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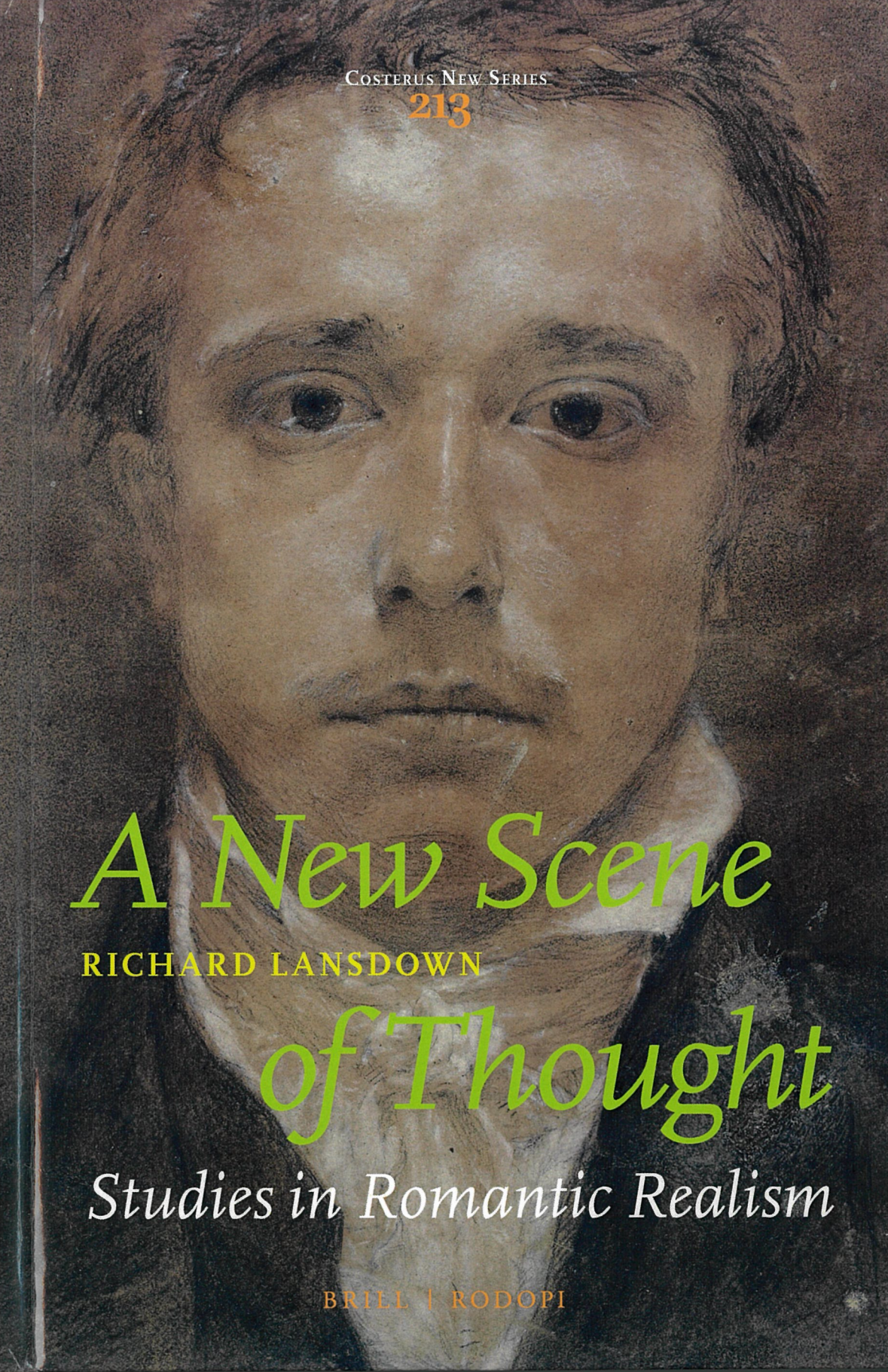

A New Scene of Thought

RICHARD LANSDOWN

Studies in Romantic Realism

BRILL | RODOPI

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Costerus New Series

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By

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"when I was about 18 Years of Age, there seem'd to be open'd to me a new Scene of Thought" (David Hume to Dr George Cheyne, March/April 1734)

to Sam and Holly: "Fare forward, travellers!"

⁘

Contents

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Introduction

Putting the matter briefly, and therefore, over-crudely,
what I want to say is this: what we can ascribe to human nature
does not determine what we can and cannot make sense of;
rather, what we can and what we cannot make sense of
determines what we can ascribe to human nature.

PETER WINCH, *Ethics and Action*

I

What would we mean if we suggested that *Frankenstein* is a more realistic novel than *Tom Jones*? It is an unorthodox proposal: the former involves imaginary events beyond the reach of modern science; the latter involves imaginary events that could have taken place in practically any eighteenth-century house, road, or inn. By the standard of probability and plausibility, therefore, Fielding's novel would surely retain its long-held place as a monument to realism, just as Shelley's would its position as a monument to fantasy.

If anything meaningful can be extracted from the suggestion, it will involve changing ideas and implications of realism between 1749 and 1818, and therefore some discussion of the Romantic movement will play a role. George Levine has suggested that "realism got its second full start in the English novel (after Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding) in the work of Jane Austen, and in the historical context of Romantic transformations of experience that reveal the world in a grain of sand," and he associated *Frankenstein* with this second full start because it enshrined the "monstrous, unnameable possibilities" of fantasy that always lurk offstage, "on the fringes of the most confident realism." He is right, surely. Just as every work of fantasy must have its basis in human experience, or be incomprehensible, so every work of realism must involve the imaginative or intellectual distortion of human experience, or it will be nothing but experience, documented and communicated without shape or meaning. But realism has an interest in disguising such distortions, in the name of verisimilitude. "Whatever else it means," therefore, realism

> always implies an attempt to use language to get beyond language, to discover some non-verbal truth out there. The history of English realism obviously depended in large measure on changing notions of what is "out

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there," of how best to "represent" it, and of whether, after all, representation is possible or the "out there" knowable.[1]

To accept the idea that *Frankenstein* is a more realist novel than *Tom Jones* would require a substantial change in our understanding of what is and has been "out there" from Fielding's time to Mary Shelley's and to our own; and it is that change in understanding that this study seeks to argue for and to substantiate. In doing so it hopes to add some illustrative detail to Levine's allusion to "Romantic transformations of experience." It is a central argument here that the Romantic movement conferred a different kind of realism on English literature: something that demonstrates, generally speaking, a different set of concerns and a different sense of what is "out there" in human experience to that which we find in Fielding and other writers of his era; something that is concerned with phenomena beyond the probable and the plausible, and more actively bent on discovering meaning in a fuller human context. I call this "a new scene of thought," furthermore: the issues are larger than the history of prose fiction and the representation of the world we find there.

