains contentious, but for relevant discussion of its political loyalties, see, for example, Blair Worden, "The Royalism of Andrew Marvell," in *Royalists and Royalism during the English Civil Wars*, ed. Jason McElligott and David L. Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2007), 214–38; and Nicholas McDowell, *Poetry and Allegiance in the English Civil Wars: Marvell and the Cause of Wit* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2008), 221–58.

[84] See Lamb to Coleridge, 23 Oct. 1802, in *Letters of Charles and Mary Lamb*, 2:82.

[85] See, for example, *Morning Post* (4 Sept. 1802); and *Anti-Gallican* 1 (1803): 70, 341.

[86] Wordsworth, *Prose*, 1:256. See Liu, 26–27.

[87] Simon Bainbridge, *Napoleon and English Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995), 80.

[88] Wordsworth to Alexander Dyce, circa 22 April 1833, in *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth*, 5:604.

[89] Wordsworth to Dyce, 5:605. See also the claim of November 1802 that Wordsworth's sonnets are "distinguished by simplicity and unity of object and aim" (Wordsworth to unknown, Nov. 1802, in *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth*, 1:379).

[90] Liu, 434.

[91] Compare also the "Fair Star of Evening" identified as "my Country's emblem," in "Composed by the Sea-Side, near Calais, August, 1802" (*P*, 155).

[92] Andrew Marvell, "Horatian Ode Upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland," in Dove Cottage MS 38, 14.

[93] Wordsworth, *An Evening Walk*, ed. James Averill (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1984), 175. See Roe, "Wordsworth, Milton," 123–24.

[94] See Robert Brinkley, "'Our chearful faith': On Wordsworth, Politics, and Milton," *Wordsworth Circle* 18.2 (1987): 57–60.

[95] [Charles Edward] Mortimer, "Review of the Political Life of Milton," *The Monthly Mirror* 14 (Sept. 1802): 166. For the Foxite Whig sympathies of this journal, see 214. Mortimer's serialized political biography of Milton was later published more fully as *An Historical Memoir of the Political Life of John Milton* (London, 1805), and duly savaged by the conservative press. On the earlier period, see Nicholas von Maltzahn, "The Whig Milton, 1667–1700," in *Milton and Republicanism*, ed. Armitage and others (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995), 229–53; and George F. Sensabaugh, *That Grand Whig Milton* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1952).