Before going further with those two novels, or the aesthetic and intellectual contexts from which they sprang, I want to introduce two works of non-fiction that might provide a point of departure where the relation of plausibility and realism are concerned in the nineteenth century. Perhaps the most influential discussion in *The Stones of Venice* was the sixth chapter of the second volume: "The Nature of Gothic." Confidently as usual, Ruskin made an immense distinction in that chapter among "the ranks of men," between the Purists (who "take the good and leave the evil"), the Naturalists (who "render all that they see in nature unhesitatingly"), and the Sensualists (who "perceive and imitate evil only"). The sensualists were of no interest to Ruskin, as they had nothing good to offer the world: but the other two groups (whose attitudes to human nature could take any form, imaginative or discursive, literary or artistic, though in the third volume of *Modern Painters* Ruskin would identify purist art with Fra Angelico and naturalist art with Tintoretto, and in *Ariadne Florentina* he would compare Botticelli and Holbein in similar terms) present an issue of moral discrimination. Is it better to concentrate on the good in humanity alone (at the risk of being pious or idealistic), or to recognize its co-existence with the bad (at the risk of being equivocal or lugubrious)?

1 George Levine, *The Realistic Imagination: English Fiction from Frankenstein to Lady Chatterley* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 35, 38, 6.

The purist, Ruskin argued, "effaces from the countenance the traces of all transitory passion, illumines it with holy hope and love, and seals it with the serenity of holy peace":

> he conceals the forms of the body by the deep-folded garment, or else represents them under severely chastened types, and would rather paint them emaciated by the fast, or pale from the torture, than strengthened by exertion, or flushed by emotion. But the great Naturalist takes the human being in its wholeness, in its mortal as well as its spiritual strength. Capable of sounding and sympathising with the whole range of its passions, he brings one majestic harmony out of them all; he represents it fearlessly in all its acts and thoughts, in its haste, its anger, its sensuality, and its pride, as well as in its fortitude or faith, but makes it noble in them all; he casts aside the veil from the body, and beholds the mysteries of its form like an angel looking down on an inferior creature: there is nothing which he is reluctant to behold, nothing that he is ashamed to confess; with all that lives, triumphing, falling, or suffering, he claims kindred, either in majesty or in mercy, yet standing, in a sort, afar off, unmoved even in the deepness of his sympathy; for the spirit within him is too thoughtful to be grieved, too brave to be appalled, and too pure to be polluted.[2]

Most books that live, live in spite of the author laying it on thick, as D.H. Lawrence said; and we would probably not share Ruskin's characteristic form of audacity nowadays. I am not sure that Fielding typically dealt with "holy hope and love," any more than I am sure that Mary Shelley typically looked down on humanity as "an inferior creature." But I think it is true that *Frankenstein* might strike us as being a more *courageous* book than *Tom Jones*, and courageous in something like the "naturalist" spirit Ruskin described, being the work of a person (a nineteen-year-old, indeed) "too thoughtful to be grieved, too brave to be appalled, and too pure to be polluted" by the moral forces and elements she was dramatizing even as she unveiled them. There truly is nothing that Mary Shelley is reluctant to behold, nothing that she is ashamed to confess; I am not sure that that is true of the more morally conventional Fielding. "Transitory passion"—haste, anger, sensuality, and pride—is very much a psychological matrix of what happens in *Frankenstein*, and it is married up to a moral vision of personality that is at some remove from Fielding's relatively placid arena of agency, punishment,

2 John Ruskin, *Works*, eds E.T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 39 vols (London: George Allen, 1903–12), x. 224, 226–7.

and reward. Shelley's novel might strike us, in comparison with *Tom Jones*, as more serious, more profound, more telling, and above all more unsettling in its attitude to human problems and the elusiveness of their solutions. *Frankenstein* concerns itself in a peculiarly unremitting way with scientific ethics, the rights of children, the obligations of parents, individuals' needs for both companionship and love, the place of "nature and nurture" in justice, and other issues besides. But it also concerns itself with those issues in a fundamentally *interrelated* way. Each one of these dilemmas is bound up with the others—so that the scientist steps outside the realm of the ethically acceptable at the very time that he isolates himself from human company, for example; and the monster experiences the need for love as a direct result of seeing others experiencing its effects. (Thus we can never tell whether the monster killed Victor's younger brother out of murderous spite, for which he is morally culpable, or accidentally out of a total ignorance of his ability to take the life of another. So we can never tell whether he is good or bad, the product of nature or nurture, a criminal or an innocent.) *Tom Jones* is a colossal and wonderful artefact (demonstrably written by someone with just as much experience of the world as Mary Shelley), but by comparison with *Frankenstein* it presents (to our post-Romantic eyes at least) less in the way of what Erich Auerbach called, in discussing Fielding's novel, "problematic or existential seriousness"[3]—and some form or other of "existential seriousness" is profoundly implicated with what realism came to mean for Romantic writers like Mary Shelley—by no means all of whom were novelists; quite the reverse—and has come to mean for us. That is so because Romantic writers greatly augmented what the word implies in its relations to human experience, and the opportunities and challenges it accordingly presents in literature.

We should hardly associate Fielding with Fra Angelico, or regard him as a "purist." But Ruskin's definition is not so far off the point as it might appear. Does Fielding take all the good and leave the evil in humanity? Assuredly not: but he does tend both to *divide* such moral qualities (between Tom and Blifil, for example) in ways that we might regard as inherently fabulistic; and to *supervise* them (by means of Thwackum and Square, for example) in ways that, we might feel, are intellectually telescopic. And he is less interested in "transitory passion" than in fundamental predispositions to good and evil: predispositions that may be obscured temporarily, but which can never be uprooted. Like one of Rebecca West's "Pelagians" (from *The Court and the Castle*), he believes "that to be happy one has only to be good." Finally, and therefore, Fielding is neither as mortified nor as fascinated by evil as Mary Shelley proved to be.

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3 Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), 492.

Like the eighteenth-century writers whose views are surveyed in Chapters One and Two, he seems to have felt that, taken in the mass, virtue will triumph over vice, not even for strictly religious reasons—though doubtless they could be added to the account provided, and should be in the eyes of writers like Samuel Johnson—but simply because virtue comes more naturally, indeed more easily, to humanity. Again, "severely chastened" is hardly the language we should use of Fielding's protagonists or his attitude towards them; but "types" Tom Jones and Sophia, and Joseph Andrews and Fanny are, in important respects, as natively and innately good human beings, whose individual "forms" are of secondary importance to their representative status, and whose simplicity and modesty will always be rewarded by fortune in the end. So the extent to which a novel like *Tom Jones* "claims kindred" with moral diversity or ambivalence, as we have come to understand such things, is relatively limited. Fielding's books are very appealing, and very beautiful; they involve sources of pleasure and interest that are his alone; but by comparison with *Frankenstein* and its darkly resolute exposure of the human "problematic," they are parables—and so it is that grief and courage are values we hardly associate with Fielding or his protagonists.

I need to make it clear: *Clarissa* and *La nouvelle Héloise* were very real experiences for their eighteenth-century readers, just as *Troilus and Criseyde* was for Chaucer's audience, and *Troilus and Cressida* was for Shakespeare's. And notions of "the real," existentially speaking, were debated in the eighteenth century, too, as the cases of *Pamela* and *Shamela* demonstrate. Readers and playgoers must always have related the literary material they encountered with what they felt to be true about their own lives—that is what responding to literature mostly is. But the "new scene of thought" from which I draw four significant examples in the chapters below imposed or exposed a set of attitudes to art and life that are only rarely anticipated in the previous era, and that are still largely our own.

If *Frankenstein* stands alongside the novels of Jane Austen in English realism's "second full start" at the beginning of the nineteenth century, one of the novel's great practitioners, working a century or so later, might also help us see what that second start brought with it. This is Thomas Mann's commentary on purists and naturalists, seen not in the universal terms that Ruskin employed, but in those of the two hundred years of history leading up to the time of writing:

> "Honest but gloomy," Nietzsche called the nineteenth century in contrast to the eighteenth, which he found, as Carlyle had, feminine and deceitful. But the eighteenth century did have in its human sociability a *spirit in the service of desirability* [*wünschbarkeit*] that the nineteenth century did not know. More bestial and ugly, yes, more vulgar, and precisely for this

> reason, "better," "more honest," than the former, the nineteenth century was truer, *more subservient to reality of every kind.* To be sure it was, in the process, weak in will, sad and darkly covetous, fatalistic. Neither for "reason" nor for the "heart" did it show awe and respect, and through Schopenhauer it even reduced morality to an instinct, namely pity. As the scientific century that was unpretentious in its wishes, it freed itself from the *domination of ideals* and instinctively sought everywhere for theories to justify a *fatalistic submission to the factual.* The eighteenth century sought to forget *what one knew of the nature of the human being* in order to adapt him to its utopia. Superficial, soft, humane, enthusiastic for the "human being," it advocated, with the use of art, reforms of a social and political nature. On the other hand, Hegel, with his fatalistic way of thinking, his belief in the greater reason of the victorious, signified quite essentially a victory over sentimentality.

"I see," Mann concluded, "that this often varying tendency and basic disposition of the nineteenth century, its truthful, blunt, and unfeeling submission to the real and factual, which is averse to the cult of beautiful feelings, is the decisive inheritance that I have received from it."[4]

Again: *Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man* is a pre-war polemic, and quintessentially a product of the German Romantic tradition struggling against its "French," "West-European," "rationalist" opponent in the lead-up to 1914. So Mann's is hardly neutral testimony, any more than is Ruskin's. Both men were products of what they sought to describe. But Mann's discussion is not very far removed from George Levine's. Realism, Levine remarked, can "be defined as a self-conscious effort, *usually in the name of some moral enterprise of truth telling and extending the limits of human sympathy*, to make literature appear to be describing directly not some other language but reality itself (whatever that may be taken to be)." "This way of imagining the world," furthermore, "makes realism a grumpy suspicion of ideas, a hard-nosed facing of facts and of the power of the external world over dream, desire, idea."[5] It is exactly because Levine's expressions—"grumpy suspicion," "hard-nosed facing of facts," and "power of the external world"—are so drenched with the morally evaluative that I am interested in them: they recapitulate that "truthful, blunt, and unfeeling submission to the real" that Mann describes, and that clearly constitutes

4 Thomas Mann, *Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man*, trans. Walter D. Morris (New York: Ungar, 1983), 11, 12. Nietzsche's remark about the nineteenth century—"*redlicher, aber düster*"—is made in *The Will to Power*, §95: "The Three Centuries."

5 Levine, *The Realistic Imagination*, 8; italics added.

some sort of *moral* enterprise, touchstone, and desideratum as much as an artistic-cum-intellectual one. And the stress Mann and Levine lay on something truthful, blunt, and unfeeling, something fatalistic and darkly covetous, suggests that nineteenth-century, "Romantic," realism is something much more than a mere extension of the realistic (perhaps novelistic) enterprise into previously unconsidered elements of human sympathy. It is fundamentally anti-idealistic, as words like "grumpy," "hard-nosed," and "blunt" vividly suggest. In a footnote to the third volume of *Modern Painters* ("Of Many Things") Ruskin described the Pre-Raphaelite movement as a "stern naturalist" one, and nearby he spoke of the "equal and unoffended vision" of naturalist art and of its capacity to "venture into all kinds of what, to the pseudo-idealists, are 'vulgarities.'" "Nay," he went on, "*venturing* is the wrong word"; "the great men have no choice in the matter; they do not know or care whether the things they describe are vulgarities or not. They saw them; they are the facts of the case. If they had merely composed what they describe, they would have had it at their will to refuse this circumstance or add that. But they did not compose it. It came to them ready fashioned..."[6]

I am not asking the reader to accept or underwrite Ruskin's and Mann's statements and characterizations—not at all. I only suggest that if we were to entertain the notion that *Frankenstein* is a more realistic novel than *Tom Jones*, moral attitudes—what Auerbach calls "existential seriousness"—as well as (or rather than) aesthetic ones are likely to be involved in the undertaking, and probably have to be taken account of even in our way of posing and framing that discussion. The moral enterprise of literature, we have come to feel (I think) as a result of our Romantic inheritance, is concerned with extending the limits of human sympathy, no doubt, and that is concerned with our changing moral notions of what is "out there" for art to represent—"out there" being inside us, in the final analysis. (The bestial and the ugly being high on the list, as *Frankenstein* demonstrates.) In extending those limits we have come to find the brand of moral-psychological realism associated with Fielding's work to be insufficient for us. But Blake said: "as a man is, so he sees." We cannot separate our understanding of what is "out there" from our sense of ourselves as perceiving subjects, and Romantic transformations of experience that reveal the world in a grain of sand clearly constitute a shift in viewpoint as well as perception. So "realism" is a moral position, not simply a cognitive or aesthetic one. *Tom Jones* may be a closer approximation to the world as it once was, in history, time, and space; but *Frankenstein* is a closer approximation to the world as it is to us, in our present-day comprehension of humanity. The job of poetry, as

6 Ruskin, *Works*, v. 109, 117, 115.

Wordsworth maintained, is "to treat of things not as they *are*, but as they *appear*; not as they exist in themselves, but as they *seem* to the *senses*, and to the *passions*,"[7] and in so far as *Frankenstein* summons up a profounder sense of human passion (the desire for fame in the scientist, the desire for justice in his creation, the helpless but hopeless connection between monster and man, "father" and "son"), it will be a more challenging—and in that sense more real—experience even than novels which obey the way the world exists in itself, in its quotidian presence.

Realism, George Levine remarks, is a "dangerously multivalent" word, but an "inescapable one"—"a hot potato of a concept," as Simon Haines puts it:

> In ethics it is the name for the Aristotelian view that moral "facts" really exist: traits of character, aspects of human nature or function, features of how we do live as human beings. In epistemology, it is the name for a Platonist view that there are real objects behind the appearances and words of the world... In aesthetics...realism is the view that art should or can show social or physical phenomena as the most detailed and exact observation finds them, not as we commonly, superficially or imprecisely see them...[8]

What I want to propose in the pages that follow is that whereas "ethical" realism can coincide with "aesthetic" realism it does not have to, and that whereas both eighteenth- and nineteenth-century English literature demonstrate the presence of aesthetic realism ("social or physical phenomena as the most detailed and exact observation finds them"), *ethical* realism—an "equal and unoffended vision," looking through appearances to the moral relationships and realities that underlie them, as seen by what Wordsworth calls "the passions"—is a particular feature of Romantic literature precisely because Romantic writers like Mary Shelley gravitated beyond the moral-psychological realm Fielding represents so majestically, into a realm of problematic and existential seriousness in which "traits of character, aspects of human nature or function, features

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7 W.J.B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser (eds.), *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), iii. 63. Ruskin would make a similar point in *The Stones of Venice*, iii. 2 ("Roman Renaissance"): "Science deals exclusively with things as they are in themselves; and art exclusively with things as they affect the human sense and the human soul. Her work is to portray the appearances of things, and to deepen the natural impressions which they produce upon living creatures." (*Works*, xi. 47–8.)

8 Levine, *The Realistic Imagination*, 6, and Simon Haines, *Poetry and Philosophy from Homer to Rousseau: Romantic Souls, Realist Lives* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 176.

of how we do live as human beings" were seen in a very different light than they had been by many eighteenth-century writers, creative and otherwise.[9] Different ideas of the universal and the individual clearly affect this change: in Fielding, Tom Jones feels things because we *all* do (what we can ascribe to human nature in effect determines what we can make sense of); in Shelley and other Romantic realists, the starting point is different: because *I* feel this, others must, too (what we can make sense of in effect determines what we can ascribe to human nature).

"Honest but gloomy," Nietzsche said. The transition from Fielding's worldview to Mary Shelley's is surely in large part a transition from optimism (even the angry optimism of Voltaire and Pope) to pessimism (even the glorious pessimism of Shelley's "Triumph of Life" or the tolerant pessimism of Byron's *Don Juan*): a pessimism that led ultimately to *Jude the Obscure*, *The Secret Agent*, and *The Buddenbrooks* itself. Nietzsche was being hyperbolic: honesty is not always productive of gloom; the truth is a value in itself; expressing it therefore brings satisfaction, even, at times, elation and excitement.[10] Still, though the reaction Mann describes took many different forms, some degree of pessimism—stern, fatalistic, "darkly covetous," "grumpy," "hard-nosed," or "blunt" as the case may be—frequently accompanied it. One of the reasons, surely, that eighteenth-century

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9 Romantic realism might well be seen as something renovated rather than something discovered. Chaucer and Shakespeare, too, are more "Naturalist" than "Purist," more Tintoretto than Fra Angelico, more Holbein than Botticelli; and the Romantic movement, of course, took to Shakespeare in a profound way. Just as *Pride and Prejudice* is built on *Much Ado About Nothing*, so *Frankenstein* is in many ways a reprise of *The Tempest* ("This thing of darkness I acknowledge mine"). Restoration and Augustan culture admired Shakespeare, naturally: but they also had certain problems with him, as Dryden's version of *Antony and Cleopatra* or Samuel Johnson's puzzled response to *King Lear* demonstrate—the problems, I would suggest, of a purist making sense of a naturalist. Earlier, I quoted Ruskin on the "stern naturalism" of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, and the "equal and unoffended vision" of naturalist art. Elsewhere in *Modern Painters* ("Of Mountain Beauty") he writes that the Sun and Shakespeare "were both of them to shine on the evil and good; both to behold unoffendedly all that was upon the earth, to burn unappalled upon the spears of kings, and undisdaining upon the reeds of the river," and that Shakespeare's "stern view of humanity" was in this respect similar to "the ancients" (*Works*, vi. 441, 452).

10 See, for example, Jane Welsh Carlyle writing to her husband on 24 July 1843: "I have got for reading Fielding's *Amelia*! and *the Vicar of Wakefield*—which I am carrying on simultaneously—I find the first a dreadful bore—one prays to Heaven that the poor woman would but once for all get herself *seduced*, and so let us have done with her alarms and precautions; on any terms! 'Upon *my* honour' I do not see the slightest sense in spending one's whole existence thro out three volumes in taking care of one's *honour*!—do you?" (*Newly Selected Letters*, ed. Kenneth J. Fielding and David R. Sorenson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 93.)

literature still appeals to us as profoundly as it does is its fundamental self-confidence, which is so hard to put into words. "Especially his own," Auerbach remarked of Voltaire, "is his tempo. His rapid, keen summary of the development [in this case, religious nonconformity on the London stock exchange], his quick shifting of scenes, his surprisingly sudden confronting of things which are not usually seen together—in all this he comes close to being unique and incomparable; and it is in this tempo that a good part of his wit lies."[11] The qualities Auerbach finds in Voltaire (rapidity, keenness, dexterity, capacity for assimilation, tempo) are surely just those we respond to in Pope, so that at his best—in the *Epistles to Several Persons*, for example, or the *Imitations of Horace*—he is the most exciting poet in the language, with a sparkling intellectual energy no nineteenth-century poet (not even Byron or Browning) can match. Even in the fourth book of *The Dunciad* there is an intellectual and moral optimism that is inextinguishable: to encompass these elements in humanity is to master them, to some extent. We do not always *want* to "submit to the factual," as Mann put it, and we will always read *Tom Jones* as well as *The Buddenbrooks*, accordingly.

In Book Five of *The Excursion* Wordsworth's Pastor discusses human nature and our limited means of access to an understanding of it:

> Knowledge, for us, is difficult to gain—
> Is difficult to gain and hard to keep—
> As Virtue's self; like Virtue is beset
> With snares; tried, tempted, subject to decay.
> Love, admiration, fear, desire, and hate,
> Blind were we without these; through these alone
> Are capable to notice or discern
> Or to record; we judge, but cannot be
> Indifferent judges. 'Spite of proudest boast
> Reason, best Reason, is to imperfect Man
> An effort only, and a noble aim;
> A crown, an attribute of sovereign power,
> Still to be courted—never to be won!
> —Look forth, or each man dive into himself,
> What sees he but a Creature too perturbed,
> That is transported to excess; that yearns,
> Regrets, or trembles, wrongly, or too much;
> Hopes rashly, in disgust as rash recoils;
> Battens on spleen, or moulders in despair.

11 Auerbach, *Mimesis*, 405.

> Thus truth is missed and comprehension fails;
> And darkness and delusion round our path
> Spread, from disease, whose subtile injury lurks
> Within the very faculty of sight.[12]

This is a complicated position within an ongoing intellectual drama, and some of it is reminiscent of a disillusioned Augustan like Samuel Johnson. But there is a difference between discovering that certain human ideals are unachievable, and discovering that they are to some extent unrealistic (an effort only, or a noble aim). Furthermore, I think Johnson would have had a genuine philosophical problem with someone who believed that "love, admiration, fear, desire, and hate" constituted a mode of vision rather than a set of obstacles to it; or who suggested that each individual ultimately must "dive into *himself*" to find the essence of human understanding; or who felt that "the very faculty of sight" in humanity was diseased at the root. The Pastor's is not a speech about disillusionment with Enlightenment standards ("Reason, best Reason"), but about the repudiation of them, however reluctant and regretful. If you decide that "love, admiration, fear, desire, and hate" are your only means of discernment, furthermore, that is going to condition what you see.

It follows that the Romantic realism defined in the chapters to follow—ethical rather than aesthetic, moral rather than descriptive, looking through the externals of the world to the human relations underlying them, responded to by the passions—is by no means confined to one department of English literature. The novel builds on such understandings in a particularly deep way in the aftermath of Jane Austen's (and Mary Shelley's) achievement, as George Levine shows, but this honest but gloomy, existentially serious, realism is a feature of English Romantic poetry, too, practically across the board, whether the poets are of the first or second generation. This book is not a survey of fiction, and only one of its studies involves a novelist. Wordsworth, Austen, Byron, and Hazlitt are the main topics of discussion in this set of studies, but they are not the only Romantic writers infected with the ethically realist bacillus. Blake's equal and unoffended realization that humans lie down with the tiger as well as the lamb (so that one portion of being is the prolific and the other the devouring, as he put it in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*), and that our native innocence is all too readily obscured by a scepticism of our own devising that we like to call "experience" are two such cases in him. Another is Keats's honest but gloomy disenchantment with urns, nightingales, and other portals opening on to a world where truth and beauty were the same, or his recognition in

12 William Wordsworth, *The Excursion*, ed. Sally Bushell, James A. Butler, and Michael C. Jaye (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), v. 492–513.

The Eve of St Agnes that when lovers commit themselves to a more intense kind of life they are also committing themselves to its ultimate extinction. (Everybody, after all, however vivacious, is dead at the end of that poem, the events of which took place "ages long ago.") Another is Coleridge's stern view, where nature is concerned, that "we receive but what we give," or his bicameral vision of the mind in "Kubla Khan": "a miracle of rare device,/A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice," where the arts of war always attend the arts of peace. Percy Shelley has a reputation for the idealist and the ethereal, but he, too, can be hard-nosed when it comes to facing certain facts, especially historical ones. "Ozymandias" presents a quintessentially ethically realist acknowledgment that if the ability of artists to capture and display the "sneer of cold command" on the faces of dictators like Ramses II is eternal, so is the sneer they are called upon to depict. Like poverty, tyranny is always with us; sadly, realistically, so is professional complicity with it. In a similar way his "Evening: Ponte al Mare, Pisa" recognizes that cities as old and deathly as this one have themselves seen out and withstood the ideas and ideals entertained by countless generations of living, questing, impatient individuals like the poet. Escape to the East as many times as you like, the poem in effect says: Pisa will be here waiting for you when you get back. "The poetry of Romanticism is everywhere marked," Jerome McGann suggests, "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."[13] I am not so sure about that: but even when human issues *are* resituated in a variety of idealized localities by Romantic writers, they are not necessarily made less real as a result.

II

So this book is both simple and traditional in its aspirations. It seeks to shed light on specifically Romantic habits of thought and representation—or on mental structures and manifestations that perhaps precede or post-date "thought." It does so by exploring a contrast between eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century forms of moral psychology, as dramatized, discussed, and propounded in a range of eighteenth-century writers (philosophical as well as literary, writers of poetry and criticism as well as fiction) and in depth in a far smaller group of Romantic ones: William Wordsworth, Jane Austen, Lord Byron, and William Hazlitt. It is a study of artistic and intellectual *traditions*,

13 Jerome McGann, *The Romantic Ideology: A Critical Investigation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 1.

therefore. A tradition can never involve a group of people who all feel the same: that would be a stagnant consensus. Nor can a tradition involve a group of people who all feel differently: that would be an intellectual chaos. Traditions are made up of evolving patterns of intellectual and artistic overlap, indebtedness, difference, and oppugnancy. Even more than art and literature, philosophy draws its vitality from disagreement and dialectic; but it also depends on certain intellectual continuities, or there would be nothing to disagree about—as the career of Deconstruction proves. Answers to questions differ, but the questions themselves recur even as they are re-drafted.

For example: there were, Isabel Rivers argues, two "crucial shifts," intellectually speaking, from the mid-seventeenth to the late-eighteenth centuries in England. "The first," she contends, "is an emphasis in Anglican thought on the capacity of human reason and free will to co-operate with divine grace in order to achieve the holy and happy life." "The second is the attempt to divorce ethics from religion, and to find the springs of human action not in the co-operation of human nature and divine grace but in the constitution of human nature alone." "The first," she concludes, more portentously, "comes to represent a new orthodoxy, and its effects in the period are very wide-reaching; the second shift, which in part arises from the first, remains heterodox in the period under consideration but its long-term influences are incalculable."[14] "Increasingly during the seventeenth century, and certainly by Pope's time," S.L. Goldberg writes,

> the "self" had become a much more problematic entity than the intellectual equipment of the age could readily describe or explain. Some of the most basic and yet intractable conflicts were clearly those within men and women, between their actual being and activity on the one hand, and their consciousness of the world and of themselves on the other. What was difficult to capture in the available intellectual terms was where and how such internal conflicts really occurred: at that point, that is, where simple dichotomies between subjective and objective broke down, where the individual's perception of reality and his or her own distinctive nature...are virtually inseparable. For this is also the point where what people believe, what they value, and what they have the capacity to be and to do, are virtually inseparable from what they feel and desire. It is also the point where all of these various activities of the self

14 Isabel Rivers, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment: A Study of the Language of Religion and Ethics in England, 1660–1780, Volume One: Whichcote to Wesley* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 1.

> shape and are shaped by the pressure of a social and political world to decide, to judge, to choose, and to make specific commitments.[15]

No intellectual evolutions described in these terms could be monolithic. In fact, Rivers argues, "the range, complexity, and subtlety of the positions explored were much greater than is often recognized now"[16]—and she says this of the very mid-eighteenth century that saw the publication of *Tom Jones*, and that is considered in the first two chapters of this book. In *The Magus of the North* Isaiah Berlin has a noteworthy two pages on the many differences and between the eighteenth-century *philosophes*. "Yet despite these disagreements," he concludes, "there were certain beliefs that were more or less common to the entire party of progress and civilisation, and this is what makes it proper to speak of it as a single movement."[17] So I hope I can demonstrate certain currents of consanguinity, not only between philosophers as various as Locke, Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Butler, Hume, and Price, but also between them and writers like Pope, Fielding, Johnson, Smollett, Reynolds, and Burney—without, in the process, turning everyone concerned into what David Fate Norton calls "Lockean cogs in the development of Western philosophy."[18] If the long-term influences of the eighteenth-century attempt to find the springs of human action in human nature alone are incalculable, as Isabel Rivers suggests, some approximations and economies are almost bound to result in attempting to calculate them, though as Isaiah Berlin demonstrates there was lively debate among eighteenth-century philosophers and writers, and the intellectual couplings and un-couplings of Romantic writers are common knowledge. Some eighteenth-century writers anticipated later developments, to a greater or lesser extent; some writers from the Romantic period (Godwin, for example, or Joanna Baillie) remained affiliated to earlier issues, debates, figures, and forms; there was no consensus at either "end" of the spectrum, and many intermediary figures (Burns, Cowper, and Crabbe, for example) link the two "scenes of thought."

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15 S.L. Goldberg, *Agents and Lives: Moral Thinking in Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 191–2.

16 Isabel Rivers, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment: A Study of the Language of Religion and Ethics in England, 1660–1780, Volume Two: Shaftesbury to Hume* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 236.

17 Isaiah Berlin, *The Magus of the North: J.G. Hamann and the Origins of Modern Irrationalism* (London: John Murray, 1993), 26–7.

18 David Fate Norton, "Hutcheson's Moral Realism," 398, *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 23: 3 (July 1985), 397–418.

Wordsworth is a quintessentially Romantic poet, who in certain respects and under certain auspices—as we have seen—looks every inch the anti-neoclassical rebel. "*Not* in entire forgetfulness,/And *not* in utter nakedness,/But trailing clouds of glory do we come from God" is surely, amongst other things, a protest against Locke and his blank slates. But Locke himself had suggested that "God has stampt certain Characters upon Mens Minds [as children], which, like their Shapes, may perhaps be a little mended; but can hardly be totally alter'd, and transformed into the contrary."[19] In "A Poet's Epitaph" Wordsworth introduced a contemporary philosopher as the last word in moral insensibility, even idiocy:

> —A Moralist perchance appears;
> Led, Heaven knows how! to this poor sod:
> And *He* has neither eyes nor ears;
> Himself his world, and his own God;
> One to whose smooth-rubbed soul can cling
> Nor form nor feeling great nor small,
> A reasoning, self-sufficing thing,
> An intellectual All in All![20]

"Bald & naked reasoning's," Wordsworth wrote in his "Essay on Morals" of 1798, "are impotent over our habits, they cannot form them; from the same cause they are equally powerless in regulating our judgments concerning the value of men & things. They contain no picture of human life; they *describe* nothing." So it is that there might be, in Wordsworth's view, "an undue value set upon that faculty which we call reason."

But it is also true that in the same essay Wordsworth came up with some strikingly "eighteenth-century" forms of intellectual expression: that "we do not *argue* in defence of our *good* actions," for example, but "feel internally their beneficent effect."[21] And the preface to *Lyrical Ballads*—of all publications—which contains many expressions that once seemed completely "Romantic" in orientation, also reveals profoundly "eighteenth-century" intellectual elements: "our continued influxes of feelings," for example, "are modified and directed by our thoughts, which are indeed the representatives of all our past

19 John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, ed. John W. Yolton and Jean S. Yolton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 122.

20 William Wordsworth, Lyrical Ballads *and Other Poems, 1797–1800*, eds James Butler and Karen Green (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 236.

21 Owen and Smyser, *Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, i. 103, 104.

feelings."[22] This still sounds similar to much that Locke might say, and to the empiricist model of the mind "as an essentially bipartite entity," both site and agent on that site, as William Walker suggests.[23] Indeed, in the "Essay, Supplementary" to the 1815 *Poems*, Wordsworth spoke of Shaftesbury—true, perhaps the empiricist philosopher to whom a Romantic is most likely to be sympathetic—as "an author at present unjustly depreciated."[24] Quite rightly, therefore, Adam Potkay speaks of the "substantial continuities that link any two decades, centuries, or retrospectively imposed periods." But quite rightly, too, I think, he argues that in a poem like "The Discharged Soldier" Wordsworth "belies an eighteenth-century model of sympathy as a mechanism for perceptual sharing and the transmission of emotion—that is, for a more or less total identification with the condition and feelings of the other."[25] There are substantial continuities, and there are also rejections of earlier models ("sympathy" in favour of "alterity"); both are significant.

There are differences of attitude, then. But Locke and Wordsworth share a parent in the British intellectual tradition as a whole. A central idea in that tradition—as manifest in Chaucer and Shakespeare as it is in Bacon, Hobbes, and the empiricist philosophers—is that the most significant experiences humans have are with real objects in time and space (including fellow humans), appreciated in the light of common sense, in the light of appearances, and (generally speaking) in the light of practical reason. But there are two paths one can follow from that point or that emphasis: that the most important thing about such experiences is that they provide the material for general laws about the world; or that the most important thing about such experiences is that they do no such thing and are incommensurable, incommunicable, and *sui generis*. (Does what we can ascribe to human nature determine what we can and cannot make sense of, or vice versa?) Wordsworth and Locke share an intense, even brooding, fascination with physical experience. It is how they interpreted it that is significant. Thus I would agree with Cairns Craig that we must be circumspect about seeing "in the English Romantics a leap into a new world

22 Owen and Smyser, *Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, i. 126.

23 William Walker, *Locke, Literary Criticism, and Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 48.

24 Owen and Smyser, *Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, iii. 72.

25 Adam Potkay, *Wordsworth's Ethics* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), 9, 57. Potkay goes on (58) to speak of Wordsworth "chastising" and "stepping back" from (bogus, inadequate, "unrealistic") sympathy: a process we can see at work in numerous poems, including "We are Seven," "Simon Lee," "A Narrow Girdle of Rough Stones and Crags," "Beggars," "Resolution and Independence," and so forth. The issue of sympathy versus alterity is returned to in Chapter Six, below, where human faces are concerned.

beyond the presuppositions of eighteenth-century British empiricism,"[26] when the Romantics clearly carry a good deal of baggage with them to that new world. But I am not sure I can follow him in saying that "British Romanticism is not built on the overthrow of British empiricism but on the working-out of its most profound consequences, those in which the imagination generates our only world, while, at the same time, subverting any certainty we might have as to its reality."[27] I think the opposition is false: the working-out of consequences in intellectual traditions can and often does involve steep disruptions; and like George Levine I think that there are Romantic transformations of experience that eighteenth-century thought in part stimulated, but could not anticipate, let alone encompass.

Certainly some Romantic writers saw the situation in that light. "I know but of two sorts of philosophy," Hazlitt wrote:

> that of those who believe what they feel, and endeavour to account for it, and that of those who only believe what they understand, and have already accounted for. The one is the philosophy of consciousness, the other that of experiment; the one may be called the intellectual, the other the material philosophy. The one rests chiefly on the general notions and conscious perceptions of mankind, and endeavours to discover what the mind is, by looking into the mind itself; the other denies the existence of every thing in the mind, of which it cannot find some rubbishy archetype, and visible image in its crucibles and furnaces, or in the distinct forms of verbal analysis. The first of these is the only philosophy that is fit for men of sense, the other should be left to chymists and logicians. Of this last kind is the philosophy of Locke...[28]

So the nature of consciousness—the crucible of Romantic transformations of experience—became a vital topic for Hazlitt: "This subject," as he called it,

> the most abstruse, the most important of all others, the most filled with seeming inexplicable contradictions, that which bids the completest defiance to the matter-of-fact philosophy and can only be developed by

26 Cairns Craig, "'Kant Has Not Answered Hume': Empiricism and the Romantic Imagination," 41, in ed. Gavin Budge, *Romantic Empiricism: Poetics and the Philosophy of Common Sense, 1780–1830* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2010), 40–63.

27 Craig, "Kant Has Not Answered Hume," 61.

28 William Hazlitt, *Complete Works*, ed. P.P. Howe, 21 vols. (London: J.M. Dent, 1930–1934), i. 127.

> the patient soliciting of a man's own spirit has been accordingly passed over by the herd of philosophers from Locke downwards.[29]

The shift from neoclassic to Romantic, as Wordsworth's and Hazlitt's cases demonstrate, does not cancel out continuities between eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century writing; but it remains an important aspect of writing from the Romantic era, and I hope in the discussions offered here to flesh out George Levine's initial comment about those blunt and hard-nosed Romantic transformations of experience that accompany the rebirth of realism in the early nineteenth century, so that we can see the pattern of affiliation and repudiation more clearly.

Accordingly this study will first survey the writings of Locke, Shaftesbury, Francis Hutcheson, Joseph Butler, Hume, and Richard Price. The chapter has no ambitions to provide a survey of eighteenth-century philosophy, or even of eighteenth-century British philosophy, but only to find a significant piece of common ground among some important figures there. (Nor does this set of studies seek to contribute to the history of philosophy across the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: it seeks a shift in ethos and attitude, rather than an intellectual tradition.) The stress will lie on the forms of sociability, universalism, transparency, and sentiment such writers treated as fundamental to human activity, and their tendency toward the abstract in discussing such elements of moral psychology. Chapter Two traces this moral psychology in the work of some important eighteenth-century imaginative writers and critics, before contrasting aesthetic and ethical forms of realism in novels by Fielding, Smollett, Burney, Austen, and Mary Shelley. Though aesthetic and ethical forms of realism sometimes co-exist in literature they do not have to, and it is ethical realism that this study associates most profoundly and in a most widespread way with Romanticism. There then follow studies of Wordsworth, Austen, Byron, and Hazlitt in terms of four ideas that the eighteenth-century writers whose works are considered in Chapters One and Two generally found problematic, but that Romantic realism felt duty-bound to confront, to engage with, and to exploit: the *unconscious* (at work in the two-part *Prelude* of 1799), the *irrational* (at work in *Northanger Abbey*), the *immediate* (at work in *Don Juan*), and the *personal* (at work in Hazlitt's rehabilitation of "prejudice" in general and in "My First Acquaintance with Poets" in particular).

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29 Hazlitt, *Works*, i. 70.

III

Before I turn to this series of discussions, there is one more temporal perspective I should like to introduce, alongside Ruskin's and Mann's views on "naturalism" and the "honest but gloomy" nineteenth century. Among the philosophers I have mentioned who took part in that "attempt to divorce ethics from religion, and to find the springs of human action not in the co-operation of human nature and divine grace but in the constitution of human nature alone," that Isabel Rivers described, all to some extent—whether explicitly or not—discussed and debated the existence of a "moral sense" in humanity: an innate capability to judge good from evil much as taste distinguishes sweet from sour: "some secret Sense," as its most enthusiastic apologist, Francis Hutcheson, called it, "which determines our Approbation without regard to Self-Interest." "Men have, by Nature," Hutcheson went on, "a moral Sense of Goodness in Actions."[30] "As if from the judge's bench," indeed, "this reflective sense exercises judgement over all that human beings do, over all the pleasures of mind and body, over thoughts, actions, volitions, promises, intentions, affections. It discerns what is good, what is proper, what is right, and what is the correct measure in each case."[31] Hume's *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* took its departure from what he called "a controversy started of late...concerning the general foundation of MORALS; whether they be derived from REASON, or from SENTIMENT; whether we attain the knowledge of them by a chain of argument and induction, or by an immediate feeling and finer internal sense; whether, like all sound judgement of truth and falsehood, they should be the same to every rational intelligent human being; or whether, like the perception of beauty and deformity, they be founded entirely on the particular fabric and constitution of the human species."[32]

It is not my intention to enter into the "moral sense" debate from Locke to Hume—as to whether it is the product of nature or nurture, for example, or whether it can be said to exist at all, or how it conceivably could be said to operate in the social and personal spheres. That debate is beyond my expertise, which can only extend to a broad characterization of some British eighteenth-century thinkers and writers. But it is interesting to mark the fate of this expression over

30 Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty of Virtue in Two Treatises*, ed. Wolfgang Leidhold, rev. edn (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2008), 92, 154.

31 Quoted in Daniel Carey, *Locke, Shaftesbury, Hutcheson: Contesting Diversity in the Enlightenment and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 166.

32 David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. Tom L. Beauchamp (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 73–4.

time, nonetheless. Humanity without a sense of right and wrong is almost inconceivable to us, except in cases of utter criminal depravity. But Hutcheson's idea remains as distant as the pyramids, none the less. Is there testimony we can introduce to register its erosion?

As we have seen, Hazlitt had pronounced views on "the herd of philosophers from Locke downwards." He could summarize the moral sense idea in confuting a sceptic like Helvetius,[33] but he could also argue that "public bodies are so far worse than the individuals composing them, because the official takes place of the moral sense"[34]—a remark that sits uneasily with eighteenth-century ideas of the social, as we shall see in Chapter One. More significantly, there is his discussion of *Cymbeline*, from *The Characters of Shakespear's Plays* (1817), where he quotes Iachimo's famous examination-cum-inventory of the play's sleeping heroine, ending:

> ...on her left breast
> A mole cinque-spotted, like the crimson drops
> I' th' bottom of a cowslip.

"There is," Hazlitt comments, "a moral sense in the proud beauty of this last image, a rich surfeit of the fancy..."[35] Clearly, Hazlitt has left the realm of moral adjudication behind. This is an evocation and a response to it—"proud beauty... rich surfeit"—that is at some remove from Hutcheson's "Goodness in Actions." True: there is something of approbation without self-interest in Iachimo here, enraptured as he is by his sleeping victim; but that rapture is driving him beyond the moral realm altogether, off the judge's bench, and into a realm of imagination.

Talking of rich surfeits of the fancy: Thomas Carlyle, writing in 1867 about his rationalist-utilitarian opponents in "Shooting Niagara: and After?" derided their "idle habit of 'accounting for the Moral Sense,' as they phrase it":

> A most singular problem:—instead of bending every thought to have more and ever more of "Moral Sense," and therewith to irradiate your own poor soul, and all its work, into something of divineness, as the one thing needful for you in this world! A very futile problem that other, my friends; futile, idle, and far worse; leading to what Moral *Ruin* you little dream of! The Moral Sense, thank God, is a thing you will never "account

33 See Hazlitt, *Works*, ii. 220.

34 Hazlitt, *Works*, viii. 265.

35 Hazlitt, *Works*, iv. 183.

> for"; that, if you could think of it, is the perennial Miracle of Man; in all times, visibly connecting poor transitory Man here on this bewildered Earth with his Maker, who is eternal in the Heavens.[36]

What Hutcheson would have made of this is hard to tell. As with Hazlitt, it carries over something from the eighteenth-century idea; but as with Hazlitt, too, the idea has become thoroughly mystified. The moral sense can never be accounted for, and the attempt to do so is not only futile but misguided; it is the perennial miracle of man, absolutely resisting any divorce between ethics and religion of the kind Isabel Rivers described.

The last three examples I have of post-Romantic uses of the expression are very glancing by comparison with philosophically inclined writers like Hazlitt and Carlyle—though I am not sure that makes them any less symptomatic. After George Eliot's Mr Lydgate is introduced to Dorothea Brooke—soon to become Mrs Casaubon—he reflects on the experience with typical chauvinist complacency:

> "She is a good creature—that fine girl—but a little too earnest," he thought. "It is troublesome to talk to such women. They are always wanting reasons, yet they are too ignorant to understand the merits of any question, and usually fall back on their moral sense to settle things after their own taste."[37]

In *Middlemarch* (1872) the great internal arbitrator has degenerated into a sort of moral-cum-intellectual nondescript, rather like "taste," and quite without rigour or potency—at least where the doctor is concerned. When Thomas Hardy's Lady Petherwin discovers that her protégée has published what she calls "ribald verses" in a local paper, she is affronted in a strikingly similar fashion:

> Really, one would imagine that women wrote their books during those dreams in which people have no moral sense, to see how improper some, even virtuous, ladies become when they get into print.

To which all that Ethelberta can reply is, "I might have done a much more unnatural thing than write those poems."[38] In *The Hand of Ethelberta* (1876), moral sense forged ahead as a blanket term, covering consciousness

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36 Thomas Carlyle, *Scottish and Other Miscellanies* (London: J.M. Dent, 1967), 322.

37 George Eliot, *Middlemarch*, ed. David Carroll (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 92.

38 Thomas Hardy, *The Hand of Ethelberta* (London: Macmillan, 1975), 97.

and conscience (as regards dreaming, which is the suspension of both), and nature and culture (as regards the probity of young women appearing in the *Wessex Reflector*); the expression hardly means anything, and certainly nothing technical, focused, or decisive of the kind Hutcheson aspired towards.

Finally, *Nostromo*, and Colonel Sotillo's pursuit of the Gould silver through the persons of his captives, Captain Mitchell and Dr Monygham:

> Even in a man utterly devoid of moral sense there remains an appreciation of rascality which, being conventional, is perfectly clear. Sotillo thought that Dr Monygham, so different from all Europeans, was ready to sell his countrymen and Charles Gould, his employer, for some share of the San Tomé silver. Sotillo did not despise him for that. The colonel's want of moral sense was of a profound and innocent character. Nothing that served his ends could appear to him really reprehensible. Nevertheless, he despised Dr Monygham. He had for him an immense and satisfactory contempt. He despised him with all his heart because he did not mean to let the doctor have any reward at all. He despised him, not as a man without faith and honour, but as a fool.[39]

As with Hardy, one measure of the distance we have travelled from Hutcheson and Hume is the dramatic and anti-philosophical lack of clarity of the concept as employed here. (Thus I am not sure what Conrad means by a "conventional" appreciation of rascality.) But the essential point is simple enough. The eighteenth century recognized the likes of Sporus and Sir Balaam; it knew about the vanity of human wishes, and the ambivalence we feel when inspecting the life of Richard Savage; it could conceive of someone being guilty of his nation's blood. But it could not conceive of someone "utterly devoid of moral sense," or if it could, it did not bother to write about such an individual. Blifil and Lovelace are nasty bits of work, to be sure. But the one is a pasteboard villain, whose possession of moral sense is neither here nor there; and the other could certainly not be said to be *devoid* of moral sense, whatever his crimes against human decency. But Conrad's Sotillo, like Dickens' Mr Monks (from *Oliver Twist*), or George Eliot's Henleigh Grandcourt (from *Daniel Deronda*), or James' Gilbert Osmond (from *The Portrait of a Lady*), really does enter the territory of manifest evil, and really does exploit, consolidate, and extend a new sense of what is "out there" in post-Romantic moral psychology. Before we consider further what that might be we must get a clearer sense of certain eighteenth-century scenes of thought.

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39 Joseph Conrad, *Nostromo: A Tale of the Seaboard* (London: J.M. Dent, 1947), 350.